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CONTACT: Leslie Kinnee

989-831-3669, lkinne@mmdhd.org

Mid-Michigan District Health Department

615 N. State St., Stanton, MI 48888-9702, www.mmdhd.org

Winter is ideal time to test your home for Radon

Stanton~ The old saying, 'what you don't know can't hurt you' certainly doesn't apply when it comes to the presence of radon in your home.

Radon is a silent killer that invades nearly one in eight Michigan homes, according to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). It can't be seen, smelled or tasted and contrary to popular belief does not cause headaches, nausea, or fatigue. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, killing nearly 15,000 Americans each year and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas found in almost any kind of soil or rock. It travels through the ground to the air above, and into your home through cracks and other holes in the foundation, floor or walls. Any home – old or new – may have a radon problem.

"There is only one way to know for sure if your home has an unsafe level of radon," said Bruce Du Hamel, Environmental Health Division Director for the Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD), "and that is to test, and now is the ideal time."

The EPA recommends that every residence (except those above the second floor in multi-level buildings) be tested for radon by taking a short-term test first. Short-term test kits may be obtained at MMDHD free-of-charge. If the result is four picocuries per liter of air (4 pCi/l) or higher, you should follow up with a long-term test to measure the radon level's year-round average. Long-term kits are also available at MMDHD for \$20.60

If unsafe radon levels are found in your home it is very important that you take action to reduce those dangerous levels. The DEQ strongly suggests that people use a trained and certified radon mitigation (reduction) contractor who will guarantee results below 4 pCi/l.

To obtain a radon test kit, or a list of local certified radon remediation contractors visit MMDHD at 615 N State Street, Stanton between 8 a.m. – noon and 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. You may also visit MMDHD's website at www.mmdhd.org for more information or contact, Bryan Fowler MMDHD Environmental Health Specialist at 989-831-3636.

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

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