



Contact: Sue Fuller, Winnebago County Health Department, Public Information Officer, 815-720-4213

Date: Thursday, January 7, 2016

For Immediate Release

Protecting our Communities Health in Their Homes
Residents are urged to test homes for radon, the second leading cause of lung cancer in U.S

The Winnebago County Health Department (WCHD) is working with the US Environmental Health Protection Agency (EPA) in a nationwide campaign to educate citizens about the dangers of radon exposure and to encourage them to take action to protect their homes and families during national Radon Awareness Month in January.

Due to the geology in the area, Winnebago County is considered “at risk” for high levels of radon gas. Radon gas is the radioactive decay from Uranium deposits found in rock, soil and water, which is naturally occurring, invisible, odorless, tasteless gas that is dispersed in outdoor air, but which can reach harmful levels when trapped in buildings. Radon is present at elevated levels in about 40% or 2 out of every 5 homes in Winnebago County. Scientists have long been concerned about the health risk of radon, but never before has there been such overwhelming proof that exposure to elevated levels of radon causes lung cancer in humans.

The U.S. Environmental Health Protection Agency estimates radon is responsible for more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths per year. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. after smoking and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. “However” says Winnebago County Health Department Environmental Health Improvement Director, Todd Marshall, “because you can’t see or smell radon, people tend to downplay the health effects and ignore the possibility that there might be a silent killer in their homes.”

“Testing homes for elevated levels of radon is simple and inexpensive. The Winnebago County Health Department’s Environmental Health Improvement Center has a Radon Gas Monitor for homeowners to check-out for two to seven days. This monitor will allow a homeowner to easily determine if their home is safe from radon. This is a screening and awareness tool only,” added Todd Marshall. A deposit of \$25.00 is required to check-out the monitor and will be given back when the screening device is returned the Department.

For more information on the Radon Gas Monitor, call the Winnebago County Health Department’s Radon Specialist, Sheila Jascemskas at 815-720-4125, or visit the Winnebago County Health Department website at www.wchd.org. Like us: facebook.com/Winnebago County Health Department. Follow us: twitter.com/Winncohealth. Or Contact us at Winnebago County Health Department 401 Division Street, PO Box 4009, Rockford, Illinois 61110, or by phone at 815-720-4000.

###