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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Health Officials Urge People to Be Careful When Viewing Solar Eclipse

August 17, 2017 - Health Officials with the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department are spreading the word about using suitable eye-protection to view the Solar Eclipse this coming Monday, August 21st between 1pm and 4pm. "This is especially dangerous as people will want to stare at the sun for minutes at a time to capture this moment", says Debbie Aldridge, Personal Health Supervisor with the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department. "Looking into the sun directly at any time, even when the sun is partially blocked, can permanently damage your eyes, causing loss of central vision, distorted vision, and altered color vision. If anyone experiences these symptoms, they should immediately contact their healthcare provider or eye doctor," Says Aldridge.

However, wearing suitable eye-protection can prevent damage. Officials urge people to not wear sunglasses, but rather specific "eclipse-glasses" that have special-purpose filters to block the sun's harmful rays when viewing the eclipse. There are many "eclipse-glasses" available in stores, but make sure they have an "ISO" label on them as these are approved viewing glasses. In addition, viewing the eclipse through binoculars, a camera, or telescope while wearing "eclipse-glasses" is strongly discouraged as the concentrated solar rays through these devices can damage the glasses' filter and enter your eyes.

For more information on the Solar Eclipse and safe viewing, you may go to NASA's website at www.nasa.gov or the Grand Traverse Astronomical Society at www.gtastro.org.