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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County Offers Free Pool Testing Kit

(Miami, June 6, 2013) -- The Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County is encouraging residents to obtain and use a free pool water test to ensure the water in which they swim is free of harmful germs that could cause illnesses.

The Water Quality & Health Council is offering free pool test strips online at www.healthypools.org, these test strips will also be available from the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County's Public Swimming Pools Program. The test strips show chlorine/bromine and pH levels using a simple color-coding.

"Maintaining proper disinfection and pH levels in pool water reduces the risk of swimmers' ear, diarrhea, skin and respiratory infections from waterborne germs," said Dr. Lillian Rivera, RN, MSN, PhD, Administrator of the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County.

Florida law requires daily testing of pool water and some managers test several times during the day especially when large numbers of people are in the pool. Water chemistry can change quickly during these times of heavy use and bacteria can survive when disinfection activity of the chemicals is reduced. The use of these test strips provides a great opportunity to ensure that the water quality in pools throughout the county is maintained properly. Unsatisfactory levels of disinfectant and pH should be brought to the attention of the pool manager.

The following rules for healthy use of recreational water are recommended:

- Don't go into the pool if you have diarrhea (some germs may still be able to contaminate the water even as long as 2 weeks after symptoms of illness are over).
- Shower with soap before getting into the water.
- Take bathroom breaks and change baby diapers frequently (hourly or more often recommended).
- Wash hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.
- Don't swallow the water in which you swim or water from spouts or sprays at water activity parks.

The Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County conducts routine inspections of public pools. For more information, please call 305-623-3500 or visit: www.dadehealth.org ; www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/ ; <http://healthypools.org>

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