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Stanislaus County Health Services Agency Receives Grants for Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Child Passenger Safety Education & Training Programs

Stanislaus County – The Stanislaus County Health Services Agency, Public Health Division is pleased to announce that the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), has provided grant funding to the Injury Prevention Program for the sixth consecutive year. A \$110,000 grant from OTS will fund safety education and training programs aimed at helping parents and caretakers make sure their child is riding safely when in a vehicle. For the third year, the Agency has also received an additional \$105,000 grant from OTS aimed at improving the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists. Both grant programs will run through September 2022.

Car crashes are the leading cause of death for children 13 and under, and car seats save lives by reducing the risk of injury or death. Unfortunately, a nationwide survey conducted by the NHTSA found that half of all car seats are misused.

“Like seat belts for teens and adults, correctly installed car seats are the best protection for children while they are traveling,” OTS Director Barbara Rooney said. “Car seat programs are an important traffic safety ally.”

Funding for child passenger safety will go toward a variety of activities to promote occupant safety and decrease injuries and deaths due to improper use of car seats, booster seats, or seat belts:

- Child seat safety check-ups/inspections;
- Child safety seat education classes;
- Child Passenger Safety (CPS) technician training and recertification training;
- Distribution of child safety seats to families in need; and,
- Promotion of the importance of discarding used and expired car seats.

“2020 was a year when people drove 13% less, but crash fatalities increased by 7%,” said Heather Duvall, Manager for Community Wellness and Prevention at Public Health. “The Injury Prevention Program is excited to have the opportunity to save lives and reduce injuries with continued education for parents, caregivers, and children about the proper use of seat belts, car seats, and safe behaviors in and around vehicles.”

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Additionally, bicycle and pedestrian-related collisions remain high. In 2020, Stanislaus County recorded 19 pedestrian and 2 bicyclist deaths from collisions with vehicles, with another 164 pedestrians and 106 bicyclists being injured.

Pedestrian and bicycle safety funding will be used to conduct youth and adult education, including:

- Bicycle safety classes and educational workshops;
- Bicycle and pedestrian safety for youth and adults;
- Public education on the importance of safety equipment like reflective armbands, leg bands, headlights, taillights, reflectors and helmets; and,
- Participation in national education campaign events and programs such as National Walk to School Day, Bicycle Safety Month, Pedestrian Safety Month, Safe Routes to Schools, and Vision Zero.

The listed activities are intended to teach and encourage skills that will help individuals maneuver safely throughout their communities, reduce preventable injuries and deaths, and encourage active modes of transportation like walking and biking.

“Our roads are increasingly riskier for people who walk or ride their bike,” OTS Director Barbara Rooney said. “The goal of this funding is to reverse the growing trend of bicyclist and pedestrian-involved crashes by educating the public on safe road behaviors.”

Funding for these programs was provided by grants from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. For more information about these injury prevention programs, please call (209) 558-5657.



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