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****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

TO: LOCAL MEDIA SOURCES
FROM: JOEL R. STRASZ, HEALTH DIRECTOR
DATE: FEBRUARY 17, 2016
RE: LEAD TESTING IN BAY COUNTY

Due to concerns regarding the recent water crisis in Flint, many Bay County residents are wondering if they or their children are at risk for lead poisoning from municipal water sources. It is important to note that Bay County's municipal water source has been drawn from sources in the Saginaw Bay for the former Bay City Municipal Water Treatment Plant, with a change to a Lake Huron raw water source on August 31, 2015 with the opening of the new state-of-the-art Bay Area Water Treatment Plant. The water drawn from the lake to the water distribution system is much lower in corrosive properties than Flint River water, and the City of Bay City and, now the Bay County Department of Water and Sewer, have consistently utilized corrosion control measures to ensure that sources of lead (from existing service pipes or old lead solder) does not contaminate a home's water system. Although there are some existing lead service pipes in Bay County, required testing has demonstrated overall lead levels below EPA standards. Incidences of lead poisoning in children do occur in Bay County, but they are much more likely to be caused by decaying lead paint found in homes and residences, primarily in those built prior to 1978. Children may be exposed to lead during home renovation, from soil, toys, pottery, and home remedies. Lead at toxic levels effects a child's nervous system impairing development.

There are three things Bay County residents can do if they are concerned about lead poisoning and/or lead in their drinking water.

1. **Parents concerned about their children's blood lead levels** should contact their primary care provider to discuss if their child is at risk for lead exposure. If you are a recipient of WIC and Medicaid eligible, Blood Lead Testing is offered through the Bay County Health Department for children ages 1 through 5 years. If you are interested in your child receiving a lead screening test, please call 989-895-4002. If you do not have a primary care provider, and your child is not a

recipient of WIC, an appointment may be made with the University Clinic at 989-895-2035. A nurse will speak with you to determine if a test is necessary.

2. **Residents concerned if their home is connected to a lead service line** should contact their local municipality to determine if such a connection exists. In some cases, local municipalities may assist in collecting water samples, if they are deemed necessary. Local municipal offices are as follows:

City of Bay City (989) 894-8321

City of Essexville (989) 893-6101

City of Pinconning (989) 879-2360

Hampton Township (989) 892-7541

Bay Co. Dept. of Water and Sewer (989) 684-3883

3. **Residents who would like to get their home water tested for lead** can obtain kits from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's Laboratory via the Bay County Health Department. These residents should be advised that at a minimum, the price to have their water tested by the DEQ is at least \$18, plus shipping and handling. Persons interested in getting their water tested are advised to call the Environmental Health Division at 989-895-4006, ext.3.

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