



For Immediate Release
December 3, 2004

Contact:

Santa Clara County Awarded \$1 Million to Promote Healthier Lifestyles

San Jose, CA – Santa Clara County has been chosen by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to receive a grant for \$1 million in efforts to reduce the burden of asthma, diabetes, overweight/obesity and its risk factors (physical inactivity, poor nutrition and tobacco) through President George W. Bush's *HealthierUS* initiative. A kick-off press event will announce the award and activities of the grant on Friday, December 3, 2004 at the Masonic Lodge at 12:30 p.m.

With the Public Health Department as the lead agency, the *STEPS to a HealthierUS* project aims to:

- Encourage individuals and families to adopt healthy nutrition practices
- Encourage individuals and families to participate in physical activity
- Link individuals to health care providers for diabetes management
- Assist employers in establishing and implementing fitness policies that promote health and prevent obesity and diabetes
- Reduce risks and complications related to diabetes and asthma

The *STEPS* project will utilize a myriad of innovative approaches to achieve these healthier lifestyles objectives including: community-wide saturation campaigns; neighborhood outreach by *Promotores* (lay health educators); health related classes for parents, students, and faith communities; and policy development for nutrition and fitness.

Although there are pronounced health needs county-wide, the Santa Clara County neighborhoods identified for the *STEPS* project demonstrate significantly more negative health impacts than comparable neighborhoods. The *STEPS* neighborhoods account for nearly 21% of the county's population. Demographically, these neighborhoods are comprised of 52.5% Hispanic, 23.5% Asian, 18% White, 3% Black, and 2.3% two or more races/other. It includes 66 public schools in 5 school districts. Overweight and obesity are more prevalent in the *STEPS* area and hospitalizations for diabetes, asthma, and hypertensive disorders occur more frequently among the residents.

“We are pleased to receive this grant. The *STEPS* project represents steps in the right direction,” said Supervisor Liz Kniss, Chair of the Board's Health and Hospital System Committee. “During the coming year, I will launch a countywide health awareness initiative that will focus on prevention and expand on these and other efforts underway to encourage a healthier Santa Clara County.”

The Public Health Department has collaborated with the following key partners to design the project activities: County Office of Education, YMCA, Diabetes Society, American Lung Association, Catholic Charities, community clinic consortium, five school districts (San Jose Unified School District, Alum Rock Unified School District, Eastside Union School District, Franklin-McKinley School District, Mt. Pleasant Unified School District), Kaiser Permanente, Healthy Santa Clara County, University of California Cooperative Extension, City of San Jose, Santa Clara Valley Health & Hospital System, San Jose State University's Department of Health Sciences and a local foundation.

EVENT: *STEPS* Kick-off press conference
DATE: December 3, 2004
LOCATION: Masonic Lodge
2500 Masonic Drive, San Jose CA.
TIME: 12:30 p.m.