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NM DOH INJURY REPORT SHOWS INCREASE IN SAFETY AWARENESS, DECREASE IN DEATHS

SANTA FE - The New Mexico Department of Health has released the Injuries in New Mexico: Successes and Challenges report, showing significant progress in reducing deaths from injury over the past 20 years.

“When we change the environment, improve the laws and enforcement, and help people change their behavior to prevent injuries, we can see a reduction in injury and death,” said Barbara Chatterjee, of the DOH Office of Epidemiology.

The report’s findings, released this week, include:

- New Mexico ranked 6th highest in seatbelt use nationwide last year. Nearly 90 percent of New Mexicans wear seatbelts, which has steadily reduced deaths from motor vehicle crashes.
- About 60 percent of New Mexico infants and toddlers ride in a child car safety seat.
- In 1994, alcohol-involved vehicle crash death rates dropped below those with no alcohol involvement and have continued to decline.
- Deaths from gunshot wounds have declined steadily since 1988.

Health officials estimate the cost of injury to be over \$1.6 billion per year in New Mexico. Treating injuries and their long-term effects account for 12 percent of medical care spending nationally.

To view the entire report, go to: http://www.health.state.nm.us/epi/injuries_in_New_Mexico2004.pdf

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