

PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM SURVEY- Injury

Contact Information

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Short Title: Citrus County Health Department Car Seat Safety Program

Program Location: Citrus County Health Department --Inverness, Florida

Objectives and Goals:

The objective is to improve transportation safety for children in Citrus County, Florida. Countywide, 4 out of 5 children's safety seats were not used correctly or installed securely. Data from car seat inspections and observational surveys showed that only about 15% of children who should ride in a booster seat actually do use one. Many families also can not afford the cost of a new car seat for their child. One goal is to educate families to use car seats consistently, correctly and install them securely. A second goal is to provide safe, new car seats and boosters at a reduced cost for low income families in the County.

Methods:

The Department of Health is in full support of injury prevention programs and provides the staff member, office space and equipment. Funding to purchase car seats, boosters and inspection station materials for this project is obtained from the Florida Department of Transportation. Car seat inspections and car seat distribution classes are conducted through the Health Department office by appointment. Community support from the local news paper, TV network and radio provides necessary advertising. I partnered with other agencies who work with children, to provide onsite staff training, parent education and car seat safety check up events.

Program Length:

March 30, 2001 to present

Number of target population reached by effort:

Yearly, over 700 people participate in a car seat safety class or event, and over 450 safety seats are provided each year at low cost.

Demographic Info:

Citrus County, Florida is rural in nature and located along Florida's west central coast and the Gulf of Mexico. It is 773.15 square miles in area. The population is

listed at 141, 416 for 2008, with ethnic breakdown of the following: White-- 129,000; Hispanic-- 5,000; African American--3,500; Asian--1,500. The median age is 49.5, with the largest population group over the age of 75. 85% are high school graduates and 16.6% have a bachelor's degree or higher. 16, 000 are below 100% of the poverty level. 14,000 are 100 to 49% of the poverty level. The median earnings for workers is \$21,334.

Overall Cost:

The total cost is between \$60,000 and \$70,000 per year. The estimated total cost per year is under \$150 per child served.

Funding Sources:

49 % Federal--Transportation dollars through the Florida Dept. of Transportation

50 % Local--Board of County Commissioners for the Health Department

1% Other, please explain:--Community donations
percentages are NOT estimate

Outcomes:

The misuse rate for car seats and boosters in Citrus County has dropped from over 95% in 2001 to 83% last year. This data is taken from car seat inspection forms. This improvement was achieved through ongoing car seat inspections, education for families, training in Child Passenger Safety for personnel from local agencies, and the distribution of safe, new car seats for low income families. The number of lives saved or injuries prevented are only through anecdotal reports from families involved in crashes where their children survived or were unharmed due to correct use of their car seat.

Did you make any estimates regarding costs deferred, outbreaks averted or deaths prevented?

As stated above, the amount of deaths or injuries prevented cannot be estimated. Since 2001, over 2,619 children have received a new car seat through this program, and 1,202 children have their car seats inspected for safety.

Additional Information:

This program is conducted during a 32 hour work week by a certified Child Passenger Safety Instructor. Car seat safety education is also provided at both local hospitals during childbirth classes in addition to the classes held daily at the Health Department office. Community volunteers assist with many of the health fairs, expos, and car seat check up events to help promote this valuable service. This program also helps connect many of the low income families to other community resources and services. This program is listed with the Department of Transportation as "Best Practice" for a community Child Passenger Safety Program.

Future Plans:

Plans are in place to continue this program. Grant funding from the Florida Department of Transportation for 2010 will cover the cost of the car seats, inspection station supplies, and educational materials. The Health Department will continue to provide the personnel to coordinate the activities. Another Health Department staff member has recently been trained as a Child Passenger Safety Technician to provide additional hands-on help.