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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Final Report from Federal Health Team on Swann Park Released

October 26, 2007 -- The Baltimore City Health Department is releasing the final report of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry on Swann Park. The report updates the federal agency's preliminary report by incorporating new information on soil in the park and comments from the community. Agency officials will come to Baltimore on November 1 to discuss the findings with the public.

The health consultation report finds:

- It is unlikely that any users of Swann Park suffered skin discoloration or other similar problems from exposure to arsenic. These problems that have never been reported in the United States after exposure to arsenic containing soils. In theory, however, young children who spent more than 150 days a year playing in the park for many years may have been exposed to enough arsenic to cause a skin problem.
- Arsenic is a known carcinogen, and excess rates of cancer from extensive exposure to soil in Swann Park at 2007 levels of arsenic are in the range of 1 in 100,000 to 2 in 10,000. These rates rely on conservative assumptions for exposure to arsenic-contaminated soil.
- Confirming the initial report in June, the report finds that children with pica behavior could have suffered immediate effects (for example, vomiting, nausea or diarrhea) of arsenic toxicity by eating a teaspoonful of dirt.

The report notes that exposures to arsenic were likely higher prior to the mid 1970s, when soil arsenic levels were higher and the nearby chemical plant was emitting arsenic into the air.

The federal agency concludes from its analysis that arsenic at Swann Park represents a "public health hazard" that requires remediation.

"I appreciate the thorough review of new data and comments by ATSDR," said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Commissioner of Health. "The report both justifies closing the park, and it explains why extensive remediation is needed."

Confirming its recommendation in June, ATSDR does not recommend hair, blood or urine testing for individuals who have been exposed to the park, because such testing will not identify arsenic exposures associated with the park.

The scientists responsible for the federal report will attend a November 1, 2007 community meeting at Digital Harbor High School, scheduled for 6:30 pm. This meeting will also cover Baltimore City and Honeywell's proposal to remediate Swann Park by eliminating exposure to arsenic.