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July 13, 2021

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Health Department Announces First Annual Pool Safely Day on July 15 to Promote Water Safety

**DuPage County**— On Thursday, July 15, 2021, the DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) and more than 30 Illinois agencies and organizations will participate in the first annual Pool Safely Day to raise public awareness around water safety and prevent child drownings.

“As families enjoy beaches, pools, lakes, and other bodies of water, we urge parents and caregivers to be particularly vigilant and Pool Safely to keep children safe and avoid any potential tragedies this summer,” said Karen Ayala, Executive Director of DuPage County Health Department.

Drowning continues to be a leading cause of unintentional death for children. This year, six Illinois children have drowned in pools or open water, according to news media reports. Of these tragic deaths, four were pool-related and among children ages 1 to 5. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reports that across the nation, between 2016 and 2018, 75 percent of reported fatal drownings involved children under age five, and the majority of these drownings occurred in residential pools.

Additionally, 18 Illinois children, ages 1 to 16, have fatally drowned since June of 2020. It is of note that 16 of the 18 Illinois children who drowned were boys. Children (ages 6 to 11) and adolescents (ages 12 to 17) are more likely to drown in open water, such as retention ponds, rivers, inland lakes, and Lake Michigan. This Pool Safely Day there is one focus, to keep children safer when around water. Parents and caregivers are reminded to follow Pool Safely’s [simple steps](#):

- Teach children how to swim. Infant, child, adult, group, and adapted swim lessons are offered at pools throughout our region.
- Never leave a child unattended in or near water. If a young child is missing, check the water first.
- Designate a focused adult Water Watcher to supervise children who are swimming. Children of all ages must be taught not to enter the water unless a Water Watcher is present.

Established in 1945, DuPage County Health Department promotes physical and emotional health; prevents illness injury and disability; protects health from environmental risk factors, and strives to assure the provision of accessible, quality service.

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- Ensure that any pool or spa/hot tub that you use has drain covers that meet federal safety standards.
- Avoid entrapment by teaching children to stay away from pool drains and pipes. Keep long hair, bathing suit straps, and drawstrings away from drains.
- Prevent children from accessing the water by installing door alarms, pool motion sensors, and fencing around all four sides of swimming pools.
- Ensure older children and teens wear a life jacket and stay away from powerful currents in lakes and rivers. Only swim where a lifeguard is present.

In 2021, DCHD was awarded a second federal grant from the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). Through the Pool Safely 10M initiative, DCHD aims to prevent child drowning through regional education, awareness, and professional training.

Together, we can prevent child drowning – on Pool Safely Day and every day.

For more information, visit [www.dupagehealth.org/231/Pool-Safely](http://www.dupagehealth.org/231/Pool-Safely).

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