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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Radon Action Month *Test Your Home for Invisible Danger*

Benzie and Leelanau County residents are reminded that January is National Radon Action Month. Radon is a naturally occurring, invisible, odorless gas that can seep into homes and raise the risk of lung cancer. In Michigan, about one in four homes is expected to have radon levels above the federal safety guideline of 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L).

"Radon may be unseen, but its health risk is real. Every home and community building should be tested every two years," said Dr. Joshua Meyerson, Medical Director, Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department.

What is Radon and Why It Matters

Radon gas comes from the breakdown of uranium, thorium, and radium in the soil beneath homes and buildings. It rises through the ground and can enter indoor spaces through small cracks in foundations, floors, or walls. Once inside, radon can build up to harmful levels. Long-term exposure to elevated radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S., after smoking.

Local Data

In our region, testing data show that in Benzie County about 10% of homes tested had radon levels at or above 4 pCi/L. In Leelanau County, about 12% of homes tested were at or above this level. This means that many homes in both counties may have unsafe radon levels, and the only way to know is to test.

What You Can Do

To encourage action, the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department, in partnership with the Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance, is hosting a special campaign: Donate a Can, Get a Radon Kit.

Beginning January 2nd, 2026, residents can bring a non-expired, non-perishable food can or item to our office, and you'll receive a free radon test kit. If you don't bring a donation, you may still pick up a kit free of charge while supplies last. All food collected will be distributed to local food pantries in Benzie and Leelanau counties.

Testing your home is simple: place the kit in the lowest lived-in level of your home for the time recommended (usually 2-7 days). If the test result is 4 pCi/L or higher, fix the radon problem by hiring a qualified mitigator or using a certified contractor. The only way to know if your home has a radon issue is to test, it cannot be seen, smelled or tasted.

Why This Matters Now

Winter is a good time to test because homes are often closed up and radon is more likely to build up. Since radon exposure is preventable, and testing is inexpensive, this month is an excellent time to act.

For free test kits, campaign details, or more information about radon risks and mitigation: visit www.bldhd.org.

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