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Gov. Rick Snyder: Comprehensive action plan will help Flint residents address water concerns

Collaborative effort with state, federal and city leaders focuses on testing, assistance

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FLINT, Mich. – Flint residents need to have access to safe, clean, water now and long into the future, Gov. Rick Snyder said, announcing a comprehensive action plan created with state, federal and city leaders to address concerns about drinking water.

The water leaving Flint's drinking water system is safe to drink, but some families with lead plumbing in their homes or service connections could experience higher levels of lead in the water that comes out of their faucets.

The action plan focuses on increasing water testing, offering additional precautions for families with lead plumbing in their homes, and providing long-term solutions to address the city's water infrastructure challenges. The plan was created at Snyder's direction by the Michigan Departments of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Health and Human

Services (DHHS), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the city of Flint.

"We are focused on helping ensure safe, clean, accessible drinking water and addressing and mitigating concerns and protecting public health," Snyder said. "Today's action plan builds upon ongoing work with local, state and federal agencies and our partnership with city and community leaders. Together, we are working to ensure that all Flint residents have accurate information and know that help is available to address potential problems."

The city and the state also are working together to gather more data to ensure the water that leaves the treatment plant as well as the water that arrives in Flint homes is safe for all residents. The plan includes:

- Testing in Flint public schools immediately to ensure that drinking water is safe, with testing also available at no cost to any other school in Flint.
- Offering free water testing to Flint residents to assure their drinking water is safe.
- Providing free water filters to residents.
- Expanding health exposure testing of individual homes.
- Accelerating corrosion controls in the Flint drinking water system.
- Accelerating water system improvements to address replacing lead service lines.
- Expediting the completion of the Karegnondi Water Authority pipeline.
- Expanding a Safe Drinking Water Technical Advisory Committee to ensure the best technology, practices and science are being followed by adding an expert from the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Research and Development to the group.
- Naming Dr. Eden Wells, chief medical executive for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, as the Flint drinking water public health adviser.
- Boosting a comprehensive lead education program to make sure residents have detailed information about how to protect themselves and their homes.

Residents can have their water tested by calling 810-787-6537 and pressing 1, or emailing flintwater@cityofflint.com. The DEQ is covering the cost of this testing.

State leaders have been working closely with state and federal lawmakers to tap resources at all levels of government to address concerns.

State health experts said there has been an increase in elevated childhood blood lead levels in some specific communities. Initial analysis of MDHHS data found that blood lead levels of children in Flint have followed an expected seasonal trend. While this analysis for Flint as a whole remains true, a comprehensive and detailed review breaking down data by ZIP codes with the city revealed that MDHHS data is consistent with a study presented recently by Hurley Children's Hospital.

"While we cannot conclusively say that the water source change is the sole cause of the increase, this analysis supports our efforts as we take active steps to reduce all potential lead exposures in Flint," MDHHS Director Nick Lyon said. "As part of this, we are working closely with our public and private partners to provide Flint residents on MDHHS assistance programs with free water filters and inform families about the steps they can take to reduce all lead exposures in their home."

As a part of the action plan, National Sanitation Foundation certified water filters will be