Drowning Prevention – Wading through the COVID-19 impact

MAY 27TH – 2:00PM-3:15PM

SAFE STATES ALLIANCE – YMCA – SAFE KIDS WORLDWIDE
Vision
to be the recognized leader and driving force in understanding and preventing injuries and violence

Mission
to strengthen the practice of injury and violence prevention

www.safestates.org
REP. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ (D-FL-23)
Florida Child Drownings Increase 100 Percent as COVID-19 Pandemic Evolves

Introduction
COVID-19 and the resulting stay-at-home policies have many consequences including an increase in risk for unintentional child injuries. This memo discusses child drownings and focuses on Florida based on alerts that Safe Kids Worldwide received from its coalitions in the state.

School closures mean that children are spending more time than ever in the home, and parents working from home are challenged in their ability to provide active supervision throughout the day. As a warm-weather state with many home swimming pools, lakes, beaches and rivers, Florida may offer an early warning of emerging child drowning trends which could echo as summer approaches. As of 2018, there were an estimated 1.25 million home swimming pools in Florida. 

- Drownings are the number one cause of injury death for children ages 1-4.
- Florida ranks number one for fatal child drownings, even before the pandemic.

Make Water Safety a National Priority
Congress must devote more resources to prevent child drownings. We need:

- A National Action Plan to prevent child drowning;
- Enhanced drowning surveillance across the country;
- Resources to support water safety education and increase access to swimming lessons to jumpstart child survival swimming proficiency throughout the nation.

Trends in Child Drowning Statistics
We compared child drowning records by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) covering the period from January 1 to April 15, 2020 against the corresponding period last year. The DCF Child Fatality Prevention website showed that fourteen children drowned in this time period in 2020 versus seven such fatalities in 2019, a 100 percent increase. Of the fourteen 2020 fatalities, eleven occurred in home swimming pools, one in a home bathtub, one in a river adjacent to the family’s home and one in a hotel swimming pool. The average age of victims was roughly 2 years and 6 months. In 83 percent of cases, available reporting narrative indicates the child exited the home without the parent’s knowledge.

100 Percent Increase in Florida Child Drowning Fatalities

From January 1 to April 15, 2020, Florida child drowning fatalities rose by 100 percent over the same period in 2019.

[Diagram showing 100 percent increase in Florida child drowning fatalities from 2019 to 2020]
SAVING LIVES BY ADVANCING WATER SAFETY

Scott Fahrney, Chief of Staff
Florida State Alliance of YMCAs and Foundation
THE Y INVENTED SWIM INSTRUCTION-IT’S IN OUR DNA

AMERICA’S SWIM INSTRUCTOR

• 1 million kids each year
• 2,700 locations
• 2,200 pools
• 100 years of experience
THE Y’S SAFETY AROUND WATER PROGRAM

- Today drownings are the **leading cause of accidental deaths** among 0-4 year-old children
- **Second leading cause of all death among children**, after congenital anomalies.
- 60% of African-American children
- 48% of Hispanic children cannot swim.
WHAT DOES DROWNING PREVENTION IN FLORIDA LOOK LIKE – LOCALLY

Free Swim for Preschool, School-Age, Kids with Special Needs and Larger Community Programs
COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND AWARENESS LOCALLY

COMMUNITY AWARENESS
Water Watcher Campaign

10,250 Water Watcher Tags handed out

21 Community Events Attended
17,673 Lives Touched
COMMUNITY AWARENESS
NBC 6 SWIM WEEK
WATER SMART FLORIDA

Mission
To protect all residents and visitors to the State of Florida particularly children from drowning and aquatic related injuries and disabilities by promoting safer water practices and providing premier, strategic community-wide education to the State of Florida.

Vision
To achieve and sustain a zero-drowning rate in Florida.

GOAL #1
Utilize public and private partnerships to increase public awareness of risk factors that contribute to fatal and non-fatal drowning.

GOAL #2
Analyze & assess available local and state-wide drowning data to improve intervention programs across the state.

GOAL #3
Integrate drowning prevention education to target audiences.

GOAL #4
Ensure relevance in our state through a diverse representation of nonprofits, private agencies, local, state & federal government.
DROWNING PREVENTION IN FLORIDA

Florida Department of Health – Public Swimming Pool
Florida Department of Health – Child Abuse Death Committee
Florida Department of Health – Broward County/WaterSmart Broward County
Florida Department of Children & Families
Florida Department of Education
Safe Kids Florida
Prevent Child Abuse
National Drowning Prevention Alliance
Florida Swimming Pool Association
Families United Against Drowning/Just Against Children Drowning
United States Lifesaving Association
American Red Cross
Florida Alliance of YMCAs
YMCA of South Palm Beach County/WaterSmart Palm Beach County
Florida Atlantic University – Center for Autism & Related Disabilities
DROWNING PREVENTION – COVID-19

✓ Social Media

✓ Media: National Drowning Prevention Month

✓ Raise Awareness of Uptick with First Lady

✓ Use Reopening to Message Water Safety
Increasing Life Jacket Use: Challenges and Opportunities in Light of Covid-19

Safe States Webinar
May 27, 2020

Elizabeth ‘Tizzy’ Bennett, MPH, MCHES
Isabell Sakamoto, MS, CHES
Sarah Stempski, MPH, MCHES
• Open water drownings are the leading cause of drowning deaths for all ages

• Wearing life jackets is a proven approach to decrease drowning risk

• The Washington State Drowning Prevention Network prioritizes life jackets as a prevention strategy

• As a result of Covid-19, adjustments are being made to life jacket loaner programs, community events and a discount life jacket coupon
Life Jacket Loaner Programs

Issue:
- Decentralized
- Cleaning Concerns

Use evidence based information from credible resources

Develop a collaborative approach

Borrow a Life Jacket
Toma prestado un chaleco salvavidas

Check the label to choose the right size.
Revisa la etiqueta para escoger la talla correcta.

Fasten all buckles and zippers.
Abrocha las hebillas y los cierres.

Check for correct fit: snug but not tight.
Verificar que el tamaño sea correcto: ajustado sin apretar.

Wear it here. Leave it here.
Úsalo aquí. Déjalo aquí.

Provide adult supervision at all times.
Proporcionar supervisión adulta en todo momento.

Life jackets save lives.
Los chalecos salvavidas salvan vidas.

Borrow and use a life jacket at your own risk.
Toma prestado un chaleco salvavidas y úsalo bajo tu propio riesgo.

In Partnership With:
Washington State Drowning Prevention Network

Seattle Children's
Hospital Research Foundation
This life jacket loaner station is CLOSED.

In the interest of public health and safety during the COVID-19 Pandemic, all life jackets have been removed from this loaner station and put in storage. The life jackets will be returned to the loaner station when it is safe to make them available to the public again.

We are not aware of any exposure to COVID-19 through the use of life jackets, but we are suspending the life jacket loaner program out of an abundance of caution.

We apologize for the inconvenience and hope that you stay safe and healthy.
Life Jacket Sales or Giveaways

Issue:
• Large events are not allowed; social distancing required

New Model: Small-scale fitting, giveaway and educational events
Based on CDC, public health, Governor’s 4 Phase reopening guidelines

Rules and guidelines to maintain social distancing and sanitization standards
• Online scheduling system with walk up option
• Ground markers 6 feet apart and distribution stations 6 feet apart
• Sanitizing spray/wipes at each distribution station
• Safety devices used for fitting sanitized after the event
• Sanitizing spray and wipes for event attendees, volunteers and staff
• Mask wearing required by all; staff and volunteers must wear gloves
• Social distance of 6 feet by all
Infection Prevention Strategies

20 registrants per hour (up to 2 people/household).
- 5 to 7 volunteers
  1 volunteer at check-in
  1-2 volunteers per ed./demo (opposite ends of table)
  1 volunteer at distribution

1. Register online
2. Travel to site
3. Mask, PPE, Instruction station

Appointment based
[15 minute intervals; 5 registrants]
10 to 10:15 = 5 registrants
11:45 to 12 = 5 registrants

Up to 2 people per household

Materials needed:
- Face masks
- Hand sanitizer/bottles
- Boxes of Gloves/Sani wipes
- Gloves
- Seattle Children’s signage
- 2 digital survey signs* (TBC)
- Tape (for line division)
- Pre-packaged devices/flyers
- Demo kits
- Tables
- Chairs
- Tent*
- Pens
- Release forms
- Touch points

Optional digital survey

6. Distribution
- Includes pre-packaged device, instructions, education, etc.

5. Ed/Demo
- Set aside any safety materials used for fitting and sanitation.

4. Check in
- Confirm registration
- Liability release form
- Clean pens

3 separate flows of traffic

stations protocol:
- 6 ft. distance between all parties/stations
- Masks for volunteers
- Hand sanitizer at all stations
- Wipe down stations between each visit
Issue:
Prior to 2020, no social media allowed

Partnership to increase access:
• Big 5 Sporting Goods
• Spokane Regional Health District
• Drowning Prevention Network

Benefits:
No event needed
Can now promote via social media
Conclusions

• Work together
• Find the positives
• Keep equity in mind

Acknowledgements:
• Seattle Children’s Community Health & Benefit, Infection Prevention, Marketing Communications
• Washington State Parks Boating Program
• Public Health Seattle and King County
• Seattle Parks and Recreation Aquatics
• Washington State Department of Health
• Safe Kids WA and Snohomish County

For more information:
Elizabeth.Bennett@SeattleChildrens.org

4th of July 2019, Lake Washington
The Need for a National Approach to Water Safety And Drowning Prevention

Safe States Webinar
May 27, 2020

Linda Quan, MD
No one is an island

Scott County pool will be closed, swim lessons cancelled for 2020 season
Increased numbers of people will recreate in water

Increased temperatures (global warming)

Increased “holiday” effect”

High risk populations and Unemployed

Decreased supervision

Home pools: working parents

Fewer lifeguarded sites

Lack of other safeguards- lifejacket loaner kiosks
Association of State laws for designated Swim Sites and open water drowning rates

**Issue:**
Does legislation of designated swim sites affect fatal drowning rates?

**Data:**
1. States’ number and type of requirements-lifeguards, water quality, rescue equipment, tracking/reporting, signage
2. States’ open water fatal drowning rates

**Findings:**
1. Open water fatal drowning rates vary by state
2. Lowest rates were associated with states with more regulations of designated swim sites
3. Lifeguard and tracking/reporting were most highly associated with lower rates overall and among 0-17 year olds
Safer Open Water Recreation Sites

• Better survival at designated sites

• Lower drowning rates in states with designated site legislation

• Assess your state’s swim area sites

• Identify unsafe waters used for recreation
  • Prohibit or limit swimming, boating in them

• Improve safety at sites:
  • Designate swim sites you want swimmers to go
  • Work with local agencies

Quan et al. Association of designated open water swim area regulations and open water drowning rates. Injury Prevention. 2020
Washington State Designated Swim Area Guidelines
Policy Implications:
1. Develop state-wide guidelines for swim sites
   https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/333-211.pdf
2. Use guidelines to help pass requirements for designated swim sites
What Works: Circle of Drowning Prevention
Creating a Water Safety Plan for the U.S.
Six working groups:
Life jackets       Fencing barriers Pools
Surveillance       Swimming/Water competency
Rescue/CPR         Supervision/lifeguards

Develop model “Water Safety State”
  “Water Safety County”
  “Water Safety Community”

Visit https://www.watersafetyusa.org/nwsap.html for more information and to indicate your interest.
ADVOCACY ASK: Drowning Prevention Funding

Three goals:

1- Direct CDC to work with national organizations to scale proven drowning prevention programs

2- Support state and community drowning surveillance efforts

3- Support a national plan on water safety

This funding would bring life-saving skills to children and allow them to enjoy the health and recreational benefits of swimming and water-based activities

The Ask: Support $5 million for Drowning Prevention at CDC’s National Center on Injury Prevention and Control.
Q & A TIME

Please submit questions into the Question box in your webinar control panel
Thank you for attending today’s webinar!