

5

Partnership for the Public's Health (PPH)



In a small Mississippi town, a family of five lay sleeping in the dead of winter without gas and electricity. The father awakens to start a fire to warm the family before rising. After many trips outdoors to gather wood, he notices the wife and children have not moved; he cannot awaken them...who can he call, what should he do?! It is 2003; children and families are not much healthier or safer than the families were in the 50s.

A woman rushes out into the night trying to escape an abusive spouse. Where can she go, who can she turn to for help? A family lives in an apartment where the landlord has not provided indoor plumbing for water. Other residents meet to discuss sanitation problems from the enormous amount of "garbage" littering their neighborhood. A small group concerned about helping a family where a child had a severe asthma attack and...what should they do for treatment? The family is without health insurance with the recent lay off of the father from his employment of 7 years. These are just a few examples of concerns from community residents within Stanislaus County and *do not represent only the poor!*

The crucial ingredient for a healthy outcome in each of these situations is *community involvement*. It is great to know help is a phone call away, but it is even better to have a community that is active, concerned, and responsive to the immediate needs of its neighbors. That is **Partnership for the Public's Health (PPH)**.

Stanislaus County Team PPH recognizes that a healthy family begins with a

healthy community. This partnership engages agencies, organizations, and religious institutions in developing strategies based on neighborhood involvement. While the agencies have knowledge and resources, the community members are connected with their neighborhood. Working together can guarantee the pooling of resources in communities beyond normal work hours of agencies/organizations. This kind of partnership can assist the agencies in meeting their objectives of creating "**Safe and Healthy Communities**".

The Partnership involves Public Health, Airport Neighbors United, Ceres Partnership for Healthy Children and West Modesto King Kennedy Neighborhood Collaborative and is in its third year. The success of this partnership is now shaping the involvement of Public Health and 14 Healthy Starts and communities in the county.

To gain the knowledge of the problems in each community, the Partnership is conducting a Community Health Assessment (CHA). As Tammy Felix, coordinator of the Ceres Partnership for Healthy Children stated, "The CHA is a critical tool that will provide local data about our communities, neighbors and families. The results will allow the agencies and communities to plan their programs around the identified needs in each specific neighborhood in Stanislaus County." The CHA includes an adult, child, and adolescent survey. Be on the look out for a survey facilitator in your community, as well as the results.

Motor Vehicle Injuries

In Stanislaus County, more people are killed from motor vehicle collisions than any other type of accidents. This rate increased more than five percent from 2000 to 2001 and now is almost twice as high as the state's rate. Besides the emotional toll on the families and communities, it is estimated that Stanislaus County's motor vehicle injuries and fatalities cost the community over \$31.5 million dollars.

Since no one person/agency can fully address this large problem, HSA has convened the Safe Communities Coalition comprised of representatives from a variety of agencies and communities to work on this issue. Warren Brumley, a community representative, said "I became involved in the Safe Communities Coalition because I am concerned about the lack of enforcement and traffic control especially in the unincorporated areas of the county." This group came together to develop a strategic plan using gathered and analyzed data. The plan was finalized and presented to the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors in February 2003.

The Safe Communities Coalition's Strategic Plan focuses on the following areas to reduce injuries and deaths: pedestrians and bicyclists, child passengers, teen drivers/passengers, and the general motoring public. Lt. Larry Parshall from the Oakdale Police Department believes, "The Coalition provides us the opportunity to get ideas

from others who are also working on traffic enforcement." Efforts have been made to ensure youth are wearing properly fitting helmets when riding a bike, skateboard, scooter or inline skates. More car seat technicians are being trained so that parents have a place to have their car seat checked. To review this plan or to become involved in the Safe Communities Coalition, please contact the Health Promotion Department at 558-5657.



4. Preparing for Terrorism

Learn where emergency exits are located in buildings you frequent. Notice where exits are when you enter unfamiliar buildings. Plan how to get out of a building, subway or congested public area or traffic. Note where staircases are located. Notice heavy or breakable objects that could move, fall or break in an explosion.

Tips for Protecting Your Family

- Slow down. Unsafe speed is one of the primary contributors to collisions.
- Don't run red lights.
- Maintain a safe distance from other cars.
- Wear your seat belt. Ensure that everyone in your car is buckled up properly either with a seat belt or in an appropriate car seat or booster seat.
- Watch for pedestrians and bicyclists especially when dropping your children off at school. Find a safe place to park to unload children. If possible, stay away from congested areas.
- Don't drink and drive.
- Bicyclists must follow the rules of the road.
- Wear a helmet. This is a requirement for those under 18 when riding a bike, skateboard, scooter or inline skates, but a smart decision for adults as well.
- Continually talk with your teenage driver about road safety, your expectations, and drinking and driving.