



San Joaquin County Public Health Services

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SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES TAKES ACTION TO IMPROVE CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY

CALIFORNIA CAR SEAT LAW CHANGES - EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2017

STOCKTON, CA (November 7, 2016) - San Joaquin County Public Health Services has been awarded a \$100,000 grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) for a year-long project to increase public awareness around new child passenger safety laws in California and to expand child safety seat education, services and training within the county. From 2011-2014, 80% of child fatalities (ages 0-7) from car crashes were linked to being unrestrained or improperly restrained in San Joaquin County. Public Health Services will use the funding to enhance its continuing efforts to keep children safe in and around cars and decrease motor vehicle-related deaths and injuries among children.

Effective January 1, 2017, California child passenger safety laws will require all children under the age of 2 to ride in a rear-facing car seat unless the child weighs 40 pounds or more or is 40 or more inches tall. "Not all parents and caregivers know about this change or understand how much safer it is for young children to ride rear-facing, so we really need to get the word out," explains San Joaquin County Public Health Officer, Dr. Alvaro Garza. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, children in the second year of life are five times less likely to die or be seriously injured in a crash if restrained rear-facing compared to forward facing.

Although child passenger restraint systems cannot protect all children from death and injury while riding in cars, car seats can reduce the risk of serious injury by 67% and reduce the risk of death by 70% in comparison to children in seat belts alone. While San Joaquin County has made progress in recent years in reducing motor vehicle injuries and fatalities, it still ranks in the top third of California counties for traffic collision injuries and deaths, highlighting the need for proper use of child restraint systems.

Funds from this grant will be used to expand the reach of car seat education classes and car seat check-ups to assist parents and caregivers with appropriate car seat usage. Project activities will also include partnering with San Joaquin General Hospital, County Clinics, and Community Partnership for Families of San Joaquin to train staff as certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians. In addition, the program will work with the Stockton Police Department to provide support for continued enforcement of child passenger safety laws, with the goal of expanding to other parts of the county to incorporate lessons learned from this pilot program.

"Years of research tell us that education and enforcement work best jointly to combat crash-related injuries and deaths in children," said OTS Director Rhonda Craft. "This grant brings both tactics together, with the Office of Traffic Safety and San Joaquin County Public Health Services working in concert to help keep children safe across the county and state." Funding for this program is from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

For more information on car seat education classes and car seat check-ups available through San Joaquin County Public Health Services [Child Passenger Safety Program](#), please call 209-468-8914.

Attachments: New CA Child Passenger Safety Law flyer (English and Spanish)

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