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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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July is UV Safety Month

July means more time outside. The great news is that we are getting more physical activity. Local fruit and vegetables are available for a tasty and nutritious diet. Don't forget to protect your skin and eyes from the harmful effects of the sun while you are enjoying the summer.

The Bergen County Department of Health Services, in conjunction with the Bergen County Cancer Coalition, encourages everyone to practice sun safety behaviors. Despite skin cancer being largely preventable, it remains the most common type of cancer in the United States. Over two million new cases of skin cancer are diagnosed annually, more than new cases of breast, prostate, lung and colon cancers combined. While the incidence of many common cancers is falling, the incidence of malignant melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer, continues to rise.

Sun safety measures that can help prevent skin cancer include:

- **Apply sunscreen with a Sun Protective Factor (SPF) of 15 or higher.**
 - Sunscreen should be applied to all exposed skin 20-30 minutes before going outside.
 - Reapply sunscreen every two hours, even on cloudy days, and more when swimming, sweating or toweling off.
 - Wear sunscreen every day of the year—winter, spring, summer and fall. UV rays can bounce off cement, water, sand, rain and snow.
- **Seek shade between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. when UV radiation levels are at their highest.** To learn more about local UV levels, visit the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at <http://epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex>.
- **Cover up with long sleeves and a hat.** Wear hats that have a brim wide enough to protect the face, ears and back of the neck.
- **Avoid sun burning, intentional tanning and using tanning beds.** One or more blistering sunburns in childhood or adolescence more than double a person's chances of developing melanoma later in life. Tanning is a sign of UV damage. The high-pressure sunlamps used in tanning salons give off UV rays that can be as much as 12 times greater than those of the sun.

Increased time in the sun poses risk to more than just your skin. Studies show that exposure to bright sunlight may increase the risk of developing cataracts, age-related macular degeneration and growths on the eye, including cancer.

To protect your eyes from the sun:

- **Wear sunglasses and protect your eyes during peak sun times and on cloudy days.** It is important especially important to wear sunglasses in the early afternoon. Protect children's eyes with sunglasses. Excessive exposure to UV light reflected off sand, water or pavement can damage the eyes.
- **Check for 100 percent UV protection.** Select sunglasses that block 100 % UVA and UVB rays. Don't be deceived by color or cost.

- **Choose a wrap-around style of sunglasses.** Sunglasses should wrap all the way around to your temples, so the sun's rays can't enter from the side.
- **Wear a broad-brimmed hat with sunglasses.**
- **Don't rely on contact lenses.** Even if you wear contact lenses with UV protection, wear sunglasses.
- **Never look directly at the sun.** Looking directly at the sun at any time, including during an eclipse, can lead to solar retinopathy, damage to the eye's retina from solar radiation.

For more information, visit the following websites: www.cancer.org, www.epa.gov/sunwise and www.aaopt.org. For information on the Bergen County Cancer Coalition, contact the coordinator at 201-634-2707 or visit www.bergenhealth.org.

The Bergen County Cancer Coalition is funded through a grant from the New Jersey Department of Health & Senior Services' Office of Cancer Control and Prevention (OCCP). For more information on Comprehensive Cancer Control in New Jersey, please visit: www.njcancer.gov