

Building Safe Communities

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Buckling Up Safe Communities

The United States is well on its way to achieving the Buckle Up America year 2000 goals of an 85 percent seat belt use rate and a 15 percent decrease in child fatalities. Seat belt use currently stands at 69 percent—a record high.

Restraint use for children is also increasing. Child safety seat use for infants increased from 85 percent in 1996 to 97 percent in 1998. Safety seat use for toddlers rose from 60 percent to 91 percent over this same period. Unfortunately, proper restraint use decreases to 68 percent for ages 5 through 15. Many parents prematurely move children from safety seats to seat belts. **Estimates are that only 6 percent of children who should be using booster seats are doing so regularly.**



Child Passenger Safety Week (February 13–19, 2000) will emphasize the importance of booster seats for children weighing between 40 and 80 pounds and under 4'9" in height. Campaign Safe & Sober Quarterly Planner 21 features materials and resources for conducting child passenger safety activities, including a special "Boost 'Em Before You Buckle 'Em" insert with drop-in articles, a Proper Child Safety Seat Use Chart, and other materials. (see Resources on page 6 for information on obtaining Planner 21).

The job of buckling up America does not stop after February. To ensure that the motoring public buckle up throughout the year, NHTSA has awarded Buckle Up America (BUA) Cooperative Agreements to a group of national organizations who will support national and community activities during BUA emphasis periods. These organizations represent health and medical professionals, truck drivers, youth, African Americans, Hispanics, and rural communities. The activities funded include media campaigns, public education and outreach efforts targeted to youth and minority communities, programs on the dangers of riding in the cargo beds of pickup trucks, and programs seeking to increase seat belt use by professional truck drivers. A list of these organizations and their principal Buckle Up America contacts can be found on page 2.

Buckle Up America National Goals

- Increase national seat belt use to 85 percent by 2000 and 90 percent by 2005
- Reduce child occupant fatalities (0–4 years) to 15 percent by 2000 and 25 percent by 2005

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National News

❖ **Rosalyn G. Millman, NHTSA Acting Administrator:** NHTSA Administrator Ricardo Martinez, who established the agency's Safe Communities initiative, left the U.S. Department of Transportation last October. In his absence, Deputy Administrator Millman was named Acting Administrator by Secretary Rodney E. Slater.

❖ **Lifesavers 2000:** This year's Lifesavers conference takes place March 12-14 in Atlanta and will feature a



Safe Communities track, including workshops on collaborating with programs that target economic development, quality

of life, and health care; data collection; expanding partnerships; outreach to diverse populations; and funding strategies. For information, contact Lifesavers, P.O. Box 30045, Alexandria, VA 22310. Fax: (703) 922-7780.

❖ **National Public Health Week:** April 3-9, 2000, marks National Public Health Week, a valuable opportunity for Safe Communities programs to promote traffic safety in conjunction with other health issues. A Planner's Guide, available from the American Public Health Association, contains information on such issues as local-state coordination, marketing plans, publicity, and community involvement. The Guide (which includes a supplement) is available for \$5.00 by calling (301) 893-1894 or can be downloaded at no cost from <www.apha.org>.



❖ **LATCH:** An ad hoc group of child restraint and motor vehicle manufacturers and safety advocates has agreed on a common term for the new uniform attachment system for installing child safety seats in passenger vehicles: LATCH (Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children). Adoption of an easily remembered term will aid consumers in identifying products using the new system. The first safety seats using the LATCH system should be available by February 2000, and LATCH system components will be phased in over the next three years.

Corazón de Mi Vida

Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for Latinos age 24 and under. The National Latino Children's Institute (NLCI), with funding from NHTSA, set out to change this. Rosalie Mendez, project director, says, "We found out by looking at the numbers and by speaking with people at the Diversity Forum [sponsored by Mothers Against Drunk Driving and NHTSA in February 1999] that the Latino community" was not being engaged by many of the efforts to promote child passenger safety. We were charged with creating materials and strategies to reach our community." The result of this research and development process was Corazón de mi vida (You are the heart/center of my life), a program using Latino cultural traditions to promote child passenger safety. In addition to producing materials in Spanish and English, the campaign focuses on interactive events that empower communities and families to take responsibility for occupant protection.

Corazón de mi vida helps community organizations provide child passenger safety education at Head Start centers, community festivals, migrant education programs, churches, and malls, and also targets El Día de los Niños (April 30, 2000), a traditional Mexican celebration that is increasingly celebrated

in the United States, as an opportunity to bring the occupant protection message to Latino communities. Mendes explains, "Celebration is an important part of Latino culture. Latinos celebrate birth, baptism, even death. We use El Día de los Niños to create an informational zocalo [town square] in which people can learn one-on-one about child passenger safety and other issues."

In 1999, the day was celebrated by street festivals and community events in 72 U.S. cities. In addition to celebrations of Latino culture and children's health, many El Día de los Niños events featured child safety activities based on materials and messages from Corazón de mi vida. A Corazón de mi vida Kit, including scripts for print and electronic public service announcements, bumper stickers, a loteria [lottery] game, and other information, will soon be available for use in this year's event.

For more information on Corazón de mi vida, contact the National Latino Children's Institute, 1412 West Sixth Street, Austin, TX 78703. Telephone: (512) 472-9971; WWW: <www.nlci.org>.



Local News

❖ Ice Alert Task Force:

In November 1998, a sudden ice storm wreaked havoc in the Miami Valley region of Ohio. Seven people lost their lives in ice-related motor vehicle collisions and many others were injured. Two months later, a police officer and firefighter who were assisting victims of another ice-related motor vehicle collision were killed after being struck by a car. Spurred by tragedies such as these, a number of the region's public safety agencies, health care organizations, and media outlets came together to form the Ice Alert Task Force.

Working together, these groups developed criteria for three categories of weather events which local meteorologists can use to trigger an Ice Alert: (1) freezing rain; (2) mixed precipitation; and (3) rapid freezing of precipitation already on the roadway. When an Ice Alert is declared, the media warns the public about the specific dangers associated with the particular category and what motorists should do to prevent crashes and falls during the Alert. In addition, public safety agencies, emergency medical service agencies, and health care organizations, are warned to prepare for emergencies that may be caused by ice.

For more information, contact James Augustine, MD, Premier Health Care Services, Inc. Telephone: (937) 435-1072; e-mail: <jaugustine@phcsday.com.>



Illustrations courtesy of the Holmes County Health Department

❖ Holmes County Highway Safety Task Force:

Amish and Mennonite residents comprise about 40 percent of the population of Holmes County, Ohio. Earlier this year, the Holmes County Highway Safety Task Force was approached by a member of the Amish community who asked the Task Force to become involved in buggy safety issues. There are about 30 crashes between buggies and motor vehicles in the county each year. In 1999, five people were killed in such incidents.



The program's first accomplishment was a Health and Safety Day held in collaboration with local public safety agencies and members of the Amish community. The Task Force avoided using the traditional media to publicize the event, knowing it would be ineffective at reaching the Amish community and might attract tourists and curiosity-seekers. Instead, they used "neighbor-to-neighbor" inserts in church newsletters and sent flyers home with students at private Amish schools.

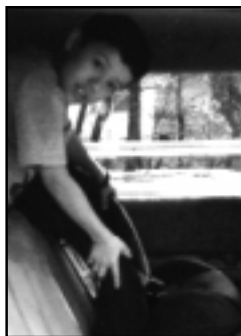
Health and Safety Day was attended by more than 750 participants from Holmes County and three neighboring counties. In addition to buggy safety demonstrations and the distribution of reflective buggy markings and arm-bands for pedestrians, the event featured a Bicycle Skills Training and Inspection for children and information on other health issues, including agricultural safety and breast cancer screenings. The day's success was indicated by the large number of requests from participants that it become an annual event. A Community Forum on buggy safety markings and road improvements, held two weeks later by the Ohio Departments of Public Safety and Transportation, attracted an overflow crowd, further demonstrating the community's interest in culturally-appropriate traffic safety efforts.

For more information, contact Anne Goon, Holmes County Health Department, (330) 674-5035.

Local News *(continued)*

❖ Safe Communities Program of Western Kentucky:

Program Coordinator Diane Cherry reports that Western Kentucky became concerned when "We looked at statistics and found that McKraken County had the third-highest motor vehicle fatality rate in Kentucky." The program initiated activities that promote restraint use across the life span. For example, an offenders' program for drivers who were cited for not properly restraining a child in a motor vehicle includes an instructional session and a car seat inspection. The \$25 program fee (used to purchase child safety seats for those who cannot afford them) is significantly less than the fine for this offense, which is waived for those who attend the class. A program done in cooperation with local preschools measured children and then provided parents with information on the appropriate child restraint device for a child of that height. Television shows produced by the Safe Communities program, with the help of a local community college, demonstrated the



proper use of child safety seats and taught parents how to judge when a child should be moved from a child safety seat to a booster seat. Both shows have been broadcast repeatedly on several public access channels.

Older children are not neglected. The Safe Communities program spon-

sors an occupant protection peer education program in every fifth-grade class in the county. In the middle schools, students receive traffic safety education as part of their arts and humanities requirement. And the county's high schools participate in an annual contest to see which school can attain the highest seat belt use rate. Cherry reports, "When we started, only about 16 percent of our teenagers used seat belts. We've achieved rates as high as 40 or 50 percent during the campaigns. Our starting rates are now in the twentieth percentile. This rate is a lot lower than it should be, but it shows we are having an effect."



The program also works to protect adults. Paducah Gaseous Plant, one of the area's largest employers, has a mandatory seat belt policy. A Safe Communities survey found that only 50 percent of the employees actually buckled up. With the help of Safe Communities, the plant conducted a compliance campaign and achieved a seat belt use rate of 95 percent.

For more information, contact Diane Cherry at (502) 898-6552.

Photographs courtesy of the Safe Communities Program of Western Kentucky

Safe Communities Calendar

February: Regional Community Building Forums; Contact Sheldon Kinbar at (215) 656-7100 (Philadelphia); Cecelia Hunziker at (847) 294-7294 (Chicago); or Leon Witman at (415) 744-2693 (San Francisco and Los Angeles).

February 13-19, 2000: Child Passenger Safety Week

March 12-14, 2000: Lifesavers 18 (Atlanta)

March 27-29, 2000: National Congress on Childhood Emergencies (Baltimore); Contact the EMSC National Resource Center at (202) 884-4927 or <www.emsc-c.org>.

April 3-9, 2000: National Public Health Week

April 30, 2000: El Día de los Niños

May 2000 - National Bike Month

May 2000 - National Motorcycle Safety Month

May 15-16, 2000: Measuring the Burden of Injury Conference (Baltimore); Contact Measuring the Burden of Injury, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh St. SW, NPP-12, Washington, DC 20590

May 14-20 - National Transportation Week

May 14-20 - National EMS Week

May 22-29 - Buckle Up America Week/Operation ABC Mobilization

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Resources

Campaign Safe & Sober Planner 21: Highway Safety Activities for February–June 2000: Planner 21 contains materials for Child Passenger Safety Week, as well as information and public education materials on aggressive driving, seat belts in school buses, and every emphasis and mobilization period through fall 2000. Planner 21 can be ordered by fax at (202) 493-2062; by mail at Campaign Safe & Sober, NHTSA, 400 Seventh Street, SW, NTS-21, Room 5119E, Washington, DC 20590; or on the Web at <www.safeandsober.org/>.



Zero Tolerance Means Zero Chances: Designed with the assistance of the National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS), the Zero Tolerance Means Zero Chances Peer-to-Peer Action Kit is designed to help youth leaders and adult advisors create a campaign to prevent youth drinking and driving. These materials will be available from NHTSA in March 2000. *For more information, contact Luis del Rio at NHTSA. Telephone: (202) 366-9825; e-mail: <Luis.Delrio@nhtsa.dot.gov>.*

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center: Funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation and managed by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center offers technical assistance to communities about bicycle and pedestrian safety. The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center can be reached by telephone at (877) WALKBIKE [925-5245] and found on the Web at <www.walkinginfo.org> or <www.bicycling-info.org>.

What's New

at the
Safe Communities
Service Center

Visit the SCSC website!
Here's what's new:

- ✿ Features on rural and Hispanic injury prevention programs
- ✿ An updated National Safe Communities Coalition Directory
- ✿ The new Safe Communities Virtual Library
- ✿ All the latest local, national, and intermodal news briefs.

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Safe Communities programs as of
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