

Public education: By 2006 encourage public bathing beach managers to post informational signage describing the dangers to human health that shedding from bathers can have as well as ways to protect against these dangers. By 2006, states and local government agencies will collaborate with the CDC on the development and distribution of educational materials for beachgoers that illustrate what individuals can do to minimize the risk of waterborne disease when they swim in the Great Lakes (e.g. CDC public education for swimming pools)

ALTERNATIVE 1 –CONDUCT EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGNS

Description of alternative:

Increase public awareness about bathing water quality. State agencies have worked with local public health departments to design uniform signs to be placed at public bathing beaches to inform beachgoers about bathing water quality. In addition to the signs posted at the beach, many states and municipalities have web sites, hot lines, and printed materials in several languages. These materials allow the public to make an informed decision with regards to bathing water quality. Similar tactics could be used to design materials informing beachgoers of the risk of transmissible disease from bather to bather and measures they should take to reduce the risk of spreading – or contracting – waterborne illnesses (e.g., don't swim if you have diarrhea). Such signs exist at public swimming pools. These signs are important especially at beaches with a high bather density or those lacking bathroom facilities where the likelihood of human fecal contamination is greatest.

Cost/Feasibility Considerations:

- State/municipal staff responsible for the design and implementation of warning signs at public bathing beaches could take the lead on designing these materials eliminating the formation of new work groups.
- The CDC may be interested in this project as an expansion to their existing initiative regarding swimming pools (i.e. six pleas for protection against recreational water illnesses).
- Federal or state funding might be needed for the manufacture of the signs and printing/distribution of the brochures.

Advantages/Disadvantages:

- Bathers would become more educated on the risks associated with swimming in contaminated waters and would use better judgment with regard to personal practices.
- A uniform document would ensure that all people utilizing Great Lakes beaches would have access to the same information. This information may reduce public health concerns regarding the person-to-person spread of disease from bathing water encounters.
- Materials would be transferable.

If there are no funding sources, this information would only be available to those municipalities who could afford to self-finance the project.