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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NATIONAL WATER SAFETY MONTH

Are You Beach Ready?

Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department (BLDHD), along with the Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance (NMPHA), are prepping for summer fun by promoting National Water Safety Month. National Water Safety Month emphasizes the importance of water safety by promoting safe swimming practices.

BLDHD, in cooperation with partners at The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay, EGLE, MDHHS, and throughout the jurisdiction, test the water quality of our beaches for several hazards, including E. coli, and monitor them for the presence of harmful algae blooms (HAB).

"When E. coli levels get too high, it can cause flu-like symptoms, skin infections, and upper respiratory illnesses," said Dr. Joshua Meyerson, Medical Director for Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department. "HABs can also be harmful to humans and can be fatal to pets. When a test comes back with elevated E. coli levels, or confirms the presence of a HAB, we issue a No Water Contact Advisory and have signs posted where the samples were collected. Testing continues until the HAB is no longer present or the E. coli levels have been reduced to a safe level. Residents can check on their beach or lake by visiting [EGLE's MiEnviro site](#)."

National Water Safety Month is also a good time to consider water safety tips for when the beaches are safe for swimming.

"It only takes a moment to drown," said Dan Thorell, Health Officer for Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department. "Having good water competency helps everyone avoid common dangers, especially in unfamiliar water."

The Red Cross highlights a few water safety tips residents can use:

- Swim sober
- Know your limitations
- Never swim alone
- Wear an appropriate, US Coast Guard approved life jacket when boating
- Know how to call for help
- Understand unique risk of bodies of water (river currents, water temperature, shallow/deep water, and underwater hazards).

To learn more about Water Safety, please visit: <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/water-safety.html>.

To view Beach Advisories on BLDHD website, please visit: <https://bldhd.org/beach-monitoring/>

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