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BAY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT ISSUES ADVISORIES FOR THREE HEALTHY BEACHES PROGRAM SAMPLING LOCATIONS

Enterococci bacteria levels high at Delwood Beach, Beach Drive, and Dupont Bridge

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Panama City, Fla. – The Bay County Health Department, Bay CHD, conducts saltwater beach water quality monitoring in accordance with the Healthy Beaches Monitoring Program. New funding now allows weekly water sampling between March and October. The samples are checked for enteric bacteria that normally inhabit the intestinal tract of humans and animals. The presence of enteric bacteria can be an indication of fecal pollution, which may come from storm water runoff, pets and wildlife, and human sewage. Poor results are posted as an “Advisory” at the affected beaches.

Advisories have been issued for the Delwood Beach (SP 8) located at end of Jan Cooley Drive, Upper Grand Lagoon, Beach Drive (SP 10) located at US-98 West Beach Drive, and Dupont Bridge (SP 11) located at the end of Oakshore Drive, Panama City.

Healthy Beaches advisories are issued to protect swimmers from increased risk of gastrointestinal illnesses. At a lower occurring level, there may also be increased risks of upper respiratory infections, skin rashes, and ear infections. Healthy Beach advisories are not related to Necrotizing fasciitis, a rare complication.

Bay CHD tests six sites along the Gulf of Mexico from Laguna Beach to Panama City Beach access #1. There are four locations along St. Andrews Bay including; Delwood Beach, Carl Grey Park, Beach Drive, and Dupont Bridge. Sampling is done on Mondays with results on Tuesday, with exception of holidays. Results are shared at Bay.FloridaHealth.gov, through media releases, and real-time on the Florida Healthy Beaches page at FloridaHealth.gov and search for “Healthy Beaches”.

Florida Healthy Beaches Program Categories are; Good = 0-35 Enterococci per 100 milliliters of marine water, Moderate = 36-70 Enterococci per 100 milliliters of marine water, and Poor = 71 or greater Enterococci per 100 milliliters of marine water. If levels are above 70, Bay CHD
notifies the local Florida Department of Environmental Protection for further investigation.

If you have any questions, please contact the Bay County Health Department at 850-481-4806 or visit the Department of Health’s Internet Beach Water Quality website at http://www.floridahealth.gov/healthy-environments/beach-water-quality/index.html.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board, works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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