

## MEDIA RELEASE

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**Re:** January is Radon Action Month - Free Kits Available

The Genesee County Health Department (GCHD) encourages area residents to check the radon gas levels in their homes during National Radon Action Month. Governor Rick Snyder has proclaimed January 2017 as Radon Action Month in Michigan. The GCHD is offering free radon test kits in observance of this event.

The U.S. Surgeon General has issued a national health advisory on the risks of breathing radon gas in our homes. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. and is the leading cause among nonsmokers. Mark Valacak, MPH, Genesee County Health Officer, explains “Radon is an invisible, odorless and tasteless gas that seeps into homes from surrounding soil and rock. Radon exposure causes no immediate health symptoms, but can be very harmful. Residents are encouraged to get a free kit and test during the next few weeks.”

Outdoors, radon is diluted by the atmosphere. When radon gas becomes trapped in homes, it can be harmful at elevated levels. During cold weather, we spend more time indoors with windows closed, potentially breathing unhealthy levels of radon. Exposure over time can increase one’s risk of contracting lung cancer.

Radon levels vary from house to house and by geographic location. Elevated levels of radon have been detected in nearly every township in Genesee County. The only way to know if you have radon gas in your home is to test for it. During January the radon test kits are available at no charge. Throughout the rest of the year, the kits are available for \$6.00 each. Some hardware and home improvement stores sell do-it-yourself radon test kits. Professional testing services are also available for those interested. If elevated levels are found, homeowners should contact a licensed radon mitigation contractor. Radon levels can be reduced with various ventilation techniques by trained professionals.

County residents are urged to pick up a free radon test kit from the Genesee County Health Department during normal business hours throughout the month of January. The Environmental Health Office is located on the second floor of the McCree Court Building at 630 S. Saginaw Street in downtown Flint. The Environmental Health Office is open from 8am to 5pm, Monday through Friday. However, the office is closed from noon to 1:00 pm each day for lunch.

Citizens interested in finding out more about radon can contact the Radon Hotline at 1-800-RADON-GAS (1-800-743-6683), or log on to [http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,4561,7-135-3310\\_4105\\_4196---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,4561,7-135-3310_4105_4196---,00.html) or [www.gchd.us](http://www.gchd.us).

Genesee County Health Department. Your Health. Our Work.

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