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AHS recommends testing of private well water in Kneehill County

RED DEER– Recent water testing results have shown that water from some private wells in Kneehill County contains higher than recommended levels of naturally occurring selenium and uranium.

Although the levels detected to-date do NOT present any immediate risk to health, the levels are above the guidelines for drinking water quality in Canada. As such, Alberta Health Services (AHS) is recommending that all private well water owners/users in the areas **north of Twp Road 31-0, south of Twp Road 33-0, east of Range Road 24-0 to the Red Deer River, and west of the Red Deer River to Range Road 24-0** submit a sample from their private water well, to AHS, for trace metals testing.

This one-time testing will be offered free of charge, to individuals in the above noted geographic area only, over the coming months. Results of this testing will provide AHS with additional information necessary to assess the potential for long-term risks and advise residents of any need for additional actions.

Residents in the affected geographic area will be receiving information packages from AHS, via mail, within in next couple weeks; however, beginning today, private well water users/owners in the affected area can pick up water samples bottles from AHS Public Health at the Three Hills Health Centre (1504 2 Street N) for this testing. Private well water users/owners can also contact AHS Environmental Public Health's office in Drumheller (at 403-823-3341) for additional information.

It is not unusual to find naturally occurring selenium and uranium in groundwater; however, long term consumption (over many years or decades) of water with elevated levels of naturally occurring selenium and uranium can be associated with adverse health effects.

At this time, this testing is not being offered to private well water owners/users outside the specified geographic area. As always, Alberta Health Services recommends that Albertans who use water from a private well or other untreated ground water sources routinely test their water to ensure safe consumption. Alberta Health Services Environmental Public Health recommends private well water testing for bacteria be completed twice per year, with at least one of those two tests being in the spring and/or early summer. Environmental Public Health also recommends that private well water testing for chemicals be completed every two to five years.

Municipal water supply in Kneehill County is not impacted by this issue.

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than four million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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