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**Keeping California Pedestrians Safe is the Target of a
New Statewide Public Health Program**

Sacramento, CA. —California is a car-centric culture, but with the rising rates of obesity and heart disease, Californians will benefit by leaving their cars behind and walking more. To help ensure that as we walk more, we also stay safe, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is launching a new program aimed at protecting pedestrians. With a \$170,000 grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), PedSafe promotes safe behaviors for both walkers and drivers.

Virtually every hour a pedestrian is injured or killed in California. The PedSafe Program views this as unacceptable and preventable. To combat this dangerous environment, the PedSafe Program conducts community-based trainings throughout the state for law enforcement, traffic engineers and planners, educators, public health providers, and advocates. The model is based on the Workbook, *Communication for Pedestrian Safety: Risk, Response and Change*. The Workbook demonstrates how to use risk communication planning to turn the tragedy of a pedestrian crash into an opportunity to educate the public and promote essential change to a car-centric culture.

The PedSafe Program will also be launching its cutting-edge media campaign, *It's Up to Us*. The campaign will provide local jurisdictions with templates, tools and messages that encourage positive changes toward a safer pedestrian environment. The campaign templates, funded by the OTS grant, will be at no-cost to the user, and to maximize implementation, will be accompanied by a Campaign Guide.

Ron Chapman, MD, MPH, Director of the California Department of Public Health states, "There are far too many people impacted by pedestrian collisions in this state. It is essential that California culture shift to a more pedestrian-friendly world. We want to walk more and we need to walk more, so let's work together so this can happen without injury or death."

"As more Californians take up walking, it is critical for us to pursue efforts that build an environment of safety", said Christopher J. Murphy, Director of the Office of Traffic Safety. "Coordinating with our public health partners is an important step in this direction and we will work together to keep California's pedestrians safe."

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

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