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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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As Warmer Weather Arrives, Residents Urged to Take Precautions
Against Tick Bites and Tick-Borne Illnesses

As warmer weather approaches and outdoor activities increase, the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department (BLDHD) is reminding residents and visitors to take preventive steps against ticks, which can transmit serious illnesses including Lyme disease and anaplasmosis. According to BLDHD surveillance data from last year, there were 76 confirmed cases of Lyme disease and 30 confirmed cases of anaplasmosis locally.

"Ticks and the illnesses they transmit remain a year-round concern in our area, but risk increases significantly during the spring and summer months," said Dan Thorell, Health Officer for the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department. "Simple actions like using EPA-registered repellent, wearing protective clothing, and checking yourself and your pets after time outdoors can greatly reduce the chance of tick bites and subsequent disease."

Benzie and Leelanau counties are home to several species of ticks, including black-legged ticks, the primary vector for Lyme disease and anaplasmosis, and others that may carry additional pathogens. Ticks thrive in wooded, brushy, and tall grass environments, and even residential yards can pose a risk for exposure.

"Even with lingering winter-like weather, Lakeshore staff are already encountering ticks, as black-legged (deer) ticks remain active whenever temperatures are above freezing," said Scott Tucker, Superintendent, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. "You can reduce your exposure by staying on established trails, avoiding brush and tall grass, and using insect repellent on boots and pant legs. Always check yourself often and remove ticks quickly for early detection is one of the most effective ways to prevent tick-borne diseases."

Preventive tips from BLDHD include:

- Use insect repellent registered with the EPA on skin and clothing.
- Wear long sleeves, long pants, and closed-toe shoes when in tick habitat.
- Perform daily tick checks on yourself, children, and pets after outdoor activities.
- Shower soon after being outdoors to wash off unattached ticks.

Tick bites can transmit disease even without noticeable symptoms. If you experience fever, rash, fatigue, or other flu-like symptoms after a tick bite, contact your healthcare provider promptly.

For additional tick-borne disease information and prevention resources, visit [BLDHD's Vector-borne Disease Webpage](#).

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