FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JANUARY IS NATIONAL RADON ACTION MONTH
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January is National Radon Action Month. The goal of National Radon Action Month is to increase public awareness of radon, promote radon testing and mitigation, and advance the use of radon-resistant new construction practices. Ultimately, an increased public awareness will save lives from radon-induced lung cancer.

The Environmental Protection Agency found that Monongalia County (MC) has a high potential for elevated levels of radon indoors (http://geopub.epa.gov/Radon/), so it is especially important to test your home and/or business for high radon levels if you live or work in MC. Homes or businesses that have radon levels of 4.0 pCi/l (picocuries per liter) or higher should install a system to reduce the amount of radon gas in the atmosphere.

Radon is a gas that cannot be seen, smelled or tasted. Radon is the result of radioactive metals breaking down in rocks, soil and groundwater. Exposure to radon occurs primarily by inhaling the air that comes through cracks and gaps in buildings and homes. Radon comes naturally from the earth, so exposure to small doses of the gas is constant. The amount of exposure that occurs is the critical issue in determining health consequences; therefore, it is important to test your home or business for radon. Exposure to high levels of radon over time increases the risk of lung cancer which may take years to appear. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer, after cigarette smoking, and accounts for more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths per year in the United States.

Joseph Lawson, MCHD Sanitarian said, “Radon gas breaks down and emits radioactive energy to the lungs when inhaled. After many years of exposure, it can cause Lung Cancer. Many people are not aware that radon is present in this county at a higher rate than usual. If you have high radon levels in your home or business, you could be receiving harmful doses of radiation. Testing for radon is the only way to measure the presence of radon. Radon testing is easy and inexpensive and if you test for high levels of radon it can be removed”.

The MCHD Environmental Health staff has been trained to test for high radon levels and makes these tests available to the public, home inspectors and realtors. The test takes forty-eight hours and utilizes continuous Radon Measuring equipment.

For more information about radon or to set up an appointment to have your home and/or business checked, call MCHD Environmental Health at 304-598-5131 or visit our website at WWW.MONCHD.ORG

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