

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **January is Radon Action Month in Michigan**

The Huron County Health Department encourages area residents to check the radon gas levels in their homes during Radon Action Month in Michigan. You cannot see, smell or taste radon, and there are no short-term side effects that could cause alarm or warn of its presence. However, long-term exposure to radon increases the risk of developing lung cancer, which accounts for more deaths in both men and women than any other form of cancer in the United States, according to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), which aims to increase awareness of health risks associated with elevated indoor radon levels, promote home testing and encourage citizens to take action to reduce exposure once elevated radon levels are found.

Behind smoking, radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer and considered a leading environmental cause of cancer deaths in the United States.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that radon is responsible for about 20,000 lung cancer deaths in the United States each year. The risk of lung cancer from radon exposure is higher for people who smoke than for people who don't smoke. However, the USEPA estimates that more than 10 percent of radon-related cancer deaths occur among people who have never smoked cigarettes.

Radon testing takes on increased importance due to many Michiganders now working from home. Testing is easy, inexpensive and the only way to determine if a radon problem exists. Residents are encouraged to test for radon every two to five years. If a radon mitigation system was previously installed in the home, residents are encouraged to test every two years to make sure that radon levels remain in the acceptable range.

One in every four Michigan homes is expected to have radon levels exceeding the federal action level of 4.0 picocuries per liter. Elevated radon levels have been found in all 83 Michigan Counties. Radon poses a serious threat to our community's health, but high radon concentrations also are easily fixed. Test kits are available year-round from the Health Department for \$11.00. During the month of January, however, the kits are available at no charge. Some hardware stores, home improvement centers, and other local retailers sell the do-it-yourself test kits. Professional testing services are also available, though they are most often used for testing as part of a real estate transaction. If elevated levels are found, they can be reduced with various ventilation techniques.

County residents are urged to pick up a free test kit from the Huron County Health Department Environmental Health Division during normal business hours through the month of January while supplies last. The Health Department is located at 1142 South Van Dyke, Bad Axe Michigan. Huron County Health Department partnered with McLaren Thumb Region this year and radon test kits will also be available for pick up Wednesday and Thursdays from 9:00 – 11:00 am at the McLaren Thumb Region Lobby.

Citizens interested in finding out more about radon can contact the Huron County Health Department at (989)269-3308, or log onto [www.michigan.gov/radon](http://www.michigan.gov/radon)