

## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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# Success for Pomona Child Passenger Safety Program

Media Event Scheduled to Announce the Program

**WHAT:** Safety seat checkup and Media Event

**WHY:** Traffic crashes are the #1 cause of death and serious injury to children, BUT 9 out of 10 children are still not properly buckled up.

**WHERE:** Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center, 160 East Artesia Street parking lot, corner of Artesia & Orange Grove, Pomona, CA 91767

**WHEN:** November 16, 2013, 12:30 – 5:30 PM.

**WHO:** Medical staff of PVHMC and Stephanie Tombrello, Executive Director, SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.

**TOPICS:** Incorrect use of safety seats; booster seat safety program for Pomona kids; traffic safety; model city program.

**(Pomona, November 11, 2013)** — A flagship child safety program, hosted by Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center and the Pomona Police Department, has attracted a third year of support. Community members and the media are invited to attend a demonstration event at Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center to learn about the program.

To tackle the problem of unnecessary deaths and injuries among children from car crashes, Pomona Police Department partnered with national nonprofit SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. and Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center, in October 2011. The project is funded by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. PVHMC is the only hospital in the region to partner with SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. on this program.

The initiative aims to make all Pomona parents with children aged 0–12 aware of the importance of properly fitted safety seats and safety belt in protecting kids while riding in the car. SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. and officers from Pomona Police Department also are providing program services at venues across the city to show families how to avoid the potentially fatal risks from improper belt fit and how to install their children's safety seats correctly.

A large part of the program focuses on raising awareness of the need for children aged 5 – 12 to ride in booster seats. In the last two years, 2370 children have gone through the 'Boosters Are For Big Kids' program in local elementary schools and community events. The aim is to teach them how to check whether or not they fit the safety belts in their car properly. Eighty-eight percent were found to need a booster seat – including 53% of 10 and 11 year olds. This is in line with national data which show that most children need a booster seat until age 10 to 12 — much longer than most parents realize.

The project also funds monthly safety seat checks by specially trained officers from Pomona Police Department. Correctly installing safety seats is vitally important as any errors can result in serious injury or even death in a crash. At checkups in the city in the last year, 9 out of 10 seats were found to be installed incorrectly.

Chief of Police David S. Keetle welcomed the continuation of the program. “This is bringing lifesaving information to our children, parents, and schools. Any death in a car crash is a tragedy, but the preventable death of a child is one of the worst scenarios our officers have to face. We’re very pleased to be working with SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. to bring these services to our city.”

Safety experts agree that booster seats are very important for proper crash protection, reducing by half the risk of injury to a child.

“Children are at great risk in a crash if the safety belt doesn’t fit them properly, particularly if the lap belt crosses the stomach,” said SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. Executive Director Stephanie Tombrello. “Booster seats lift the child so the belt is positioned properly on the strong bones, to take the force of a crash on the pelvis and shoulder, not the soft abdominal area. It is very simple to learn if a child fits a safety belt properly, but the consequences of *not knowing* can be devastating.”

A safety seat checkup, operated by the program team, also will take place at Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center that morning. Trained Technicians will be on hand from 12:30 – 5:30 PM to inspect the installation and use of safety seats. Families who wish to have their children’s seats checked should call Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center 909-865-9858 to make an appointment. PVHMC also offers classes at the hospital to expectant parents to help instruct them on installing car seats safely and correctly.

Traffic crashes are the number one cause of death and serious injury to children. Nine of ten children are not properly protected when riding in the car.

The program, sponsored by California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, also offers a statewide helpline for parents and a

safety seat inspection station at the Pomona Police Department. Any member of the community who wishes to get involved with the program is invited to call the Safe Ride Helpline at 800-745-SAFE (English) or 800-747-SANO (Spanish).

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. is the national nonprofit organization dedicated to child passenger safety and was founded in 1980 by fifteen Los Angeles-area safety advocates. The organization is nationally recognized for technical expertise and program excellence.

## **SIDEBAR**

Most kids need to ride in a booster seat from about age 5 until age 10-12.

If your child isn't using a booster, try the simple test below the next time you ride together in the car. You may find that your child is not yet ready to use a safety belt without a booster.

### The 5-Step Test

1. Does the child sit all the way back against the auto seat?
2. Do the child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the auto seat?
3. Does the belt cross the shoulder between the neck and arm?
4. Is the lap belt as low as possible, touching the thighs?
5. Can the child stay seated like this for the whole trip?

### About Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center

Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center is a 453-bed, acute care, nationally accredited not-for-profit medical center serving eastern Los Angeles and western San Bernardino counties. PVHMC is one of only four hospitals in California to be named a recipient of the Healthgrades Outstanding Patient Experience Award for five consecutive years. The Hospital was recognized by Thomson Reuters in 2011 as a 50 Top Cardio Vascular Hospital and a four-time recipient of the 100 Top Hospitals in the nation in the past 16 years. For more information please visit, [www.pvhmc.org](http://www.pvhmc.org).

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