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State to announce Flint water action plan Friday at Kettering

MLive – October 1, 2015, By Ron Fonger

FLINT, MI — Local, state and federal officials are set to announce a plan for addressing concerns with [lead in Flint's drinking water](#) at a news conference Friday, Oct. 2.

An advisory from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality said leaders will announce the plan at 1:30 p.m. at Kettering University.

The news conference comes after weeks of [worrisome news](#) about rising levels of lead in the city's tap water, documented by researchers from Virginia Tech university and a study by a Hurley Medical Center doctor that showed the number of children in the city with elevated blood levels nearly doubled after the city started using the Flint River as its water source in 2014.

Brad Wurfel, director of communications for the DEQ, said Thursday, Oct. 1, that [Gov. Rick Snyder](#) cannot attend the news conference.

Snyder said earlier this week that he expected state officials to announce plans to deal with the lead in water issue by Friday, saying, "There are probably some things that weren't as fully understood when that switch was made."

The state oversees water quality in Flint, and state-appointed emergency managers were running city government when decisions were made not to negotiate a short-term agreement to continue buying Lake Huron water from Detroit and to instead use the river as a water source.

Although the city is not currently in violation of the Safe Drinking Water Act, bacteria, the level of total trihalomethanes and lead have been problems in the water system since then.

Among those scheduled to attend the news conference are Mayor Dayne Walling; Harvey Hollins, director of the state Office of Urban Initiatives; Dan Wyant, director of the Michigan DEQ; Nick Lyon, director of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services; and Dr. Eden Wells, chief medical executive of the state Department of Health and Human Services, the news release said.

Wurfel would not discuss the plan in advance of the news conference, but officials in local, state and the federal government have called for a variety of actions in recent weeks.

Among them: Funding for home water filters, additional testing of city water and reconnection of Flint to the Detroit water system.

"We're looking forward to coming to Flint. We recognize lead is a concern in the city," Wurfel said.

http://www.mlive.com/news/flint/index.ssf/2015/10/state_will_announce_flint_wate.html

Legislators take action to fix Flint water supply

Detroit Free Press – October 1, 2015, By Kathleen Gray

LANSING — The Michigan Legislature is beginning to take notice of the ongoing controversy surrounding Flint's water system, which has been plagued by problems with discoloration and foul smells since the city disconnected from the Detroit water system and began pulling its water supply from the Flint River.

The state Senate approved a supplemental appropriations bill that included a \$100 placeholder while the state looks for a solution to the water issue.

"We want to make sure we have an accurate number. We didn't want to put too much in or not enough," said state Sen. Jim Ananich, D-Flint. "We want to get an accurate understanding of what it's going to cost to get us the help that we need."

The appropriation comes on the heels of Gov. Rick Snyder telling reporters on Wednesday that he'll have some more answers on the state's role in fixing Flint's water problems by the end of the week. The state Departments of Environmental Quality and Health and Human Services is scheduled to hold a news conference at 1:30 p.m. in Flint Friday to discuss a comprehensive plan to deal with Flint's controversial water system.

It also occurred as the Genesee County Board of Commissioners and Health Department issued an emergency advisory to Flint residents on Thursday, telling them to refrain from drinking the city water unless it was filtered through a certified filtration device or had been tested and showed that it doesn't contain elevated lead levels.

"Since no safe level (of lead) has been identified, it is in everyone's interest to reduce exposure to lead as much as possible," the emergency advisory stated.

Jamie Curtis, chairman of the commissioners, said they had little choice. Curtis said he had asked the state last week for a response after a Hurley Medical Center pediatrician reported that blood lead levels had jumped in Flint children since the city began pulling water from the Flint River.

But instead of hearing from the state, he read in the Free Press Wednesday that Gov. Rick Snyder publicly acknowledged that Flint's water supply "appears" to have problems. That, Curtis said, was in conflict with assurances from state officials earlier this year that the water was safe.