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## DOH-BAY HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE OF HANDWASHING ON GLOBAL HANDWASHING DAY

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**Panama City, Fla.**— The COVID-19 pandemic provides an important reminder that one of the most effective ways to stop the spread of germs and stay healthy is also one of the simplest- handwashing with soap and water. Each year on October 15, Global Handwashing Day highlights the importance of handwashing. The Florida Department of Health in Bay County (DOH-Bay) is highlighting this important public health prevention action.

"Keeping hands clean can prevent 1 in 3 diarrheal illnesses and 1 in 5 respiratory infections, such as cold or the flu", said Sandon S. Speedling, MHS, CPM, CPH, Administrator and Health Officer for DOH-Bay.

This year's theme is "Hand Hygiene for All" in hopes of seeking to increase awareness of making soap and water available in public places. Many germs that can make people sick are spread when we don't wash our hands. Handwashing is especially important after using the bathroom, before preparing food, before eating and after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.

DOH-Bay along with our partners focus on handwashing education which can help reduce the number of people who get sick with diarrhea by 23-40%, absences in schools due to gastrointestinal illness by 29-57% and respiratory illnesses like colds by 16-21%. Free education materials are available for partners, clients and residents. To download them, visit http://ww11.doh.state.fl.us/comm/_partners/handwashing/. The CDC also offers resources and materials to promote handwashing available at https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/materials.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fhandwashing%2Fresources.html.

To learn more about Global Handwashing Day visit https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/global-handwashing-day.html or https://globalhandwashing.org/global-handwashing-day/.

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