



CHCHD News

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department

Contact: Abena Williams, PIO
(423) 209-8238

AbenaW@HamiltonTN.gov
Health.HamiltonTN.org

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Health Department launches new Water Safety campaign

Chattanooga, TN- Summer is officially here and many families are flocking to the pool, the lake, and the beach. As the July 4th holiday weekend begins, the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department, in partnership with Safe Kids led by Children's Hospital at Erlanger, reminds parents and caregivers that children can drown quietly and within seconds. The Health Department's new Water Safety poster campaign aims to reinforce important safety practices for parents and caregivers.

According to Safe Kids USA, drowning deaths among children increase 89 percent between May and August. "For children ages one to four years-old, the most common place to drown is in their family swimming pool," said Carleena Angwin, health educator at the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department. "Our partners at Children's Hospital at Erlanger have already documented eight near drowning cases in the region, three of which resulted in a child's death," Angwin added.

The Health Department posters feature four vibrant designs and messages:

- *Stay close enough to reach me. If you are supervising a young child, be close enough to reach them.*
- *Don't forget my life jacket.*
- *Swimming lessons: provide the gift that will last a lifetime.*
- *Do you know CPR? Seconds count, become CPR certified.*

The posters will be displayed at Chester Frost Park and near other bodies of water in Hamilton County, and at all of the City of Chattanooga's 16 community recreation centers. The posters are available in .pdf format for private organizations and individuals to download at <http://health.hamiltontn.org/>.

"We appreciate our community partners working with us to promote this message. There is no such thing as too many reminders when it comes to children's water safety. A national study of drowning related incidents found that parents or caregivers said they were supervising the child in nearly 9 out of 10 child drowning related deaths," said Angwin. "It's also important to remember that near drowning cases have high fatality rates, nearly 15 percent of children admitted for near drowning die in the hospital. If they survive, they can suffer severe neurological disability, that's why this message is so important," she added.

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