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PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 4, 2011

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DPHS Releases Drinking Water Radiation Tests Results for Six Cities and Towns

New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services Celebrates National Public Health Week

Concord, NH - The Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) Radiochemistry Laboratory has completed testing and analysis of surface water samples that were collected late last week to determine if any Fukushima-related radiation was present. These samples were collected from Concord, Nashua, Laconia, Manchester, Portsmouth, and Keene.

The drinking water samples collected from the cities and towns were screened and analyzed for the presence of radioiodine, I-131, and/or other nuclear power plant–related radionuclides. Radioanalytical testing done on the drinking water samples did not detect any I-131 activity or any other radionuclide related to a nuclear power plant release above the Minimum Detectable Activity.

Department of Environmental Services (DES) staff collected the samples and worked with DPHS to facilitate reporting of the test results. This rapid response was successful due to the collaboration of these two agencies.

"As is evident from our own sampling and as the national expert agencies such as the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Environmental Protection Agency have advised, the radiation released from the Fukushima nuclear accident in Japan does not pose a direct risk to the citizens of New Hampshire," said José Montero, Director of Public Health. "However, there is public concern that must be addressed and we wanted to assure the public that our drinking water is safe. We determined that one way to do that was to increase our usual sampling efforts of drinking water. We will continue to do so until the accident in Japan is under full control."

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DPHS also reports that a fresh snow sample collected and analyzed over the weekend showed trace amounts of Iodine-131 (18 picocuries per liter or pCi/L). The Minimum Detectable Activity (MDA) for I-131 in this sample was 8 pCi/L. A previous measure reported on March 28 showed 40 pCi/L. Neither of these levels is considered a public health risk.

These recommendations are one of the topics DHHS is focusing on this week in recognition of National Public Health Week; for more information go to www.nphw.org. For more information about radiation and the crisis in Japan, visit the following sites: State of New Hampshire readiness www.nh.gov/readynh, NH Department of Health and Human Services www.dhhs.nh.gov, US Federal Emergency Management Agency www.fema.gov, US Food and Drug Administration www.fda.gov.

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