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Public Health Home-Visiting Program Receives Grant for Child Passenger Safety Education and Training

A state grant will enable county public health nurses to give free car seats to their low-income clients and provide education on how to use the safety seats properly to protect their children.

The \$84,000 "Child Passenger Safety" grant will fund activities to help prevent injuries and deaths to children receiving comprehensive home visits from public health nurses in Contra Costa County. Funding for the grant was provided to Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) by the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

“Public health nurses in Contra Costa County serve vulnerable, low-income families who are impacted daily by health inequities,” said Michelle Rivero, a program manager for CCHS. “Our families struggle with meeting the basic needs of the children. Rent, food, clothing all become priorities over car seats, and many of our families use old, expired car seats. This program is a much-needed resource to help keep children safe.”

Funding from OTS will go toward a variety of activities to promote occupant safety and decrease injuries and deaths due to improper use of car seats, boosters or seat belts:

- Child seat safety check-ups/inspections
- Child safety seat education classes
- Distribute a minimum of 80 child safety seats to Public Health Nursing Home Visiting clients
- Promote safety seat recycling and importance of discarding used and expired car seats

Car crashes remain the leading cause of death for children 13 and under. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 46% of car seats are not used properly.

“Children should be as safe as possible when traveling in a car,” OTS Director Barbara Rooney said. “Funding for child passenger safety education and training allows our partners to make sure children are in the right car seat that is being used correctly.”

CCHS’s Public Health Nursing Home Visiting Program serves vulnerable families with young children in need of care coordination services. Eligible families include those at risk for negative child outcomes, health disparities, pregnant women and adolescents from underserved minority groups and others. The Public Health Nursing Home visiting program makes approximately 1,400 home visits each year with children (0-8 years) living throughout the County.

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