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JANUARY IS NATIONAL RADON ACTION MONTH
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The Monongalia County Health Department is working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in a nation-wide campaign to educate Americans about the dangers of radon exposure and to encourage them to take action to protect their homes and families. The MCHD urges Monongalia County residents to take action during this year’s National Radon Action Month by testing their homes for radon.

Radon is a naturally occurring, invisible, odorless, tasteless gas that is dispersed in outdoor air, but it can reach harmful levels when trapped in buildings. Scientists have long been concerned about the health risks of radon, but never before has there been such overwhelming evidence that exposure to elevated levels of radon can cause lung cancer in humans.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that radon is responsible for more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths per year. Radon is the leading second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. after smoking and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers.

EPA assessments show that Monongalia County (http://geopub.epa.gov/Radon/) has a high potential for elevated indoor radon levels greater than 4 pCi/L (picocuries per liter). The EPA recommends that homes or facilities having radon levels of 4.0 pCi/l or higher install a system to reduce radon gas.

The good news is that exposure to radon is a preventable health risk, and testing radon levels in your home can help prevent unnecessary exposure. If a high radon level is detected in your home, you can take steps to fix the problem to protect yourself and your family. However, the only way to determine if you are at risk is to have you home or facility tested for the presence of radon gas.

Because radon gas is a potential health problem in Monongalia County, the MCHD is now offering radon testing. The MCHD Environmental Health staff has been certified by the National Radon Safety Board (NRSB) to carry out radon testing and offer education on radon mitigation. The test takes 48 hours and utilizes the latest technology in electronic continuous Radon Measuring equipment.

The MCHD is offering radon testing to the public, home inspectors and realtors. Jon Welch, director of MCHD Environmental Health, said that, “Our goal is to make the radon testing process as easy, convenient and educational as possible”.

For more information on radon, radon testing and mitigation call the MCHD at (304)598-5131, visit our website at www.monchd.org or visit EPA’s National Radon Action Month Web site at www.epa.gov/radon/nram.