

## VENTURA COUNTY NUCLEAR PREPAREDNESS



Dear Parents and Guardians:

On Wednesday, September 18, 2013, Ventura County will commence an educational public health campaign that is the first of its kind in our nation. The topic: Teaching county residents how to stay safe and help others if there were ever a nuclear explosion set off by terrorists in nearby Los Angeles. Just as we prepare for all sorts of public health challenges, from earthquake safety, to fire safety to annual flu vaccinations, it's important that we also prepare for an unlikely man-made event. Why now? Good question. *We have absolutely zero knowledge of any terrorist threat to Ventura County or any other county in the country.* However, it's the responsibility of public health departments to protect and care for the residents they serve. And nuclear safety is just another one of the public health topics we think is important for residents to learn.

To give a little background, we have been developing a nuclear safety plan in Ventura County since 2006. While some people along the way have asked, "Why are you doing this? You're going to scare my family," most have said, "Thank you for taking this seriously." Ventura County's Emergency Planning Council has determined that it is our responsibility to prepare the residents of our county. We have been provided federal funding to support our efforts. This program will run for the next 12 months and will ultimately be incorporated into our ongoing education efforts.

The name of our public health program is **"Get Inside. Stay Inside. Stay Tuned."** Why? Because in the event of a nuclear explosion, the safest way to avoid dangerous radioactive fallout is to *immediately* get inside a building – and to *stay* inside that building – until public health officials say it's safe to come out.

So, why are we giving you an early heads up? As a parent myself, I recognize that if a nuclear explosion were to occur during school hours, there would be a natural tendency for me and other parents like me to rush to their children's school to pick them up. **"Get Inside. Stay Inside. Stay Tuned."** is the safest plan to follow. No matter where you are, the safest place to be is *inside* a building, *away* from the radioactive fallout. A car is not a safe place to "shelter" – and would likely put you and your children at further risk. You may, in fact, get stuck in traffic and develop serious health problems from radiation exposure.

My request for you today: Be comfortable that our schools are one of the safest places to be in an emergency, and your children will be cared for as long as necessary in the event of a nuclear explosion so that you can stay off the road and they will have healthy parents to come home to. And as of September 18, 2013, please visit us on the Web at [ReadyVenturaCounty.org](http://ReadyVenturaCounty.org), or email me directly at [nuclearsafety@ventura.org](mailto:nuclearsafety@ventura.org) to ask any questions you may have about nuclear safety.

Yours, in health,

Robert M. Levin, MD  
Ventura County Public Health Officer