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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TO: Media Partners
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REGARDING: Blastomycosis Investigation Update
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Blastomycosis Outbreak Investigation Update

Public Health Delta & Menominee Counties (PHDM) continues to investigate an outbreak of blastomycosis associated with the Escanaba Billerud Paper Mill. To date, there have been 19 confirmed cases of blastomycosis, a fungal infection, identified. A confirmed case is a person with symptoms of blastomycosis and where the fungus has either been grown (culture) or seen by microscope in a specimen. An additional 62 people have been classified as probable cases. A probable case is a person with symptoms of blastomycosis and who has a positive antigen or antibody test.

At the request of Billerud, on March 27-28, 2023, a preliminary onsite Health Hazard Evaluation was conducted to study the health and safety of the Escanaba mill employees. The evaluation team consisted of outbreak investigators from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Mycology Branch, and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). These experts met with members of management, the mill's occupational health and safety team, and union representatives. The evaluation will continue as the NIOSH team analyzes data and reviews case investigation information.

PHDM and Billerud will continue to provide updates about cases at the Escanaba Mill and the community at large.

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