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Governor

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For Immediate Release
May 05, 2010

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MEDIA RELEASE

**PRECAUTIONARY BEACH ADVISORY POSTED
PORT CHARLOTTE BEACH COMPLEX.**

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

Port Charlotte (FL) -The Florida Department of Health (DOH) Charlotte County Health Department is issuing a precautionary beach advisory for the Port Charlotte Beach Complex. Charlotte County Utilities had a greater than 10,000 gallon raw sewage spill from a force main that emptied into the Fordham waterway. As the waterway passes by the beach complex, in the interest of public health, the beach advisory is issued by the Florida Department of Health. Samples will be taken and when results are known to be free of bacterial contamination associated with sewage the advisory will be lifted. This area 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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