



Kalamazoo County

Health & Community Services

Linda Vail Buzas, MPA
Director, Health Officer

To: Health Care Providers

From: Linda Buzas, MPA
Director/Health Officer

Richard Tooker, MD, MPH
Chief Medical Officer

We need your help!
Report patients with illness related to
the Calhoun County oil spill by:

Calling 800-222-1222
Faxing report to 313-745-5493

Subject: Public health reporting of patients with illness related to exposure to oil from the spill into the Kalamazoo River starting July 25.

Date: August 4, 2010

Public health in Calhoun and Kalamazoo Counties and the Michigan Department of Community Health urgently need information to understand the impact of the oil spill on human health. Accordingly, we are requesting that health care providers report patients with symptoms associated with exposure to oil or oil vapors from the spill. The CDC reports that inhalation of fresh crude oil could result in inhalation of associated volatile hydrocarbons. Symptoms including headache, dizziness, confusion, nausea, or vomiting, may occur from breathing vapors given off by crude oil.

This public health reporting is authorized under the state's Public Health Code (R 325.71-75), and you do not need patient consent to report. You are required by law to release this information. Copies of the Michigan public health reporting law and the section of federal HIPAA regulations that specifically exempts this type of public health disclosure are posted at www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxic (scroll down to "Calhoun County Oil Spill – information for health care providers"). Be assured that patient information will be kept strictly confidential according to procedures in place for all public health reporting and surveillance.

The Michigan Poison Control Center has been granted authority to act as the legal agent of the State to collect case reports. You can report by phone: 1-800-222-1222 (staffed 24/7); by email to ssmolins@dmc.org; or by fax to 313-745-5493 using the enclosed reporting form. The form is also posted at the oil spill website noted above, where it can be downloaded and completed electronically.

Because the oil spill is affecting several jurisdictions, the Michigan Department of Community Health is taking the lead in coordinating the public health surveillance aspect of the oil spill response. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the MDCH Division of Environmental Health at 517-335-8350.

Thank you and we appreciate your cooperation.

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