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Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Human Placentas Discovered By Urbana-Champaign Sanitary District

Unusual Event Under Investigation By Local Authorities

Champaign, IL – For the third time in just over a month, a healthy human placenta has been found by workers at the Urbana-Champaign Sanitary District. Urbana Police contacted the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD), and the Champaign County Coroner’s Office for assistance with this unusual situation. According to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Rules and Regulations, human placentas are considered potentially infectious medical waste, and should not be disposed of in the municipal sewage system.

“I can say with absolute certainty that the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District has never received a call of this nature,” said Julie A. Pryde, Public Health Administrator at CUPHD. “CUPHD has been asked by local authorities to assist with disseminating information to the community to ensure that this situation does not occur again.”

Persons assisting with home births, human or animal, should not dispose of placentas through the municipal sewage system—through flushing down the toilet or depositing them in a storm sewer. Placentas should be treated as any other solid, potentially infectious medical waste, and disposed of properly. Hospitals, clinics, and the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District have contracts with licensed medical waste disposal companies.

The individual or individuals in the community that have been engaging in this practice must stop immediately and begin disposing of the medical waste associated with home births in an approved manner. Persons assisting with home births can contact the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Champaign for disposal guidance by calling (217) 278-5800. Local health authorities strongly encourage community members to alert the proper agencies if they have any information regarding the unauthorized disposal of medical waste.

The average human placenta or afterbirth is nine inches in length, and is about one inch thick. It typically weighs approximately one pound, and is dark reddish or maroon in color. The placenta is connected to the fetus by an umbilical cord of approximately 22-24 inches in length which supplies the fetus with nutrients and oxygen from the mother, and transfers waste products and carbon dioxide from the fetus for disposal by the mother.

For more information on CUPHD and its many programs, please contact CUPHD at (217) 352-7961 or visit CUPHD on the web at www.Stock2forFlu or www.c-uphd.org .

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