



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT:**

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

**Travel Warning: Water safety vigilance critical for Valley visitors**

PHOENIX, Ariz. (November 21, 2007) – On a long Thanksgiving weekend, when as many as 150,000 people pass through Phoenix Sky Harbor's gates, **families in the Valley of the Sun are urged to remember water safety** for their own children, and guests who might bring children for the holiday.

The forecast high for Thanksgiving Day is 77 degrees, and many families will likely spend time outdoors. "The hustle and bustle is a trademark part of this holiday weekend," says Tiffany Isaacson, Water Safety Coordinator for Water Watchers at Phoenix Children's Hospital. "But it can mean that we might take our eyes off little ones, and that can create an increased risk for child drownings."

A 2006 article published in the Journal of Travel Medicine cites the risk of drowning for travelers, and found that, as a destination, the United States had the highest rate of drowning deaths when exposure was controlled. Arizona has one of the highest rates of child drowning in the United States, and Maricopa County has experienced 14 child drownings to date in 2007.

Combined with increased time spent in the home and outdoors this weekend, is the amount of children likely to spend time in a residence that is not their home. "Many families will celebrate at the home of a grandparent, for example," explains Isaacson, "and if a child doesn't spend time in that residence often, there may not be adequate childproofing devices to keep children out of the pool or spa."

Tips for families and guests this Thanksgiving weekend include:

- Practice the **ABC's of Water Safety: Adult supervision** when children have access to water, **Barriers** between children and water, and **Classes** in CPR for adults and swimming lessons for children at the appropriate age.
- Pay special attention to supervision during large gatherings, when distractions can be most intense. Designate a "Water Watcher" to have eye-to-eye contact with children who have access to a pool or spa, and ensure that the "Water Watcher" is not impaired by alcohol.

- If using a pool or spa which you are not familiar with, do not assume the area is safe for small children. Pay special attention to water depth for diving, decorative rocks and sharp surfaces, and drains which can become entrapment hazards.

Thanksgiving is a time to count our blessings, and Phoenix Children's Hospital knows that children are at the top of that list. Taking these important precautions will allow families to enjoy the holiday safely, for years to come.

Phoenix Children's Hospital is Arizona's leader in pediatric care and is one of the 10 largest free-standing children's hospitals in the nation. The most comprehensive array of pediatric specialists in the State practice at this one organization. The outstanding clinical expertise, as well as high patient volume, and an unwavering commitment to caring only for children, all contribute to Children's leadership position. For information about Phoenix Children's, visit the Hospital's website at [www.phoenixchildrens.com](http://www.phoenixchildrens.com).