

NEWS

From the County of San Bernardino
www.sbcounty.gov



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 17, 2007

For more information, contact
Margaret Beed M.D., County Health Officer
(909) 387-6218

County Health Officer warns of smoke from Big Bear fire

Parents and individuals with sensitive health conditions who live near areas affected by the Butler II fire in the Big Bear area should stay alert to changing smoke levels and be prepared to quickly act, according to Margaret Beed, San Bernardino County Health Officer.

Smoky conditions can be hazardous for young children, the elderly, individuals with heart conditions or chronic lung disease such as asthma and bronchitis, and individuals with other respiratory ailments.

Because of the uncertainty of fire conditions, Dr. Beed advises residents near the fires to be prepared. Individuals with asthma, bronchitis, emphysema and other lung or heart diseases should make sure that they are on medication and have at least a five-day supply on hand. Individuals with asthma should consult their physician about an asthma management plan and stick to it during unusually smoky conditions. Listen for radio and television messages about fires in your area.

Dr. Beed also advised residents to be prepared to stay indoors and limit their activity if necessary. Check for a "recirculation" function on your air conditioner. If smoke is present, it will be easier to breathe indoors if air is recirculating instead of drawing smoky air from outdoors. Contact your doctor if you have symptoms such as chest pain, chest tightness, shortness of breath, or severe fatigue. This is important for not only people with chronic lung or heart disease, but also for individuals who have not been previously diagnosed with such illnesses. Smoke can "unmask" or produce symptoms of such diseases.

For more information about wildfire health and safety, go to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/wildfires/>.