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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**E. Coli Outbreak Update: Scope of Investigation Expands
Washtenaw County Public Health Not Seeing Additional Cases**

YPSILANTI, Mich., April 29, 2010 — Washtenaw County Public Health continues to investigate an outbreak of food-related illness identified as a toxin-producing *E.coli* non-0157 strain. The strain of *E.coli* blamed for the local outbreak now appears genetically related to outbreaks under investigation in two other states – Ohio and New York. Washtenaw County Public Health has confirmed eight local cases that match into the multi-state outbreak; thirteen additional cases are pending laboratory confirmation. Local, state and federal health officials are working together to identify a food source, supplier or distributor common to the affected areas.

Symptoms of *E. coli* infection include abdominal cramping followed by diarrhea that progressively worsens and is often bloody. Anyone with similar symptoms should call or see their health care provider. Please report suspected *E. coli* illness to Washtenaw County Public Health at 734-544-6700.

Most persons sickened with *E. coli* recover within a week; however, some infections can be serious. The non-0157 strain of *E. coli* identified in the outbreak is less common, but it is still capable of producing severe illness. A rare but serious complication of *E.coli* infection is called Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS), and it is the leading cause of kidney failure among children in the United States. HUS is most likely to occur in young children and the elderly. HUS can cause serious kidney damage or even death. No cases of HUS have been reported in Washtenaw County.

Public Health reminds individuals to prevent the spread of foodborne illness by using proper hand washing, handling all foods carefully and avoiding cross contamination and cooking foods to appropriate temperatures. The Washtenaw County Public Health Fact Sheet on *E. coli* is available at: http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/public_health/phcontent/cd_fact_sheets/ecoli.pdf

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