

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 13, 2004

CONTACT: Rebecca Head, PhD, DABT
Director, Public Health
Preparedness
734-544-6759

**ANNIVERSARY OF BLACKOUT CALLS ATTENTION TO PUBLIC HEALTH
PREPAREDNESS EFFORTS IN WASHTENAW COUNTY**

Saturday, August 14th, will mark the one year anniversary of the blackout that hit southeast Michigan as well as many other parts of the U.S. and Canada. During this crisis citizens of Washtenaw County realized their need to be prepared for all types of emergencies. With the appearance of SARS and West Nile Virus, and the increased threat of terror as projected by homeland security, keeping the public safe, from infectious disease outbreaks as well as purposeful releases of biological or chemical agents, is a priority.

The risk of a terrorist event is low in Washtenaw County, yet everyone wants to be prepared to protect family and friends. The Washtenaw County Public Health Department, lead by the Health Officer Ellen Clement, is partnering with local first responders, healthcare providers, hospitals and community organizations, like the Red Cross, to ensure that everyone is ready for any public health emergency.

How will Public Health help you prepare? Emergency preparedness activities at the Public Health Department focus on helping citizens make personal preparedness plans. The following will help each individual and his or her family to prepare for an emergency:

(more)

- ✓ **Create and practice a family emergency plan.** Choose a meeting place inside your home when you can “shelter in place.” When you may have to evacuate, choose a place to meet and plan how to get to there. Keep a list of emergency numbers, including relatives and friends, to call in the event of an emergency.
- ✓ **Create and maintain an emergency supply kit.** Use a small duffel bag or backpack to store water, dried or canned food, warm clothes, a flashlight, a radio, extra batteries, a first-aid kit and any other items you may need.
- ✓ **Remain calm,** in the event of an emergency. Tune your radio to WAAM 1600AM or WEMU 89.1 FM for current emergency information in the Washtenaw County community.
- ✓ **Be informed,** before an emergency. For more information on becoming prepared for an emergency, contact Washtenaw County Public Health at 734-544-2979 or visit the following county, state and national websites:

<http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org>

<http://www.michigan.gov/ophp>

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov>