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## **Governor Quinn Urges Illinoisans to Protect Themselves During Heat Surge**

### *State Agencies Encourage Preventive Action, Checking on Elderly*

CHICAGO – July 17, 2011. Governor Pat Quinn today encouraged Illinoisans to take preventive action during this extremely hot weather to stay safe, cool, and avoid heat-related illnesses. As sweltering summer temperatures grip the Midwest, various Illinois state agencies offer services and information to help ensure the health and safety of the public.

Governor Quinn urged Illinoisans to take advantage of services available from the Department of Public Health, the Department of Human Services and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency. Everyone is urged to check on those most vulnerable to the high temperatures, including the elderly and children.

“High heat and humidity can lead to serious health problems, particularly for the elderly and young children,” Governor Quinn said. “It’s extremely important for people to recognize the signs of heat-related illness and take action to prevent becoming sick from the heat. I encourage Illinoisans to take advantage of numerous services statewide to keep them cool and safe.”

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) offered the following tips to help Illinois residents stay cool during hot weather, which can be found in the “Summer? No Sweat Survival Guide” at <http://www.idph.state.il.us/public/books/summtoc.htm>

- Increase fluid intake and avoid liquids containing caffeine, alcohol or large amounts of sugar;
- Take cool showers, baths or sponge baths;
- Protect your body with lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing. When outdoors, wear a hat and use a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) greater than 15 to protect against sunburn;
- Never leave anyone, including pets, alone in a closed, parked vehicle;
- Stay indoors, if at all possible, in an air-conditioned location or seek out the nearest air-conditioned facility.

IDPH also encourages people to learn to recognize signs of heat-related illnesses like heatstroke, which can quickly become serious or even deadly if unattended. Heatstroke is caused by prolonged exposure to the heat. The symptoms of heatstroke include:



- Headache
- Red, dry face
- Skin hot to touch
- Body temperature of 105° F or more
- Strong pulse
- Loss of consciousness in extreme cases
- Seizures, irregular heartbeat

The Illinois Department of Human Services has established more than 120 cooling centers to provide Illinoisans cool and comfortable locations during hot summer days. Cooling centers are open during normal business hours from 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Additionally, Illinois Tollway Oases in the Chicago area serve as cooling centers. For more information about Cooling Centers, call the Illinois Department of Human Services hotline at (800) 843-6154 or check locations at <http://www2.illinois.gov/KeepCool/Pages/coolingcenters.aspx>.

The Illinois Department on Aging also encourages relatives and friends to make daily visits or calls to senior citizens living alone. When temperatures and humidity are extremely high, seniors and people with chronic respiratory health conditions must be watchful for dehydration and other effects of extreme heat. In addition, seniors should eat lighter meals, take longer and more frequent rests, and drink plenty of fluids.

The Illinois Emergency Management Agency coordinates emergency and relief activities statewide. For more information about preparedness, visit the IEMA Ready Illinois website at [www.Ready.Illinois.gov](http://www.Ready.Illinois.gov).

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