

## National Public Health Week, Article 5

### **Injury Prevention Starts...In Your Community**

Though it's not something people typically think about or plan for, the potential for injury is all around us. Each year, nearly 150,000 people die from injuries and almost 30 million people are hurt seriously enough to go to the emergency room. Violence and maltreatment are also significant problems affecting people of all ages. In 2006, more than 18,000 people were victims of homicide and more than 33,000 took their own life.

The number of violent and injury deaths tell only part of the story. Many people survive and are left with permanent physical and emotional scars. Together we can prevent many of these injuries before they happen.

#### **Did You Know that Nationally?**

- Youth violence is the second leading cause of death for young people aged 10 to 24 and is the leading cause of death in urban areas.
- More than a third of homes with children reported having at least one firearm, but only 39% of these families keep their firearms locked, unloaded and separate from ammunition.
- Approximately 20% of high school students report being bullied at school, and over 30% report being in a physical fight.
- There are over 32,000 suicides each year in the United States—or one suicide every 15 minutes.
- Nearly 900,000 children are confirmed to have been maltreated each year.
- In 2006, more than 700,000 young people aged 10 to 24 were treated in emergency rooms for nonfatal injuries sustained from assaults.
- In 2008, U.S. State and local Child Protective Services (CPS) received 3.3 million reports of children being abused or neglected.
- One in four adolescents report verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse from a dating partner.

- Each year, more than 50,000 people in the United States die as a result of violence.
- In the United States, 1 in 6 women and 1 in 33 men reported experiencing an attempted or completed rape at some time in their lives.

**You can start by....**

- ✓ Joining your Neighborhood Watch program.
- ✓ Working with school leaders to implement school violence and bullying programs.
- ✓ Keeping weapons in a locked and safe place, away from children.
- ✓ Modeling respectful communication in your interactions with children, family members and in the community.
- ✓ Being a caring adult in the life of a young person.

Stacey Cryer, Health & Human Services Agency Director for Mendocino County stated “Public Health is committed to ensuring a safe and healthy environment for all county residents. However, everyone can take an active role in their overall health and safety. Together we can make a difference.”

There is much more you can do to prevent violence and injuries beyond those mentioned in this series of articles. You can help make your community a safer and healthier place to live. For more information about injury prevention, visit [www.nphw.org](http://www.nphw.org).

For local statistics, check out the Mendocino County *Community Health Status Report* (CHSR) at [www.co.mendocino.ca.us/hhsa/chs](http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/hhsa/chs) click on PR and Publications

For more information about the statistics above and their sources go to [www.nphw.org](http://www.nphw.org)

To check *County Health Rankings 2011* go to [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org)