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**For Immediate Release**

## DuPage County Health Department Announces Protect Swimmers Day on Thursday July 21, 2022

**DuPage County** - On Protect Swimmers Day, there is one focus, to keep children safer by water. Residents are urged to make water safety a priority and to take steps to protect children from drowning. On July 21st, DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) brought together, organizations, businesses, and swimming facilities across metro Chicago to raise community awareness about child and adolescent drowning risk factors and preventive strategies.

On Protect Swimmers Day, we honor the life of Anna Faye Trent, who fatally drowned in a lifeguarded pool one week after her fourth birthday. Anna's family created the 4ANNA Foundation to prevent child drowning. Eighteen Illinois children fatally drowned in pools and open water in 2021. Since March 2021, three adult caregivers from Illinois fatally drowned while rescuing young swimmers from deep open water.

Data collected on this issue reveals that drowning is the leading cause of unintentional death among children ages 1-4. Drownings occur during both planned swimming times and non-swim times. Deaths of children ages 1-4 are more likely in swimming pools, while older children and teens are at greater risk of open water drowning in ponds, rivers, small lakes, great lakes, and the ocean. Additionally, boys are more likely than girls to drown. From a racial/ethnic perspective, children who are African American/Black and Hispanic/Latinx are at greater risk of drowning, and it is believed that reasons for this disparity include less exposure to aquatic environments and swim instruction.

Adult caregivers are urged to practice the following water safety steps to prevent drowning:

- **Teach children to swim and to self-rescue.** Important skills include learning how to keep your nose and mouth above water, how to propel forward, how to exit the water, and how to float to self-rescue in deep water or strong currents. Children of all ages must be taught not to enter the water unless a focused adult is nearby
- **Make sure pools and hot tubs you use have VBGA compliant suction outlet drain covers.** Swimmers should keep their bodies, fingers and toes, hair, and straps away from suction outlets in pools
- **Prevent children from accessing the water by using layers of protection.** This includes 4-foot fencing around all four sides of pools, self-locking gates, door alarms, and pool motion sensors. Fencing is very important if your home's back door opens to a pool or spa.
- **Wear life jackets in open water.** When swimming or boating in open water, all swimmers should wear a life jacket and avoid powerful currents.

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

Together, we can prevent child drowning – on Protect Swimmers Day and all year long. Visit [dupagehealth.org](http://dupagehealth.org) for more information.

**STAY SAFE  
DUPAGE**



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.