Central Michigan
District Health Department
Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities

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PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

To: **Local Media**

From: **Central Michigan District Health Department**

RE: **SepticSmart Week 2019**

Release Date: **September 17, 2019**

SepticSmart Week 2019

The Central Michigan District Health Department (CMDHD), the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE), and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), recognize September 16-20, 2019 as SepticSmart week. This annual event focuses on educating homeowners and communities on the proper care and maintenance of their septic systems.

More than one-fifth of U.S. households and over half of households in the CMDHD jurisdiction depend on individual onsite sewage systems to treat their wastewater. These systems have to treat and safely dispose of all of the wastewater generated in a house. A typical family of four will create 12,000 gallons of wastewater in a month. This is 144,000 gallons a year that must be processed through a septic tank and discharged into the soil in a manner that prevents contaminating our groundwater and surface waters with bacteria, viruses, and nutrients.

Onsite sewage treatment systems provide a cost-effective, long-term option for treating wastewater, particularly in sparsely populated areas. When properly installed, operated, and maintained, these systems help protect public health, preserve valuable water resources, and maintain a community's economic vitality.

The EPA's SepticSmart initiative is a nationwide public education effort. EPA offers educational resources to homeowners, local organizations, and government leaders to explain how septic systems work and provide tips on how to properly maintain them. Some helpful tips to maintain your sewage treatment system include:

DO:

- Learn the location of your septic tank and drainfield

- Pump your septic tank every 3-5 years by a licensed septage hauler. If needed, pump your tank now before the cold weather makes pumping difficult and sometimes more expensive.
- Keep your tank accessible for future maintenance
- Keep a detailed record of pumps and maintenance
- Conserve water
- Repair leaking plumbing fixtures such as toilets tanks
- Use water efficiently, stagger water use throughout the day and week.
- Do laundry through the week instead of doing all of it on one day.

DO NOT:

- Do not discard harmful chemicals down your drains such as paints, gasoline, fats, grease or solids that can clog drains.
- Do not flush trash down the toilet bowl such as diapers, disposable wipes, feminine hygiene products, coffee grounds, cigarette butts, or cat litter.
- Do not drive, park, or run any machinery over your septic tank and drainfield.

It is easy to forget a properly operating sewage treatment systems needs care too. The ability of a system to treat wastewater can slow down as the system ages or if it has been subject to intended or unintended abuse. Remember, the purpose of your septic system is to dispose of and treat gray (sink) water and black (toilet) wastes. Anything else is poison to the system and poison to the ground water.

SepticSmart Week 2019 encourages homeowners, wastewater professionals, and state, tribal, and local officials to design and maintain effective systems. These systems promote public health, water conservation, and economic well-being. Be part of the solution by visiting www.epa.gov/septic for an abundance of resources and information.

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon. Visit our website at www.cmdhd.org, LIKE Central Michigan District Health Department on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @CMiDHD.

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