



**For Immediate Release:**

July 2, 2009

## **Regular Water Quality Testing Ensures Safe Swimming**

July 1 - 7 is National Clean Beaches Week

LOS ANGELES – With the arrival of National Clean Beaches Week, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health would like to remind residents to check online for the latest information about ocean water quality conditions before planning a day at the beach.

“The vast majority of beach water along the coast of LA County meets State ocean water quality standards, which means it is safe for swimming, surfing, or otherwise playing in the waves,” said Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, Director of Public Health and Health Officer. “But if you want to check out the beach you’re planning to visit before you get there, up-to-date reports on water quality and sewage spills are always available to the public via a web-based database.”

To find the cleanest beaches in Los Angeles County, visit Public Health’s website at <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/beach> to see beach grades from A – F, or call the Public Health Beach Closure and Advisory Hotline at (800) 525-5662. Regulators test the water at Los Angeles County’s beaches up to five times a week.

“Accurate knowledge about the cleanliness of LA County beaches will give you and your family peace of mind,” said Dr. Fielding. “You should not have to worry about the water that you’re enjoying.”

Once you arrive at the beach, remember the following tips to stay safe while enjoying the surf:

- Always swim near an open lifeguard station.
- Never swim alone.
- Pay especially close attention to children and elderly when at the beach. Even in shallow water, wave action can cause loss of footing.
- Keep at least 100 feet away from piers, jetties, and rocks, and always obey warning signs. Permanent rip currents often exist along side these structures.
- Never throw sand and always fill in holes before you leave the beach.
- Protect yourself from the sun by using sunscreen and wearing a hat and sunglasses.

The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises more than 4,000 employees and an annual budget exceeding \$750 million. To learn more about Public Health and the work we do, please visit <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov>.

###