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## Critical health services in jeopardy

Ithaca, Stanton, St. Johns~ The Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD), along with other health departments in Michigan, contacted legislators before the Governor's May 5 Executive Order, urging them not to cut critical services.

What followed the announcement from the Governor's Office was a collective gasp of disbelief that could be heard all across the state.

"The Governor's cuts can be explained in one word: devastating," said Kimberly Singh, Health Officer for MMDHD. "We braced for the worst and hoped for the best. Now we are forced to make difficult decisions that will undoubtedly affect the basic health and welfare of the citizens of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.

While MMDHD doesn't yet know what additional services it will have to cut, it does know that providing even the most basic of services in this economy, with so many more citizens in need, will be nearly impossible.

Funding for basic programs such as childhood immunizations, sexually transmitted disease control and, most surprising, communicable disease control, were cut 25%. In light of the current and future threat of an influenza pandemic, it is unthinkable that communicable disease funding was cut. The local health department is the public's key line of defense against the rapid spread of pandemic influenza and other diseases.

Programs slated for elimination:

- Community-Based Dental Clinic in St. Johns- serving adults enrolled in Medicaid
- Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR)- focusing on childhood immunizations

Facing reduction in funding:

- Cardiovascular disease prevention
- Communicable disease control
- Restaurant inspections
- Groundwater protection
- Immunization clinics

"We simply cannot continue to provide the current level of services as a direct result of state-level cuts," said Singh. "We will do our best to keep as many programs as we can intact, but the bottom line is that critical programs are in jeopardy of being cut."

*Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.*

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