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Oneida County Health Department Offers Tips for Water Safety

As many of us head to the beach, swimming pools and out on boats to celebrate the Fourth of July holiday, the Oneida County Health Department is reminding residents to be safe and proactive when it comes to water recreation.

“We wait all year for the nice weather so that we can get in or around the water,” said Oneida County Director of Health Phyllis D. Ellis, BSN, MS, F.A.C.H.E. “The last thing we ever want is a day of summer fun to turn to tragedy.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 10 people die every day from unintentional drownings. Children ages one to four have the highest drowning rates and most occur in pools.

Some top factors that influence drownings are:

Lack of Swimming Ability: taking formal swimming lessons can significantly reduce the risk of drowning;

Lack of Barriers: keep pool fencing and gate locks in good condition;

Lack of Close Supervision: drowning can happen quickly and quietly, wherever there is water and even when lifeguards are present;

Failure to Wear a Life Jacket: Half of all boating deaths might be prevented with the use of a life vest.

Alcohol Use: alcohol influences balance, coordination and judgement and its effects are heightened by sun and heat.

Parents need to be alert when around water, encourage children to use the buddy system when swimming and keep safety equipment nearby and ready to use. Don't use air-filled or foam toys, such as water wings, noodles, or inner-tubes, instead of life jackets. These toys are not life jackets and are not designed to keep swimmers safe.

Kids should be practicing water safety from the earliest age by being urged to follow beach and pool rules, avoid rough play and running and no diving in water less than eight feet deep.

For more information on swimming safety, visit: <https://www.poolsafely.gov/parents/safety-tips/>.