



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Tiffany Isaacson
(480) 292-8774 office
(480) 510-0965 (cell)
tisaacson@phoenixchildrens.com

A DEADLY PATTERN OF CHILD DROWNINGS

Pool Fences Could Have Saved Lives – Parents Urged to Action

PHOENIX, Ariz. (September 11, 2008) – The Arizona summer has been brutal for toddlers who have made their way to unfenced pools in Maricopa County. **For four weeks in a row, a child has drowned in an unfenced pool.**

“Parents, grandparents, neighbors and friends must stop and listen,” says Tiffany Isaacson, Water Safety Coordinator for Water Watchers at Phoenix Children’s Hospital. The group was founded in honor of Weston Letter, who drowned in 1998. “The facts reported to us about these drownings are clear. Pool fences save lives, when used properly.”

According to recent media reports, seven fatal drownings have taken place in Maricopa County since the first of July. Additionally:

- Six of the seven incidents involved a child under the age of three.
- Five of the seven incidents occurred on a weekday, were in the West Valley, and involved boys. Worldwide, boys are more likely to be involved in water-related incidents.
- Most importantly, **in five of the seven incidents, no fence stopped the child from reaching the water.** Doggie doors allowed the child to reach the pool in two of the fatalities.

“Will the fatalities continue?” asks Isaacson, “we do not know. We’ve lost a total of 14 children this year, equal to the total we lost in all of 2007. We have experienced a deadly pattern, and families must have, and use, a water safety plan with the ABC’s of Water Safety to stop it.”

- **Adults** should have “eye to eye contact” with children when they have access to water, and should take turns being the designated “Water Watcher” so supervision is always fresh.
- **Barriers** between children and water can save a life. In 95 percent of swimming pool incidents reviewed by the Arizona Child Fatality Review team, a properly locked and maintained fence could have prevented tragedy.
- **Classes** in CPR for adults and swimming lessons for children at the appropriate age will help everyone to know what to do in an emergency.

Interviews/Strong Visuals: Tiffany Isaacson, Water Safety Coordinator, Phoenix Children’s Hospital at a resort pool or backyard pool.

About Phoenix Children’s Hospital

Phoenix Children’s Hospital is Arizona’s only licensed children’s hospital, providing world-class care in more than 40 pediatric specialties to our state’s sickest kids. Though Phoenix Children’s is one of the ten largest freestanding children’s hospitals in the country, rapid population growth in Arizona means the Hospital must grow as well. Phoenix Children’s recently announced a \$588 million expansion plan to bring its special brand of family-centered care to even more patients and families. The plan includes a significant upgrade of the Hospital's current campus, an aggressive physician recruitment effort, and new satellite centers in high growth areas of the Valley. For more information, visit the Hospital’s Web site at www.phoenixchildrens.com.