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**DOH DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH RECEIVES HARMFUL ALGAE  
BLOOM GRANT FROM CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION**

*-- Grant to Enhance Efforts to Monitor Health Impacts of Blue Green Algae and Florida Red Tide --*

**TALLAHASSEE** –The Florida Department of Health (DOH) announced today the continuation of a grant in the amount of \$993,320 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for its Division of Environmental Health’s Florida Aquatic Toxins Program.

The CDC Harmful Algae Bloom grant has allowed DOH to increase monitoring of possible health impacts associated with algae blooms, gain a better understanding of illnesses associated with exposure to aquatic toxins, and provide current information on these health effects to the public.

“We are extremely delighted with the continued support received from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,” said DOH Deputy State Health Officer Bonita Sorensen, M.D., M.B.A. “This award extends Florida’s efforts to lead the nation in assessing health impacts from harmful algae blooms and protecting the health of our citizens and visitors.”

“Naturally occurring,” plant-like algae can rapidly multiply in the open ocean, bays, lagoons and freshwater environments. “Harmful algal blooms” of blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) and red tide produce potent toxins, which can make some people sick.

To ensure that blooms are evaluated properly and that the public is notified of potential health risks, the program develops public health response plans. A variety of state agencies work collaboratively on these plans including, the DOH County Health Departments, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Mote Marine Institute.

The Florida Aquatic Toxins Program was established in 1998 to determine if toxins from harmful algae blooms, such as red tide and blue green algae, were affecting the health of Florida’s citizens and visitors.

For more information about the Florida Aquatic Toxins program, study descriptions and program activities, visit the DOH Web site at [www.doh.state.fl.us](http://www.doh.state.fl.us) and choose “Aquatic Toxins” from the pull down menu.

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