

## **Prevent drowning with free pool door alarms 6-28-11**

Fort Myers, FL—Toddlers are at the greatest risk for drowning and the Lee County Health Department wants to help parents and caregivers know quickly when their pre-schooler escapes into the pool area by giving away door alarms.

“Drowning is the leading cause of death for children under 5 in Florida, but at greatest risk are toddlers,” said Diane Holm, spokesperson for the Lee County Health Department and the National Drowning Prevention Alliance. “The child who has just learned to walk is curious about everything and doesn’t understand he can’t walk on water, can’t breath under water and when he falls in the water there will be no splash to alert his parents.”

Layers of protection properly installed, like these high decibel door alarms, make having a backyard pool, spa, decorative pond or canal safer since no parent can watch a child 24/7. The free door alarms are available to only 200 families with a home pool or spa and young children.

The pool door alarms will be given away in partnership with Lee Memorial Health Systems at the Red White and Boom event in Cape Coral on July 4<sup>th</sup>. Families interested in getting an alarm should find the Lee Memorial tent to register for a free alarm.

The National Drowning Prevention Alliance suggests practicing the Safer Three: Safer Water with alarms and fences to delay unauthorized pool access, Safer Kids with swimming lessons and enforced water safety rules, and Safer Response with a practiced plan for water rescue including calling 911 and adults and using rescue tools such as a shepherds hook.

Tips to stay safer in home pools include:

1. Create barriers preventing unauthorized access
2. Set specific swimming rules for each individual or group based on swimming ability, such as wearing a properly fitted life jackets for those who cannot swim the length of the pool on the surface of the water
3. Have rules and enforce them, such as requiring children to ask permission before getting into the water
4. Never swim alone
5. Designate an adult water watcher undistracted by social activity, reading or a phone
6. Learn to swim, perform a water rescue, and CPR including rescue breathing
7. Never combine alcohol and water recreation
8. Take frequent rest breaks on land

Drownings peak annually during the July 4<sup>th</sup> Independence Day weekend with many holiday celebrations occurring outdoors near the water.