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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Licking County Health Department Radon Program Receives National Recognition**

Beginning January 1, counties across the nation will lead activities and host special events to increase awareness of the health effects of radon exposure and to promote radon testing, mitigation, and radon-resistant new construction. To assist in this effort, the National Association of Counties (NACo) has awarded twenty-four counties and coalitions of counties across the nation, including Licking County, 200 free radon test kits through its County Radon Outreach Program. The test kits, supplied by NACo, were awarded to these counties for their innovative radon outreach and education efforts concentrated in diverse and low income population areas.

The Licking County Health Department will distribute its free kits directly to Women, Infants and Children (WIC) clients in the county. These 200 kits will supplement the existing Health Department radon awareness program which provides free test kits to county residents upon request. The county also will conduct a media campaign and will participate in a local Building Industry Association Home Show as well as the Hartford Fair and numerous health fairs in the county.

Radon is a naturally occurring, invisible, and odorless radioactive gas. It originates from natural deposits of radium in the soil. As the radium decays it turns into radon gas which can enter a home.

The only way to know if a home has a radon problem is to test. Every home should be tested, regardless of age, construction style, or previous testing results. The cost of reducing radon exposure in the home typically compares to other common home repair investments.

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the country surpassed only by direct smoking, and the leading cause of lung cancer among nonsmokers. It is ranked by the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) as a Group A Carcinogen, which places it in the highest ranking for cancer potential, and in the same category as tobacco. The USEPA has found that radon is responsible for about 21,000 lung cancer deaths every year.

For more information about radon, or to request a test kit, contact the Licking County Health Department at (740) 349-6535 or visit [www.lickingcohealth.org](http://www.lickingcohealth.org).

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