STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

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GOVERNOR

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Community and state partnerships expand as free bottled water continues to be provided to City of Benton Harbor residents

LANSING, Mich. – Free bottled water distribution continues for City of Benton Harbor residents announced the Michigan Department of Health and Humans Services (MDHHS) today. Since Sept. 30, 33,591 cases of water have been distributed with additional shipments scheduled for delivery to the city.

Free bottled water is being offered out of an abundance of caution and residents are being encouraged to use bottled water for cooking, drinking, brushing teeth, rinsing foods and mixing powdered infant formula.

MDHHS is engaging in a long-term effort to eliminate lead action level exceedances, educate communities on the effects of lead in drinking water, and remove lead service lines. MDHHS is honored to be working with numerous partners across the city to help distribute water to Benton Harbor residents, including the community's religious leaders. Today, Abundant Life Church of God in Christ served as a bottled water distribution point and handed out over 3,000 cases of water.

"It's been a great opportunity partnering with the Governor's office in this collaborative effort to rid every resident of their lead lines," said Pastor Duane Seats of the Abundant Life Church of God in Christ. "We are committed to working with everyone to correct the problems that exist in Benton Harbor. This is not a one-person fix, and it's going take a team starting with the Governor's office, the city residents, city government and all the neighbors and all the partners that want to work to fix this problem. I'm excited because we're not taking this fight against lead sitting down. Abundant Life Church of God in Christ is committed until the end to see our city residents through this. It's going to work, but it's going to take time."

"Working collaboratively with community leaders, local organizations, and Benton Harbor residents is critical to our collective success moving forward," said Elizabeth Hertel, MDHHS Director. "While the city works hand-in-hand with state and federal partners to replace lead service lines, MDHHS is committed to ensuring the residents of Benton Harbor have access to clean water in partnership with the men and women who call Benton Harbor home and deserve to remain front and center throughout this entire effort."

Distribution is at the following locations and times:

Thursday, Oct. 14

- Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency, 331 Miller Street, Benton Harbor
    - 4 – 6 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 15

- God's Household of Faith, 275 Pipestone, Benton Harbor
    - 2 – 6 p.m.

Additional dates and locations for bottled water pick up will be added to make sure community needs are met. Information will be posted on Michigan.gov/MiLeadSafe.

For more information, or to speak to someone to arrange water delivery please contact 211 which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Residents can also call the Berrien County Health Department water hotline at 800-815-5485, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. to schedule drop-offs.

For questions about lead, MDHHS can be reached at 866-691-5323 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

This action is part of an accelerated, across-the-board effort to reduce the risk of exposure to lead in drinking water while the city replaces all lead service lines. This collaborative effort includes the City of Benton Harbor, the Berrien County Health Department, local community organizations, MDHHS and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy.

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