



Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency

"Healthy People, Healthy Communities"

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Community Health Services Awarded New Traffic Safety Grant

The Prevention and Planning Unit of Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency Community Health Services is pleased to announce it has been selected to receive a California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) Grant for 2010-2011. This is the third grant that has been awarded to Mendocino County by the Office of Traffic Safety in recent years. The new grant, *Sober and Safe*, will be used to sustain the dramatic declines in deaths and injuries on Mendocino County roadways in recent years.

The OTS grant gives Mendocino County funding to monitor and increase seatbelt use, and reduce cell phone use and texting while driving at and around Ukiah schools, implement the "Every 15 Minutes" event at two area high schools, offer traffic safety education and presentations to high schools, support Sober Grad events, and present a Responsible Beverage Training in the Spring of 2011.

"We have come a long way in California in the last four years," said Christopher J. Murphy, Director of the Office of Traffic Safety. "Every category of traffic fatality and injury has seen remarkable improvements. These grants will keep that momentum going."

In Mendocino County 650 people were killed or injured in traffic collisions in 2008, with alcohol involved in 149 of these collisions, almost one in every four. This rate of alcohol involvement in fatal and injury collisions places Mendocino County higher than all but 5 counties in the state. Of the victims, 35 were under the age of 21, and 64 were young adults between the ages of 21 and 34.

The goal of Mendocino County's *Sober & Safe* grant is to reduce by 15% the number drivers under the age of 21 who are in fatal or injury collisions after drinking alcohol. "The grant programs are aimed squarely at saving lives and futures," said Murphy. "They will keep California's traffic safety vision on track and moving ahead 'Toward zero deaths, every 1 counts'. There are no acceptable levels."

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