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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Upsurge in Use of New Designer Drug

(Coldwater, MI) The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) reports a surge in hospital ER cases due to the use of a new recreational designer drug called "bath salts." Emergency departments report 18 cases over the past four weeks, with one suspected death. Most were young adults in their 20's to 30's.

These products, dubbed as a 'fake cocaine,' contain mephedrone and methylenedioxypropylamphetamine (MDPV), a known central nervous system stimulant. They may be sold under the names of Aura; Zeus 2, Ivory Wave, ZOOM 2 and Cosmic Blast. They are easily purchased either online or at convenience stores, truck stops and/or head shops. A small packet of the drug can cost as little as \$20.

Young people who use these products may experience nose bleeds, nausea, panic attacks, increased heart rate, chest pains, paranoia and delusions. Some young people have been involved in homicides and suicides while under the influence. Many describe being chased by demons, gods, aliens or foreign soldiers. Severe cases may require long term psychiatric care. These drugs are highly addictive and dangerous.

According to Dr. James Phillips, Medical Director for the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency, "These stimulants aren't regulated by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Unfortunately, since they can be purchased from sources other than drug dealers, first time users do not understand the dangers involved or how quickly they can reach a toxic state."

Providers are asked to report suspected cases to the Detroit Poison Center by phone, 1-800-222-1222, or by email to ssmolins@dmc.org. Health care providers are required to report suspected cases to the Poison Control Center under the mandatory

Chemical Poisoning reporting rule [Public Health Code (R 325.71-325-75)]. People who are interested in additional information can either contact the Detroit Poison Center or visit the health department's website at <http://www.bhsj.org> and click on the Frequently Asked Questions Sheets for 'Bath Salts.'

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