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July 16, 2010

*****CONSUMER ALERT*****CONSUMER ALERT*****

**HASHMI SURMA SPECIAL EYE MAKEUP
CONTAINS DANGEROUS AMOUNTS OF LEAD**

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today warned consumers of the dangerous amounts of lead contained in a type of black eyeliner used by many Middle Eastern and South Asian women and girls. Hashmi Surma Special, a brand of black eyeliner contains 710,000 parts per million lead. The type of eyeliner used in these regions is known as Suma, Kohl or Kajal, and is believed to be the source of lead poisoning in a young child in New York, according to the New York State Department of Health. Dangerous amounts of lead can lead to acute lead poisoning, and possibly death.

"Hashmi Surma Special is marketed as a product that has medicinal properties that strengthen and protect the eyes, but the opposite is true," said Madigan. "This product is 70 percent lead and lead can be directly ingested through the eye. That is a very dangerous situation and we want to warn women and girls to protect themselves."

The Attorney General urged consumers to stop using Hashmi Surma Special immediately and called on retail stores that sell the product to pull it from their shelves. In addition, Attorney General Madigan has alerted the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, and the United States Food and Drug Administration of the product's dangerous lead levels.

Madigan offered consumers the following tips regarding Hashmi Surma Special:

- Stop using this product immediately.
- Put the remaining product in a sealable container or plastic bag.
- Immediately wash your hands and any other body parts that may have come into contact with this product. Wash exposed household surfaces with soap and hot water.
- Be sure to keep this product away from children.
- Do NOT discard the product by washing it down your sink or flushing it down your toilet. Instead, dispose of the sealed product in your regular household trash.
- Contact your health care provider to be tested for lead poisoning if you are concerned that you have been exposed.
- Contact the Illinois Attorney General's Product Recall Hotline at 1-888-414-7678 (TTY: 1-800-964-3013) if you have questions or concerns about a recalled or dangerous product.

The Attorney General's office discovered the high lead content after purchasing the product at a local store earlier this month and testing it for lead content.

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Attorney General Madigan's office has tested hundreds of products for lead including toys, jewelry, bibs and lunch boxes. Attorney General Madigan enforces the Illinois Lead Poisoning Prevention Act, which requires labels on children's toys, jewelry and child care articles that contain more than 40 ppm of lead. The Act also requires that any item used by the general public that contains lead more than 600 ppm must be accompanied by a warning label.

As part of her continual efforts to protect consumers from unsafe products, Attorney General Madigan sponsors a recall hotline at 1-888-414-7678 to help callers identify recalled products in their homes and explain how to contact companies to repair or return affected products. Attorney General Madigan also publishes the Safe Shopping Guide, a color directory of hundreds of recalled products. Free copies are available by calling the hotline at 1-888-414-7678. Consumers may also download a copy from the Attorney General's Web site at www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov.

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