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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**What You Can't See, Can Harm You!**

(Coldwater, MI) What you can't see, can harm you. Radon is a colorless, odorless, radioactive gas that gets trapped in buildings. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that radon is responsible for 21,000 cases of lung cancer cases each year. Six hundred of these cases occur in Michigan. According to Rebecca Burns, Environmental Health Director at the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency, "Radon gas is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer overall."

Radon levels are measured in picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L). A picocurie is a unit of measure for radiation. While no level of radon is considered safe, EPA recommends that action be taken when indoor air levels are 4 pCi/L or higher. In Michigan, eight counties have been identified as having a predicted average indoor radon screening level greater than 4 pCi/L (picocuries per liter). Branch, Hillsdale and St. Joseph Counties are among those eight counties.

Testing your home is the only way to know if you have a radon problem. Testing for radon is easy and inexpensive. If levels are found to be high, radon levels can be safely reduced at a minimal cost to homeowners. Free charcoal radon test kits are available from the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency. The charcoal kit tests for the presence of radon gas over a short period of time (3 to 7 days).

Governor Jennifer Granholm has declared October 17<sup>th</sup> to October 23<sup>rd</sup> to be Radon Action Week. She encourages all residents to learn more about this environmental health threat and to test their homes during the upcoming heating season. To find out more information about radon, go to the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency's website: <http://www.bhsj.org> and click on Frequently Asked Questions Sheets – Radon.

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