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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 \$75,000 "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 Marilyn Condit, a nurse 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 70 child safety seats to Public Health Nursing Home Visiting clients
- Promote safety seat recycling and importance of discarding used and expired car seats

A nationwide survey conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety found that two out of three car seats are misused. Car crashes remain the leading cause of death for children, and car seats save lives by reducing the risk of injury or death.

"Children are our future and it is important that parents and caretakers keep children safe by using the right car seat, and installing it correctly," OTS Director Rhonda Craft said. "Funding for child passenger safety education and training is critical to ensuring children are as safe as possible in vehicles."

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. Public Health Nurses often find that the families they visit not only have medical needs but social and economic needs that affect the growth, safety and well-being of the child. These are the families within the County that are most in need of basic health and social services.

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