

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, July 9, 2004 2:00pm

Contact/Phone: Rebecca Burns, Environmental Health Sanitarian 269-273-2161 x228

### **Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency**

**Memorial Park Beach on Messenger Lake to be CLOSED for swimming due to poor water quality as of 2:30pm today, July 9, 2004.**

*Routine sample for E-coli shows water over limit for bacteria*

The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency announced today that the Memorial Park Beach on Messenger Lake in Branch County will be CLOSED to swimmers as of 2:30pm today, July 9, 2004, due to elevated levels of E. coli bacteria. Laboratory tests taken earlier this week indicate an unsafe level of bacteria for swimmers. The threshold for E-coli in a public swimming area is a count of 300 per 100ml of water. The tested level this week was 404.8. The beach is being re-sampled by Community Health Agency staff this afternoon and will be tested locally at Regional Medical Laboratory in Battle Creek. Test results will be available by 5:30pm Saturday, July 10, 2004. If the re-sample shows levels have subsided to an acceptable level, the beach will be re-opened that day.

Water quality at public bathing/swimming beaches in Branch, Hillsdale, and St. Joseph counties is tested weekly between May 28th and September 3rd for E. coli bacteria. Beaches which are unsafe for bathing/swimming purposes are to be posted closed until further testing shows that it is safe for bathers/swimmers. You can find information about beach closings, monitoring efforts and *E. coli* test results at the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality web site.

To find out more about the statewide public beach monitoring program and to find information about a specific beach in your county, use the following internet address:

[www.deq.state.mi.us/beach/public/default.asp](http://www.deq.state.mi.us/beach/public/default.asp)

For additional local information about this program, please visit our web site at

[www.bhsj.org/eh/eh\\_beach.htm](http://www.bhsj.org/eh/eh_beach.htm)