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MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESCRIPTION FOR HEALTH PROGRAM PROMOTES HEALTHY EATING

Ypsilanti Health Clinics Prescribe Free Tokens for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables to Use at the Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers' Market

YPSILANTI, Mich., July 28, 2008 -- Washtenaw County Public Health has launched a new program to encourage patients at local health clinics to increase their fruit and vegetable consumption by shopping at the Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers' Market. Through the Prescription for Health program, clinicians at four health clinics in Ypsilanti are providing patients with \$5.00 in tokens redeemable for fresh fruits and vegetables at the Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers' Market. At least 500 patients will be able to take advantage of the program.

The goal of Prescription for Health is to impact chronic disease risk by increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Staff at the participating clinics –The Corner Health Center, Hope Clinic, Neighborhood Health Clinic and University of Michigan Ypsilanti Health Center – have responded enthusiastically to the program. “Clinicians find it an excellent way to encourage healthier eating, and patients are delighted to get the information about the Farmers' Market and, of course, the tokens for fresh produce. We think it's a great, win-win idea for everyone,” said Katherine Simpson, Coordinator at Hope Medical Clinic.

Ypsilanti has higher rates of food insecurity and chronic disease and the lowest levels of fruit and vegetable consumption in Washtenaw County. “With few options for purchasing fresh produce in the city limits, it can be very difficult to get the recommended five or more fruits and vegetables per day,” said Jenna Bacolor, Program Supervisor at Washtenaw County Public Health. “We hope this program will connect patients with a local source of fresh, healthy food. Beyond the tokens that this program provides, patients can use Electronic Benefits Transfer, or Food Stamps, as well as cash and credit cards to purchase food at the Downtown Farmers’ Market.”

Prescription for Health runs from June through September, 2008. Located in the Key Bank parking lot at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Hamilton, the Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers’ Market is open every Tuesday, 2-7 p.m. from now until October. For more information, contact Jenna Bacolor, Program Supervisor, Washtenaw County Public Health Department, (734) 544-2969 or bacolorj@ewashtenaw.org.

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