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Dickinson-Iron District Health Department Kicks off National Radon Action Month

Kingsford and Iron River, Michigan, January 6, 2015 – The Health Department is working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in a nationwide campaign to educate Americans about the dangers of radon exposure and to encourage them to take action to protect their homes and families.

During the year 2013, the Health Department calculated an average of elevated radon levels in area homes. Of the 64 tests conducted, 37% were found to be elevated in Dickinson and Iron Counties. Radon is a naturally occurring, invisible, odorless, tasteless gas that is dispersed in outdoor air, but which can reach harmful levels when trapped in buildings. Scientists have long been concerned about the health risk of radon, but never before has there been such overwhelming proof that exposure to elevated levels of radon causes lung cancer in humans.

“The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that radon is responsible for more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths per year,” states Daren Deyaert, Environmental Health Director. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. after smoking and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. “However, because you can’t see or smell radon, people tend to downplay the health effects and ignore the possibility that there might be a silent killer in their homes,” states Deyaert.

Testing homes for elevated levels of radon is simple and inexpensive. Radon test kits can be purchased at local hardware and home improvement stores or directly from the Health Department. Many are priced under \$25.00. During the month of January, the Health Department is selling short-term test kits for \$5 and long-term kits for \$10; otherwise they sell for \$9 and \$22 respectively. Radon problems can be fixed by qualified contractors for a cost similar to that of many common home repairs such as painting or having a new water heater installed.

The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department urges area residents to take action during this year’s National Radon Action Month by testing their homes for radon. Radon poses a serious threat to our community’s health but there is a straightforward solution. For more information on radon, radon testing and mitigation, and radon-resistant new construction, call the Health Department at 779-7239 or 265-9913 or visit EPA’s National Radon Action Month Website at www.epa.gov/radon/nram.

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