

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – May 4, 2014

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## **Are you ready for Arizona's Killer Heat?**

Heat killed 139 people in Arizona in 2013 - the best way to reduce that number is to be prepared. A new report, [The Trend in Morbidity and Mortality from Exposure to Excessive Natural Heat in Arizona\\*](#) shows heat is linked to an average of 118 deaths every year since 2000. It also shows that men account for seven of every 10 heat deaths in Arizona. The National Weather Service says the beginning of our summer will be hotter than normal this year.

“High temperatures start early in Arizona. Our most serious months for heat illness are May through September,” said Matthew Roach, Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) Climate & Health Program Manager. “People need to be prepared – be aware of temperatures, plan outdoor activities accordingly and know the symptoms of heat illnesses.” The National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center three-month outlook calls for a greater chance of above-average temperatures for the first half of summer in much of the U.S. Southwest, including Arizona.

There are hundreds of people going to Arizona's hospitals because of heat. In 2013, 526 people were admitted to hospitals because of heat, and more than 2,000 (2,242) were treated in emergency rooms also went in 2013. Almost half of the state's heat-related emergency department visits in 2013 were young adults between the ages of 15-44 (1,102).

ADHS partners with national, state and local agencies (county health departments, the National Weather Service, the Phoenix Heat Relief Network, Arizona State University, non-profits, emergency management agencies, and others) to provide resources for those in need. This multi-agency team is also working to determine causal factors such as whether the overnight low temperature plays a part in the number of illnesses and deaths.

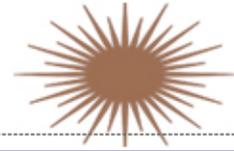
“Excessive heat in our desert climate climbs to the top of public health priorities every summer. We want to make sure people continue being active, but that they have to be smart about it,” said Will Humble, ADHS Director. “We all share a community responsibility to help those in need stay cool. One way is to [donate water\\*\\*](#) or hold a water drive at your work. The donated water helps people who go to cooling shelters in the extreme heat.”

The Department is kicking off its 4<sup>th</sup> annual water drive this month. In the past three years, employees have donated almost 200,000 bottles of water to the needy across the state.

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\*<http://www.azdhs.gov/phs/oeh/heat/documents/reports/trends-in-morbidity-and-mortality-from-exposure-to-excessive-natural-heat-in-az-2012.pdf>

\*\* <http://www.coolme.today/#phoenix>



## Coordinated Social Media Campaign Details Fighting Extreme Heat with H.E.A.T.

A multi-agency group composed of County Health Departments, the National Weather Service, the Phoenix Heat Relief Network, Arizona State University, non-profits, Emergency Management Agencies, ADHS and others is working together to promote heat safety. We want to reduce the number of heat-related and heat-caused illnesses and deaths in Arizona.

The week of May 12, you'll see social media messages from all of these groups to promote awareness in the public. We're using HEAT to promote ways for the public to Stay Cool, Stay Hydrated, and Stay Informed.

Monday: <b>H</b>	<u>H</u> ydrate
Tuesday: <b>E</b>	<u>E</u> nvironment/Weather
Wednesday: <b>A</b>	<u>A</u> wareness
Thursday: <b>T</b>	<u>T</u> ake Action

The week will wrap up with the Mayor's Call for Water in Phoenix.

You can find a more expansive explanation of the campaign on the National Weather Service Phoenix Forecast Office ([website/link](#))

We appreciate your help sharing the campaign with your audiences – This will be a long, hot summer and we'll continue pushing social media messages beyond this campaign. We value your contribution in fighting this major public health concern in Arizona.