To: Local News Media

From: Dr. Robert Graham, Medical Director, Central Michigan District Health Department

RE: Meningococcal Death

Release Date: May 8, 2008 at 5:35 p.m.

CMU Student Dies From N. Meningitis

Mt. Pleasant - Central Michigan District Health Department has just learned of a death of a CMU student. The cause of death has been identified as bacterial meningitis. The department wishes to extend sympathy to the family of LaMott Smith. Mr. Smith was visiting the Coopersville area when he became ill. Central Michigan and Ottawa County health officials are identifying close personal contacts of the student in both Coopersville and Mt. Pleasant areas. Close personal contacts can be defined as a roommate, household member or someone that has shared beverages or eating utensils. Health officials are advising a course of antibiotics to prevent infection.

Bacterial Meningitis is an infection caused by a germ which affects the tissue around the brain and spinal cord. Airborne droplets from the nose or throat of a person with the bacteria can spread the disease to others who have been in close contact with the infected, such as a household member or a girlfriend or boyfriend. In addition, the bacteria can be spread by sharing eating utensils or drinks with someone who is infected. The bacteria are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. Vaccination is the best form of protection and is recommended for college students. Symptoms may include a sudden onset of flu-like symptoms, stiff neck, headache, nausea and seizures. If untreated, it can result in coma or death.

Health officials are asking anyone who has come into close contact with Mr. Smith between the dates of April 22, 2008 and May 7, 2008 or know of his whereabouts/activity schedule between those dates to contact the Central Michigan District Health Department at (989) 773-5921 ext. 134. This is important information to know to assist in getting antibiotics to those who need it. Close personal contacts can be defined as a roommate, household member or someone that has shared beverages or eating utensils.

If anyone is experiencing the symptoms listed above, please seek medical attention immediately.

The Central Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon counties.

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