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**M E M O R A N D U M**

**DATE:** July 30, 2018

**TO:** Executive Directors, Community Mental Health Services Programs

**FROM:** *TR* Thomas Renwick, Bureau of Community Based Services

**SUBJECT:** Awareness of Potential Behavioral Health Issues in Michigan Communities with PFAS Contamination

Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a suite of chemicals historically used in thousands of applications throughout the industrial, food, and textile industries. PFAS has been classified by the US Environmental Protection Agency as an emerging contaminant on the national level; the human health effects of which have become an increasing concern of experts. PFAS chemicals break down very slowly in the environment and are highly soluble, easily transferring through soil to groundwater. To date, PFAS contamination has been verified in 34 locations across the state.

Those communities experiencing this issue may have an increased need for behavioral health services. This includes current consumers of Community Mental Health (CMH) services and community members experiencing distress as a result of concerns about the situation. As an important partner in assisting communities and community members build and maintain resilience in times of crisis, there are a number of actions CMH agencies can take. CMH should remain aware of the elevated level of PFAS in community water systems, assess and determine the extent to which the community is experiencing behavioral health effects and may require services.

Services may include outreach, listening sessions, education and Psychological First Aid. Training for staff is available from the NCTSN learning center online at: <https://learn.nctsn.org/course/index.php?categoryid=11>. These efforts are aimed at preventing post-traumatic stress effects and providing screening/assessment to determine the need for additional clinical services. It is important to monitor calls to crisis lines and intake and walk-ins which may be attributed to the PFAS water issue and document the impact to client services. In addition, many communities are conducting public sessions on this issue. It may be beneficial to have a CMH team member attend to maintain situation awareness.

CMHs are encouraged to establish communication with the local emergency manager and the local health department in their jurisdiction to assure a coordinated response as knowledge continues to accumulate and PFAS sites are identified across Michigan. Contact information for local emergency management and local health departments is attached.

For the most up to date information on Michigan's PFAS response, visit <http://www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse>. If you have any questions regarding the above, please contact: Jody Lewis at (517) 582-8428 (cell) or [lewisj@michigan.gov](mailto:lewisj@michigan.gov)

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## Attachments