

SANTA CLARA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

In May, 1996, the Public Health Department received a two year grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation for work in the violence prevention area, **Project HALT (Health Approach Lessens the) Violence**. The mission of Project HALT Violence is to help change the culture of violence in our community and to help reduce crime in Santa Clara County.

The Santa Clara County Public Health Department in concert with numerous other project partners believes that violence within our county community can be reduced through a multi-faceted, mid- and long-term preventive approach. The Public Health Department is committed to working with existing groups which are addressing violence prevention and will support and complement their efforts by contributing the strengths of a public health perspective.

Specifically, **Project HALT Violence's objectives** include the following:

- ◆ Establish an identified role for Public Health in the area of violence prevention
- ◆ Compile a broad-based resource inventory in order to identify strengths/services
- ◆ Assess gaps in services in the community
- ◆ Initiate a population-wide community education project for violence prevention
- ◆ Participate in community coalitions to promote collaboration and enhanced efforts
- ◆ Work with the community to develop a community action plan for violence prevention
- ◆ Plan and advocate for public policy to control the incidence and impact of violence.

CURRENT PROGRAM EFFORTS AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

In July, 1996, the Public Health Department hired a Violence Prevention Coordinator, to organize and facilitate the project's activities under the direction of the Deputy Director of Public Health. The Department has identified four major areas where violence prevention work needs to be initiated and /or better coordinated:

- ◆ **Reducing and Preventing Firearm Violence** -Public Health is currently working with Supervisor Jim Beall's Office, the Mayor Hammer's Office, the Police Chiefs Association, and others to convene a series of meetings designed to educate the community about the need to reduce and prevent firearm violence.
- ◆ **Developing and promoting a comprehensive approach to school/community-based violence prevention programs**, working through the Domestic Violence Council, Child Abuse Council, and Office of Human Relations.
- ◆ **Expanding efforts to educate the community about the need to decrease children's exposure to media violence.** Public Health is working with the Medical Association, Catholic Diocese and others to present a symposium on media literacy in the fall, 1997.
- ◆ **Creating a framework for ongoing collection and analysis of violence-related data.** As part of ongoing data collection efforts, Public Health has compiled an inventory of violence prevention resources available in Santa Clara County.

In addition, active participation has been established in other coalitions, such as the Mayor's Gang Task Force and the Domestic Violence Council. In the near future, Public Health plans to partner with the Drug and Alcohol Bureau and others to address the prevention of alcohol-related violence through an initiative designed to reduce youth access to alcohol.