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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**DON'T HAVE HEAT IN YOUR RENTAL APARTMENT, CO-OP OR CONDO?
Here's what to do**

As temperatures continue to be dangerously low, the Westchester County Department of Health today offered suggestions to residents who have heat-related issues in rental apartments or condos and co-ops with central-heating systems.

“Cold weather can raise health concerns, particularly for the elderly, infants and those with chronic disease,” stated Westchester County Health Commissioner, Joshua Lipsman, M.D., M.P.H. “Residents who have no heat should immediately contact their building superintendent. If that doesn’t solve their heating problem, residents should contact the landlord or building’s management agency. Usually contacting these sources is the quickest way to correct a heating problem.”

However, if there still is a heating problem after contacting the superintendent and the building’s landlord or management agency, and there is no obvious evidence of work being done to fix the problem, residents can call the Health Department at 813-5000 for assistance in working with their local building departments to try to correct the problem.

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Commissioner Lipsman also reminded residents to take precautions to avoid hypothermia and frostbite. Accidental hypothermia can occur even with temperatures of 60 to 65 degrees. Residents of households with occupants over 65 years of age should keep the thermostat set at no less than 68 degrees in the daytime.

Infants less than one year of age should never sleep in a cold room and should be provided with warm clothing and a blanket to prevent loss of body heat.

Warning signs of hypothermia in adults include shivering, confusion, memory loss, drowsiness, exhaustion and slurred speech. Infants who are suffering from hypothermia may appear to have very low energy and bright red, cold skin.

Frostbite is another cold weather concern, and is especially dangerous because it often happens with little warning. Numbness can occur so quickly that the individual, unaware of being frostbitten, may remain outside, increasing the chance of permanent damage. Older persons, and those with diabetes, are especially vulnerable to frostbite because of impaired circulation.

To prevent frostbite and hypothermia, it is important to dress warmly in windproof clothing and to go indoors when you begin to feel cold. Wear several layers of loose-fitting clothing to trap body heat. Fasten buttons or zippers and tighten drawstrings securely. Don't forget gloves, mittens and a hat that covers the ears.

“If you know of an elderly or ailing person who lives alone, be a good neighbor and check in with him or her every day,” Dr. Lipsman continued. If you suspect that someone is suffering from hypothermia or frostbite, call a medical provider immediately.

For more information, contact the Westchester County Department of Health at (914) 813-5000 or visit our website at www.westchestergov.com/health.