



Genesee County Health Department

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Release Date: November 15, 2007 End Date: November 19, 2007

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RE: **Giving Thanks: November 19 Honors Public Health Heroes**

November 19 marks the nation's third annual Public Health Thank You Day.

As Thanksgiving approaches, The Genesee County Health Department and leading U.S. public health organizations ask Americans to give special thanks to their state and local "public health heroes" who protect the nation's health throughout the year. These everyday heroes include our public health nurses, environmental sanitarians, epidemiologists, health educators, emergency preparedness coordinators, nutritionists, hearing and vision technicians, laboratory technicians, researchers, community activists, and many others.

Joining the Genesee County Health Department in promoting this day of thanks are the American Public Health Association, the Association of Schools of Public Health, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, and the National Association of County & City Health Officials.

Together, these organizations have designated the Monday before Thanksgiving as Public Health Thank You Day to honor the state and local public health professionals who protect and safeguard our lives and our health every day.

"Public health work takes many forms that protect our lives each day," said Robert M. Pestronk, Health Officer for Genesee County. "Every day, in every corner of Genesee County, our local public health professionals protect people from ordinary health threats such as unsafe food and communicable diseases as well as extraordinary health threats such as flu pandemics.

"We all owe a debt of gratitude to our governmental public health professionals and their advocates at the local, state and federal level," Pestronk said. "They devote their lives to building healthier communities in which we can live safely."

Most Americans understand the important 'protection' work of public health. Less appreciated are the prevention and health promotion work carried out by public health departments. All three – protection, prevention, and promotion – are essential to enable our children to succeed in school and grow into healthy adults who contribute to a healthy economy, Pestronk said.

Whether they are preparing to respond to a public health emergency, testing beach water for harmful bacteria, immunizing local residents, reducing infant deaths, investigating and stopping disease outbreaks, providing nutrition counseling to families in need, or inspecting your favorite restaurants, your local public health heroes are protecting you. Take a moment to say "thank you" on November 19th, Public Health Thank You Day.

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