



State of Wisconsin

Department of Health and Family Services

Jim Doyle, Governor

Karen E. Timberlake, Secretary

For Immediate Release

June 20, 2008

Contact: Stephanie Marquis, 608.266.1683

Secretary Timberlake Toured Flood Damage in Crawford, Iowa and Sauk Counties *Stressed Importance of Public Health Safety*

Yesterday, Department of Health and Family Services Secretary Karen Timberlake toured flood-damaged areas in Crawford, Iowa and Sauk Counties to show support for the communities and stress the importance of personal and public safety.

“Our thoughts are with all of the people whose lives have been impacted and the emotional trauma they’re experiencing,” said Secretary Timberlake. “I encourage residents to reach out to the support services available on the local, state and federal level. No one should be left unsupported in times of crisis.”

Mental and emotional wellbeing is just one of the many public health issues facing residents coping with flooding here, and around the state. Secretary Timberlake also stressed the importance of safety before and after flood waters recede.

Drinking water supplies can be compromised if drawn from submerged private wells that may be contaminated. Bottled water should be used for cooking and drinking until wells are tested, flushed and decontaminated. Contact your local health and human service agency to obtain a well testing kit.

“The dangers of flood water go beyond just the drinking supply. Flood waters are often contaminated by bacteria, runoff and raw sewage. People should avoid flood water whenever possible to help prevent the spread of disease,” Timberlake added. “Food and household items that have been exposed to flood water that cannot be disinfected should be thrown away, as they may be contaminated with bacteria.”

Sand from sandbags should also be disposed of properly and not used in children’s sand boxes. In addition, it’s important to clean your home or business properly to help prevent mold growth, which can cause serious health risks such as asthma, allergies and other respiratory problems.

For more information and guidelines on flood safety and clean-up, go to the Department’s website at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/>

- END -