To: Local Newspaper Editors
From: Melissa DeRoche, Health Educator/PIO
RE: National Preparedness Month
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September is National Preparedness Month
Prepare Your Family Now

Get an emergency supply kit. Make a family emergency plan. Be informed. Get involved. Follow these four steps and prepare your family for emergencies that may happen. This September marks the 5th annual National Preparedness Month, which is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Ready Campaign.

When creating an emergency supply kit for your family, begin by stocking enough items in your kit to last for 3 days. Items to place in your emergency supply kit may include: a flashlight and extra batteries, a battery powered radio and extra batteries, a first aid kit, a map of the area that indicates roadways and rivers, which may aid in evacuation, a compass, a whistle to signal for help, cash (ATM and banks may not work), a utility knife (no exposed blades), matches in a waterproof container, a change of clothes for each family member, a sleeping bag or warm blanket for each family member, food (canned food and a can opener, dry food that will not expire), a gallon of water per person per day, pet food, prescription medications, copies of birth certificates, passports, licenses, and wills, and a list of phone numbers of relatives or emergency contacts. It is suggested that you create an emergency supply kit for your house and one that you can easily take with you if you have to evacuate and go to a shelter or a safe location.

Keeping an up-to-date list of phone numbers for family members, neighbors, family doctors, your veterinarian, school and daycare is all part of a family emergency plan. In addition, writing down medical information about each family member is another good idea. Another component of a plan is to designate a meeting place for your family in case you become separated in an emergency.

Being informed about potential disasters in your area is another step to preparedness. Many websites offer educational information on a wide variety of topics surrounding
emergencies/disasters. Helpful websites include: Ready Campaign (www.ready.gov), The Michigan Department of Community Health preparedness site (www.michigan.gov/prepares), American Red Cross (www.redcross.org) and Central Michigan District Health Department (www.cmdhd.org.)

Being involved is the last step to preparing your family. Become involved in local efforts in your community by becoming a member of your local Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT), Neighborhood Watch Program or American Red Cross chapter. In Michigan, you can also become a registered volunteer through the Michigan Volunteer Registry (www.mivolunteerregistry.org).

This article has been provided by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the local residents of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon counties.

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