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**For Immediate
Release**
April 22, 2009

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MEDIA RELEASE

THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, CHARLOTTE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
ISSUES BEACH ADVISORIES FOR PORT CHARLOTTE BEACH EAST AND WEST

High levels of bacteria prompt beach warning signs to be posted.

Port Charlotte (FL) - The Florida Department of Health (DOH) Charlotte County Health Department is issuing beach advisories for the Port Charlotte Beach East and West. Water samples collected from the beaches were determined to contain levels of enteric bacteria (enterococci) higher than recommended by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) water quality standards. These areas should be considered a potential health risk to the bathing public. If high concentrations of these bacteria are ingested or enter through an open cut or sore, they may cause human disease or infection. The most common symptoms include rashes, diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting.

Enteric bacteria such as fecal coliform and enterococci normally inhabit the intestinal tract of humans and animals, and may cause human disease, infections or rashes. The presence of enteric bacteria is an indication of fecal pollution, which may come from storm water runoff, pets, wildlife and human sewage. The bacteria have been associated with large flocks of seabirds roosting on this beach in the past.

Charlotte County Health Department participates in the Florida Healthy Beaches Monitoring Program. The Healthy Beaches Program involves the monitoring of salt or brackish water beaches. Health advisories are issued if beach waters fail to meet required water quality standards. Signs placed near the beach will read "This Beach Monitored as Part of the Healthy Beaches Program – ADVISORY - High Bacteria Levels - Swimming NOT Recommended - Increased Risk of Illness at This Time." Signs remain posted until bacteria levels have been determined to be acceptable by standards set forth by US EPA.

DOH promotes and protects the health and safety of all people in Florida through the delivery of quality public health services and the promotion of health care standards. For more information about DOH programs such as the Florida Healthy Beaches Program please visit the Department of Health's web site at www.doh.state.fl.us and choose beach water quality under the A-Z topics list, or visit www.CharlotteCHD.com.

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