



*For Immediate Release*

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## **St. Vincent's Medical Center & Aquarion Water Offer Summertime Drinking Water Advice to Protect Youngsters From Dehydration**

BRIDGEPORT, CT, July 27, 2005 – As youngsters throughout Connecticut begin to spend more time in strenuous outdoor activities this summer, professionals of St. Vincent's Medical Center and Aquarion Water Company agree now is the time to ensure that young people are drinking enough water to prevent dehydration.

Children at camp spend the day outdoors in the heat playing sports and games and often get too distracted to stop and drink water to replenish the fluids they've lost from sweat, St. Vincent's Medical officials noted. Aquarion Water Company President and CEO Charles V. Firlotte said the company's water supply continues to meet, or is better than, the quality required by state and federal standards. "Our data is extracted from more than 118,000 tests on some 11,200 water samples," Firlotte noted. "We are committed to provide our customers and their families with a high-quality product that is vital to their good health and well being – not only for the hot summer but for other seasons as well," he added.

Medical officials noted that if one's body is signaling thirst, dehydration is already on the way. It's best to avoid getting dehydrated in the first place. It's a good idea for youngsters to drink water before, during, and after playing, especially if it's hot. But thirst isn't the only sign that parents should stay on the lookout for.

"Warning signs are often over looked or misdiagnosed by parents," says Linda Russell RN, MS, Director of Occupational Health at St. Vincent's Medical Center. "For example, 'charlie horses' (muscle cramps) is a sign of dehydration but might be mistaken for growing pains," Russell added. "The key is to prevent it from happening first."

### **Hospital and water quality professionals offer the following suggestions:**

#### **DO: Provide Water for Youngsters Before and During Physical Activity**

Those who are engaged in a moderate to intense activity should drink water up to an hour prior

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to and then every 15 minutes during the activity. Persons should continue to drink water after activities -- even if not feeling thirsty.

**DON'T: Drink Sports Drinks Instead Of Water**

If the goal is to keep up a steady pace for two hours or more, a sports drink may be beneficial. However, most are too concentrated and will draw water into the stomach (through osmosis), keeping it from hydrating the rest of the body. The excess amount of sugar can sometimes cause cramps, nausea and diarrhea. Despite its simplicity, water is usually the best choice.

**DO: Educate Children About Warning Signs Of Dehydration**

If warning signs are ignored, dehydration can lead to heat exhaustion or even a heat stroke. Common signs include thirst, fatigue, irritability, tingling fingers, muscle cramps, headaches, dizziness, inability to concentrate, nausea and vomiting. One also may feel overheated and as if unable to cool off.

**DON'T: Forget To Send Your Child To Camp With Plenty Of Water**

Purchase a water bottle or thermos (the bigger the better) with insulation to keep the water colder longer. If you freeze the water the child may not have water for the morning because it hasn't melted before physical activities begin. Thus, it's better to keep it cold with ice cubes.

Aquarion Company's principal business is public water supply. Through its Aquarion Water Company subsidiaries, it is one of the 10 largest investor-owned water utilities in the U.S., serving 219,400 homes and businesses, or approximately 677,000 people, in 53 Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts and New Hampshire communities. Aquarion Water Company of Connecticut provides high-quality water for some 174,000 residential and business customers, or more than 587,000 people, in 36 cities and towns.

St. Vincent's Medical Center is a major acute care hospital and a leading referral center for open-heart surgery, total joint replacement and cancer serving Southwestern Connecticut and Westchester County, New York. St. Vincent's has earned national and regional recognition for the compassion of its staff, the commitment to patient satisfaction and the quality of its care.

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