Riverside County Reports Child Drowning Death

RIVERSIDE, CA (July 18, 2024) - A 4-year-old western Riverside County boy died after being found unresponsive in a community spa, Riverside County health officials reported today.

The child died at a local hospital on Monday, July 15.

"Such a tragedy serves as a reminder of how important it is to be careful when around water," said Riverside County Public Health Officer Dr. Geoffrey Leung. "From a bathtub to a hotel pool or the ocean, all water poses a risk, especially for children. Providing close, constant supervision is the only way to ensure they are safe."

This is the second fatal pediatric drowning this year. A 5-year-old child who was not a resident of Riverside County drowned in a backyard pool in Riverside on July 6.

Leung urges parents to stay alert when children are around or in the water. He provided the following recommendations to help prevent drowning incidents:

- **Designate a water watcher:** If children are in or around water, a capable adult should always maintain close, constant attention.
- **Take swim lessons:** Enroll in swim lessons or survival float classes. First 5 Riverside County partners with several organizations across the region to offer free or low-cost swimming lessons.
- **Read the rules:** Pay attention to posted signs and follow the rules of the pool.
- **Use the buddy system:** Always swim with someone else, regardless of age or skill.
- **Get CPR certified:** CPR saves lives. Getting certified through the American Red Cross is low-cost, easy and available to ages 9 years and older.
- **Stay sober**: Avoid consuming alcohol and other substances when in and around water.

Drowning is a leading cause of accidental death among children under 4 years of age, and seniors over 65 years old have the second-highest rate of drowning fatalities. In 2024, there have been 55 drowning incident reports in Riverside County with eight adult fatalities.

"Drowning is often silent. Rarely is there splashing, screaming, or calls for help," said Leung. "All drownings are preventable by adopting essential safety measures when around any type of water."

To increase awareness on how to prevent accidental drownings, RUHS-Public Health this week launched "Water Safety Wednesday," a social media campaign on Facebook and Instagram featuring water safety tips, classes and programs to ensure residents stay safe this summer.

For more information and resources, visit the Riverside County Water Safety Coalition website at www.ruhealth.org/rivcowatersafety.

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About Riverside University Health System

The 439-bed Riverside University Health System (RUHS) Medical Center in Moreno Valley, Calif., is a teaching hospital and research hub with a Level I Trauma Center and the only Pediatric Intensive Care Unit in Riverside County. RUHS includes 14 Community Health Centers across Riverside County, the Public Health Department, and Behavioral Health, which provides emergency and inpatient psychiatric care. Visit RUHealth.org to learn more.