



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH
LANSING

JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

JANET OLSZEWSKI
DIRECTOR

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CONTACT: T.J. Bucholz
(517) 241-2112

REVISED VERSION

MDCH Releases Saginaw Bay Watershed Preliminary Findings

The Michigan Department of Community Health has released preliminary findings from a fish consumption survey of people fishing and eating fish from the Saginaw Bay, Saginaw River, Tittabawassee River, and Shiawassee River.

From March 2005 through March 2006, 1,088 people – who were fishing in the Saginaw Watershed – were asked to complete a survey about their fish consumption habits. Preliminary results were presented today at a stakeholder group meeting established by MDCH and the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network, which provided funding for this study.

While survey results suggest that there is a general awareness of the existence of the fish consumption advisory, many people are not using the advisory to the fullest extent. The fish advisory provides knowledge to Michigan citizens on which fish are safe to eat.

Additional findings from this study show that many people are eating fish from the Saginaw River and, to a lesser extent, the Tittabawassee River. Findings show that many people are eating fish from these rivers that MDCH advises against eating. Many people reported eating catfish from the Tittabawassee and Saginaw Rivers, which flow into Saginaw Bay. These fish contain dioxins, furans, and PCBS at levels that could cause harmful health effects if eaten too often.

The findings support the need for continued partnerships between MDCH and local community groups in the City of Saginaw to better inform people about the fish consumption advisory. MDCH and the First Ward Community Center, a non-profit, full service community center serving the physical and emotional needs of the people of Saginaw, will be collaborating this summer to better inform the urban minority fishing community about choosing safe sport-caught catfish and other species to eat from the Saginaw Bay Watershed. This collaboration is funded by a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The advisory for catfish and carp from these rivers is listed in the Michigan Family Fish Consumption Guide as “Do not eat these fish” at www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxics.

The MDCH Division of Environmental and Occupational Epidemiology conducted the fish consumption survey. Questions concerning this work can be directed to Kory Groetsch or Linda Dykema toll free at 1-800-648-6942