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Press Release

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Health Services Agency Receives Grants for Bicycle, Pedestrian and Child Passenger Safety Education

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY - The Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency (HSA) was recently awarded California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) grants totaling \$167,000 to implement programs that emphasize collaboration and community education to improve safety on area roads.

Bicycle and pedestrian deaths account for 29 percent of all roadway deaths in California, and the number of people killed on foot or on a bicycle is growing at an alarming rate. Data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) shows 1,014 bicyclists and pedestrians across the state were killed in 2016, a nearly 30 percent increase from 2012. This equates to nearly three bicycle and pedestrian deaths in California every day.

A nationwide survey conducted by NHTSA also 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.

The Health Services Agency is targeting the most vulnerable road users - bicyclists, pedestrians, and children in vehicles. Some grant activities for the upcoming year include:

- Hands-on bicycle and pedestrian safety skills training for elementary aged youth.
- Distribution and proper fitting of bicycle helmets.
- Child safety seat checkup events.
- Distribution of no-cost car seats to families in need.

Grant funds also support the Community Traffic Safety Coalition's Vision Zero campaign, joining communities across the nation and around the world with a goal to prevent all serious injuries and fatalities on our roadways. Vision Zero considers any loss of life from traffic crashes unacceptable and preventable. The project is currently providing technical assistance to the City of Watsonville as the first Vision Zero city in the county.

OTS Director Rhonda Craft said, "Understanding the rules of the road behind the wheel, on foot or on two wheels helps all roadway users get where they need to go safely."

Funding for these bicycle, pedestrian and child passenger safety education programs was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.



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