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## **Riverside County health officials receive \$125,000 in transportation safety grants**

The safety of people who use roadways to walk or ride their bike is the focus of the Riverside University Health System – Public Health’s PedBikeIT program.

A \$125,000 grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) will fund the year-long program that includes a variety of educational activities like youth training, bike rodeos and community events aimed at raising awareness of traffic rules, rights and responsibilities as a pedestrian, bicyclist and motorist.

“We make it fun to learn about traffic safety,” said Marsie Rosenberg Gutierrez, program coordinator for the program. “Engaging children and their families through these interactive activities can save lives by preventing traffic injuries and fatalities in our County.”

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 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.

Educational efforts funded by the OTS grant will promote safe pedestrian and bicyclist behavior such as avoiding mid-block crossing, wearing a helmet when riding a bike, and maintaining eye contact with drivers. Program components will be especially geared toward school-aged children and older adults.

“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,” OTS Director Rhonda Craft said.

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



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