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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 7/17/20

## **PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY**

### **Heat and Humidity Returns in Worcester this Weekend**

**SHREWSBURY** - Dangerous heat conditions are forecasted for this weekend and into the beginning of next week. The Worcester Division of Public Health is issuing the following Public Health Alert. Residents are urged to take appropriate precautions to avoid heat-related emergencies.

Conditions of extreme heat are defined as summertime temperatures that are substantially hotter and/or more humid than average for location at that time of year. Humid or muggy conditions, which add to the discomfort of high temperatures, occur when a "dome" of high atmospheric pressure traps hazy, damp air near the ground. Summertime activity, whether on the playing field or the construction site, must be balanced with measures that aid the body's cooling mechanisms and prevent heat-related illness.

"Individuals suffer heat-related illness when their bodies are unable to compensate and properly cool themselves," stated Medical Director, Michael Hirsh, M.D. "Several factors affect the body's ability to cool itself during extremely hot weather. When the humidity is high, sweat will not evaporate as quickly, preventing the body from releasing heat quickly. In such cases, a person's body temperature rises rapidly and individuals are in extreme danger of becoming very ill."

The elderly, the very young and people with mental illness and chronic diseases are at highest risk. However, any individual can succumb to heat if they participate in strenuous physical activities during hot weather.

#### **TIPS TO PREVENT HEAT RELATED ILLNESS**

- Never leave infants, children, elderly or pets unattended in a parked car.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Don't wait until you're thirsty.
- Dress in lightweight, loose-fitting clothes. Use a hat and sunscreen as needed.
- Drink fruit juice or a sports beverage to replace salts and minerals lost during heavy sweating.
- During the hottest parts of the day, keep physical activities to a minimum and stay indoors in air-conditioning and out of the sun.
- Use fans as needed.
- Open windows to allow fresh air to circulate when appropriate.
- Use cool compresses, misting, showers and baths.
- Avoid hot foods and heavy meals—they add heat to the body. Eat frozen treats.

## Heat Stroke and Heat Exhaustion

Heat stroke, which occurs when the body can't control its temperature, may result in disability or death if emergency treatment is not given. Heat exhaustion occurs when the body loses a large amount of water and salt contained in sweat.

Warning signs of heat stroke vary, but may include:

- An extremely high body temperature (above 103 degrees Fahrenheit, orally)
- Unconsciousness
- Dizziness, nausea and confusion
- Red, hot and dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache

Warning signs of heat exhaustion vary, but may include:

- Heavy sweating
- Weakness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Paleness, tiredness, dizziness
- Muscle Cramps

## WHAT TO DO

If you see any of these signs for heat stroke or heat exhaustion, you may be dealing with a life-threatening emergency and should do the following:

- Again, get medical assistance as soon as possible.
- Get the individual to a shady area.
- Cool the victim rapidly with a cool bath or shower or by sponging with cool water until body temperature drops to 101-102 degrees Fahrenheit, orally.