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Distracted & Dangerous

Helping States Keep Teens Focused on the Road



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Introduction

MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES ARE THE LEADING CAUSE

OF death for 15- to 20-year-olds in the U.S. While driver fatalities for this age group decreased 49 percent between 2003 and 2012, teens – who account for 6 percent of the nation's licensed drivers – remain overrepresented in traffic crashes. In 2012, 9 percent of all drivers involved in fatal crashes and 13 percent of all drivers involved in police-reported crashes were teenage drivers (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration [NHTSA], 2014a).

What's driving these numbers? Some teens crash because of risk-taking which is the result of developmental and behavioral issues. However, most crashes occur because the novice behind the wheel does not have the skills or experience needed to recognize a hazard and take corrective action (National Institutes of Mental Health, 2011; Shope 2006). Researchers point to driver recognition (e.g., inadequate surveillance, distraction) and decision errors (e.g., following too closely, driving too fast for conditions) as the most prevalent reasons for teen crashes (Curry, et al., 2011). Distraction – any activity that diverts a person's attention away from the primary task of driving – is often a factor

and given the increase in the use of electronic devices in the vehicle, it is cause for concern on the nation's roads (NHTSA, 2014b).

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) data confirm that teens and distraction don't mix. In 2012, 15- to 19-year olds accounted for the largest proportion (10 percent) of drivers who were distracted at the time of a fatal crash. While 57 percent of those killed in teen distracted driving crashes were the teens themselves, the remaining 43 percent were their passengers, other vehicle occupants, pedestrians, or bicyclists. The risk of being involved in a fatal distracted driving crash remains high throughout a driver's twenties. In 2012, 20- to 29-year-olds represented 27 percent of the distracted drivers and 34 percent of the drivers who were reported to be using cell phones in fatal crashes (NHTSA, 2014a).

The term *distracted driving* is fairly new in the safety lexicon, but it's hardly a new phenomenon. Drivers have been distracted by many things both inside and outside their vehicles for decades. For today's teens, distracted driving is typically linked to texting and smart phone use. That's not surprising when you consider that 78 percent of teens now own a cell phone. The growth in the use of personal mobile devices is staggering. Currently, more than a third of teens (37 percent) have smart phones, up from just 23 percent in 2011, and nearly three in four have access to the internet on cell phones, tablets and other mobile devices. One quarter of teens are "cell-mostly" internet

Young drivers are distracted by more than just electronic devices. Distraction caused by passengers – especially multiple passengers – is particularly problematic for novice drivers.

users, exceeding adult usage by more than 10 percent (Madden, et al., 2013).

Young drivers, however, are distracted by more than just electronic devices. Eating, grooming, adjusting the radio, even daydreaming are drawing their attention away from the road. But distraction caused by passengers – especially multiple passengers – is particularly problematic for novice drivers. New research reveals that teen drivers are six times more likely to have a serious incident when there is loud conversation in the vehicle and three times more likely when passengers are horsing around. This inside “chaos” increases the driver’s mental workload, resulting in cognitive overload (Foss & Goodwin, 2014).

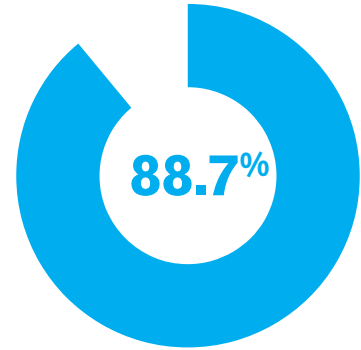
Whatever the cause of the distraction, secondary tasks that take a driver’s eyes off the road, reduce scanning and increase cognitive load are particularly dangerous (Simons-Morton, et al., 2014). That danger becomes even more acute for teens due to their lack of driving experience and a crash risk that’s four times greater than any other age group (Kweon & Kockelmann, as cited in Lerner et al., 2010). This presents a challenge for State Highway Safety Offices (SHSOs) and others tasked with addressing behavioral safety issues including distracted driving. What can be done to ensure that teens, our most vulnerable drivers, are fully engaged in safely operating a motor vehicle?

This publication is one of a series on teen driving funded by State Farm. It provides a snapshot of current teen distracted driving research and data, and discusses how states are using this and other information to address the problem. (It is not intended to be inclusive of

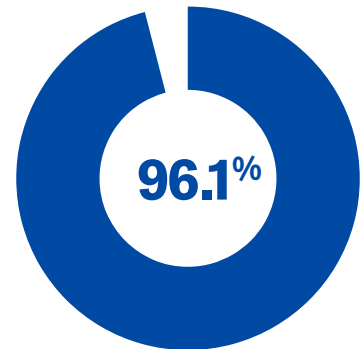
all teen distracted driving policies or initiatives, nor does inclusion of a particular program imply endorsement.) The report focuses on legislative, enforcement and educational initiatives at the state and local level, and briefly discusses national policies and programs specifically targeting novice driver distraction. It is designed to help Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) member states, safety advocates and others working in teen driving gain a better understanding of the issue and learn what is being done to reduce its incidence.

The state and local policies and programs detailed in this report were identified through a survey of SHSOs conducted by GHSA in March 2014. Thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia (DC), Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands provided responses about their teen distracted driving laws, programs and activities. Following review of the surveys and consultation with an expert panel made up of state highway safety officials, safety advocates, public health practitioners and researchers working in teen driver safety, telephone interviews were conducted with a select number of states to gain a better understanding of their activities. It should be noted that some, but not all, of the initiatives included in this report have been or are being evaluated through crash data analysis, pre- and post-surveys and/or the peer review process.

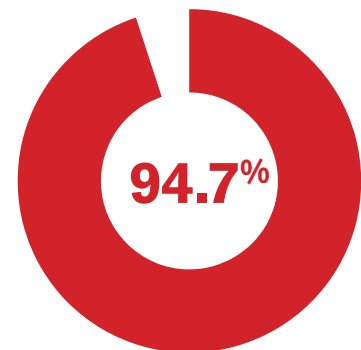
Sprinkled throughout the report are brief synopses of actual teen distracted driving crashes. SHSOs were asked to share links to news reports about high profile crashes in their state. These are included to illustrate the devastating and, in some cases, precedent setting impact of this unsafe behavior.



Percentage of drivers who feel threatened by others who talk on cell phones when behind the wheel.



Percentage of drivers who feel threatened by others who text on cell phones when behind the wheel.



Percentage of drivers who feel threatened by others who check social media on cell phones when behind the wheel.

A Nation of Distracted Drivers

MOST AMERICANS (88 PERCENT) RECOGNIZE THAT distracted driving is a significant problem, particularly when it comes to distraction caused by the use of electronic devices. The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety's (AAA Foundation) 2013 *Safety Culture* Index found that licensed drivers 16 years of age and older feel threatened by others who talk on cell phones (88.7 percent), text (96.1 percent) or check social media (94.7 percent) when behind the wheel. Additionally, social disapproval of this unsafe behavior is strong, with more than two thirds (67.1 percent) of respondents indicating that driver use of hand-held cell phones is "somewhat" or "completely unacceptable." Disapproval is nearly universal (94.4 percent) for those drivers who text or check e-mail on the road (Hamilton, Arnold & Tefft, 2013).

A closer look at the data reveals that teens 16 to 18 years of age view drivers talking on cell phones (88.4 percent), text messaging or e-mailing (87.4 percent) and checking or updating social media (85.5 percent) as a "serious" or

Teens recognize that using a cell phone to make or take a call or text while driving is dangerous, but there's a clear disconnect between what they know and what they admit to doing behind the wheel.

“somewhat serious” threat to their personal safety. More than half of teens also feel it’s “somewhat” or “completely unacceptable” to talk on a hand-held cell phone (59.7 percent) or type text messages or e-mails (92.4 percent) while driving. As teens mature and gain driving experience, however, that disapproval begins to lessen (Hamilton et al., 2013). This change in attitude may be the result of teens feeling more confident in their driving skills over time.

What’s even more troubling is that teens and adults have adopted a “do as I say, not as I do” attitude when it comes to their behavior on the road. The percentage of drivers (67.3 percent) who admit to talking on a hand-held or hands-free device during the past month is nearly identical to those who disapprove of the use of hand-held cell phones, with more than one quarter saying it happens “fairly often or regularly.” When it comes to texting, 34.7 percent indicated they read messages in the past 30 days, while a quarter (25.8 percent) typed or sent them (Hamilton et al., 2013).

The youngest drivers, 16- to 18-year-olds, were less likely (20 percent) than any other age group, with the exception of drivers 60 and older, to talk on a hand-held or hands-free cell phone on a regular basis. Their propensity to “regularly” or “fairly often” read (13.7 percent) and respond (6.7 percent) to text messages or e-mail while driving is higher than for motorists 40 and older, but the same as or less than 19- to 24-year-olds (13.7 percent, 10.5 percent) and 24- to 29-year-olds (13.9 percent, 9.8 percent). Teens, like all other age groups, also believe talking hands-free is safer than talking on a hand-held device (67.9

percent for teens, compared to 69.6 percent for all drivers) (Hamilton et al., 2013). This is concerning since research confirms that “hands-free doesn’t mean risk free due to the effects of cognitive distraction” (Hamilton, et al., 2013; Strayer, et al., 2013). Many hands-free devices still require some degree of manual interaction, which often leads to visual distraction. In addition, voice-command systems may not adequately prevent distraction as intended (Reimer et al., 2013).

Studies conducted by insurance carriers and teen peer-to-peer organizations such as Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) have yielded similar findings. Teens recognize that using a cell phone to make or take a call or text while driving is dangerous, but there’s a clear disconnect between what they know and what they admit to doing behind the wheel (Liberty Mutual/SADD 2014). Young drivers also universally recognize they are responsible for the safety of themselves (98 percent) and their passengers (99 percent), but point to other drivers (80 percent), rather than their own lack of driving experience (55 percent), as a concern (State Farm, 2013).

What is heartening, however, is that 76 percent of teens indicate they limit the number of peer passengers in their vehicles to one (State Farm, 2013). Another study of students in high schools across the U.S. found that many view their friends as a distraction in the car (Buckley, et al., 2013). While this is self-reported behavior, these findings are important and can be leveraged to promote and reinforce a positive social norm that most teens don’t ride with multiple passengers and recognize that it’s risky to do so.



Influencing Teens: Parents & Peers

THE FACT THAT TEENS ARE LIKELY TO BE THE EARLIEST and strongest adopters of new technologies may explain why they're often singled out as the age group most likely to drive distracted. But U.S. adults under the age of 50, who are likely parents of teens, use mobile devices at nearly the same rate (Romer, et al., 2013).

Parents play a critical role in influencing what their teens do behind the wheel. From an early age, children watch their parents and model their behavior. Therefore, if a parent uses an electronic device, applies make-up, eats, or engages in some other distracting behavior while driving, there's a good bet his or her teen will do so once licensed. This adoption of descriptive norms is powerful, even more so than injunctive norms, which relate to parental expectations and approval (Carter, et al., 2014). It is essential that parents recognize how their own driving behavior, as well as norms and values regarding distracted driving, influence their teens' driving patterns. As one researcher aptly put it, "always be the driver you want your teen to be" (Uni-

versity of Michigan Transportation Research Institute/Toyota Motor Services, 2012).

Peers also wield tremendous influence over teen drivers. As young people drive with their friends, they're not only trying to maneuver the vehicle, but to maintain and strengthen relationships that are important to them (Buckley, et al., 2013). This attempt to do two thinking or cognitive tasks simultaneously negatively impacts driving ability. Research also shows that teens, particularly males, take more risks when their friends are in the car, but both male and female teenagers engage in distracting behaviors when at the wheel (Carter, et al., 2013).

As with their parents, however, teens are more likely to be influenced by what their peers actually do (descriptive norms) when it comes to distracted driving behaviors. While researchers don't fully dismiss the impact peer acceptance and inclusion (injunctive norms) have on novice driver behavior, the fact that teens think their friends drive distracted more often than they actually do may be prompting them to engage in the unsafe behavior. Correcting misperceptions about how much teens engage in risky driving behaviors presents opportunities to challenge and positively influence the social norm (Carter, et al., 2014).

Helping parents and teens recognize the impact passengers have on novice driver crash risk is also important. Just one teen passenger increases a teen driver's crash

TEEN DRIVER KILLED WHILE POSTING ON FACEBOOK

An Idaho teen died in a car crash just moments after posting on her Facebook page, “I can’t discuss this matter now. Driving and facebooking is not safe! Haha.” Her parents are urging all states to enact texting and driving bans. Eighteen-year-old Taylor Sauer, the recipient of a Distinguished Student Award one year before her death, rear-ended a slow moving tractor trailer while she was driving at over 80 mph per hour on the freeway. Her vehicle was then struck by another semi. She died shortly after the crash. Her grieving parents, Clay and Shauna Sauer, appeared on the *Today Show* to call for a texting ban not only in their home state, but in all states. Their hope is that bans will teach drivers from a young age that texting and driving is unsafe and unacceptable (KTVB, 2012).

New research suggests that peer passengers may pose a greater threat of a teen driver being involved in a serious incident than electronic devices.

risk by 50 percent. Put three or more passengers in the car, and the “risk is nearly four times greater” than when a teen is driving alone (National Safety Council, 2009). Distraction for a driver is high as he engages in conversation, debates song choices or comments on what’s happening inside and outside the vehicle with friends. In some cases, passengers may even physically interfere with the driver or their presence may prompt the teen driver to speed, tailgate or show off (Williams & Tefft, 2012). As noted in the previous section, surveys suggest that teens are getting the message about the need to limit driving with friends. But are they?

Compliance with state graduated driver license (GDL) laws, many of which

restrict the number of peer passengers teen drivers may transport, is mixed. More than half of New Jersey probationary (intermediate) license holders surveyed about their compliance with the one-passenger limit mandated by that state’s GDL, admitted violating the restriction (IIHS, 2011). While parents are the chief enforcer when it comes to this and other GDL provisions, nearly three quarters of U.S. parents are in the dark about how their state’s GDL program works (IIHS, 2010). New research also suggests that peer passengers may pose a greater threat of a teen driver being involved in a serious incident than electronic devices, making parental awareness of passenger impact even more critical (Foss & Goodwin, 2014).



Washington's Response to the Problem

FORMER U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

(USDOT) Secretary Ray LaHood put the problem of distracted driving on the nation's radar screen. Calling it "an epidemic on America's roadways," LaHood joined with victim advocate organization Focus Driven, which was launched by the National Safety Council, to raise awareness of this unsafe behavior. USDOT also launched the distraction.gov website, which includes a link to the teen driving parent portal *Under Your Influence* (www.underyourinfluence.org/).

As part of the National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS), NHTSA now reports on the number of drivers text-messaging or visibly manipulating hand-held cell phones, which is purported to be as many as 600,000 in any given daylight moment in the U.S. NOPUS also reports that approximately 9 percent of all drivers are speaking on a hand-held or hands-free cell phone (NHTSA,

2013). The agency analyzes Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) and National Automotive Sampling System (NASS) General Estimates System (GES) data and issues a [Traffic Safety Facts Research Note on Distracted Driving](#) that includes information by age group beginning with novice drivers 15 to 19 years of age. A separate [Teen Distracted Driver Data](#) fact sheet for 2012 is also available.

Congress also recognized the magnitude of the problem. A new priority safety program designed to encourage states to enact and enforce texting laws as well as institute bans on the use of all electronic devices for drivers under 18 was enacted in 2012 as part of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), the federal surface transportation program which is scheduled to expire in September 2014. The law earmarks 8.5 percent of Section 405 highway safety program funds for distracted driving incentive grants. The program calls upon states to enact primary enforcement laws, establish a minimum fine (\$25) for a first offense and increased fines for repeat violations, and include (via statutory mandate) questions about distracted driving on their driver's license written exams (U.S. DOT, 2013).

Additionally, MAP-21 established a state graduated driver licensing (GDL) grant program that sets forth minimum requirements for state GDL systems. Teens

holding an intermediate license (phase two of the GDL program) may transport no more than one non-family member under the age of 21 unless accompanied by a 21-year-old licensed driver. To qualify for a GDL grant, states must also prohibit (as a primary offense) permit (stage one) and intermediate license holders from using a cell phone or any communications device while driving, except in the event of an emergency (U.S. DOT, 2013).

Seven states qualified for distracted driving grant funds in Federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, while only Connecticut did so in fiscal year 2014. No states qualified for GDL grant funds in FY 2013 or 2014. A 2012 survey of SHSOs found that 20 states and DC include at least one distracted driving question on their driver license test, while 37 states and DC include distracted driving information in their driver manual. The Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA), for example, cites numerous examples of distracted driving in the driver license manual and defines it as anything that takes a driver's eyes, hands or mind away from the task of driving. In the MVA's online tutorial, novice drivers can answer practice licensing exam questions that include the following: Texting while driving a motor vehicle is: A) Permitted when driving at low speed; B) Not legal; or C) Legal if the driver is 21 years of age or older. The correct answer is B (Sprattler, 2013).

TEEN WAS TEXTING BEFORE FATAL CRASH

Deianerah "D.J." Logan died on the first day of her senior year in high school when the van the 17-year-old was driving struck the back of a stopped school bus. The crash investigation confirmed that she had been composing a text message at the time of the fatal crash. "D.J. was a good kid, with good grades, great friends, a perfect driving record and loved life," said her father Matt Logan. "She made a mistake, like all teenagers do in the process of growing up, except this time, there's no growing up. We can only pray that others learn from her." Logan also pointed out that parents must be positive role models. "We need to educate and live by example by limiting our phone use in the car. We all need to help each other make positive choices, but ultimately, we still have the responsibility of making wise choices. Don't text and drive. Just don't do it" (Fate, 2012).



44 states and the District of Columbia have an all-driver text messaging ban that includes novice drivers.

Hawaii

Alaska

DC

When it comes to passenger restrictions, 47 states and DC have provisions in their GDL laws, 13 of which are secondary enforcement. The exceptions are Florida, Mississippi and South Dakota. Iowa allows a parent to waive the restriction (no more than 1 passenger under 18 years of age for the first six months of intermediate licensure; state officials estimate that 89 percent of parents have exercised this right), South Dakota permits an exemption if the teen is driving to and from school, and Louisiana's restriction applies only between 6 p.m. and 5 a.m. A closer look at state passenger restrictions finds that they vary by timeframe (i.e., six months, 180 days, one year), age (i.e., under 18, under 20, under 21) and number (i.e., no more than one, no more than 2), making for a hodgepodge of requirements across the nation (GHSA, 2014b).

The jury is still out on the effectiveness of novice driver cell phone and texting bans. A study of North Carolina's young driver law, which bans the use of all electronic devices by license holders under 18 years of age, found there was no difference in behavior after it took effect. Researchers determined that nearly two-thirds of teens and just over one-third of parents knew about the law, but only 22 percent of teens and 13 percent of parents indicated that it was enforced. On the other hand, research examining the impact of hand-held cell phone bans for all drivers

State Policy Initiatives

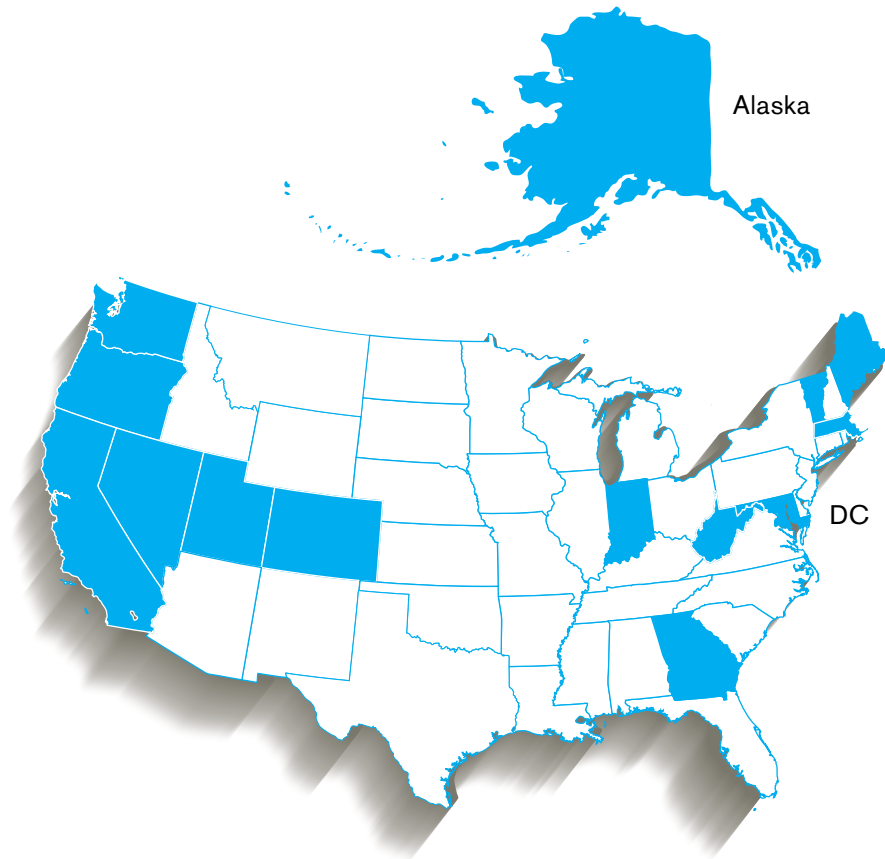
CURRENTLY, 44 STATES AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA have an all-driver text messaging ban that includes novice drivers. Of those bans, 39 are primary and five secondary (FL, IA, NE, OH, SD). A closer look reveals that 37 states and DC also have primary novice driver cell phone bans that apply either to all drivers under 18 years of age (under 19 in Illinois) or GDL drivers. These laws restrict teens from using any electronic devices when operating a motor vehicle. Additionally, Mississippi and Oklahoma prohibit teens holding a learner's permit or intermediate (provisional) license from texting while driving, while Missouri bans text messaging by any driver under 21 years of age. Arizona and Montana are the only states that do not have a prohibition on texting and/or cell phone use by teen drivers (GHSA, 2014a).

Distracted & Dangerous

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State Policy Initiatives

IIHS recommends that states bar intermediate license holders from transporting any peer passengers and cites 15 states and DC for their no passenger restriction.



Banning cell phone use and texting by all drivers may provide an opportunity to support the establishment of rules for novice drivers that are modeled by parents.

found a “significant reduction in young driver fatal crashes” (Buckley, 2014). The research suggests that consistent enforcement is essential but clearly made more difficult when laws restrict only young drivers. Recognizing the role parents play in influencing their teen drivers’ behavior, banning cell phone use and texting by all drivers may provide an opportunity to support the establishment of rules for novice drivers that are modeled by parents (Buckley, 2014).

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), meanwhile, “has documented that bans on hand-held phone use reduce overall phone use... but there’s no evidence they reduce crashes” (2014a). The organization, however, notes “there is a disconnect between the estimated crash risk associated with cell phone use and real-world crash trends, which indicate that crashes have been

declining in recent years, even as driver phone use has increased” (IIHS, 2014a). New research examining the impact of texting bans in 48 states over an 11-year period, however, found that primarily enforced all-driver texting laws were associated with a 3 percent reduction in fatalities, and those banning only young drivers from texting had the greatest impact on reducing deaths among 15 to 21 year olds (Ferdinand et al., 2014).

IIHS does point to passenger restrictions as an effective policy for addressing teen crash risk. Two national studies conducted by IIHS and the Highway Loss Data Institute found that “strong restrictions on nighttime driving and teenage passengers...reduce fatal crashes and insurance losses for teenage drivers” (IIHS, 2014b). Those findings prompted the development of an online calculator that shows the gains

Research found a 21 percent reduction in the fatal crash rate of 15- to 17-year-olds when novice drivers were prohibited from driving with any teens versus two or more.

states could make in teen driver safety if they amended their GDL laws to include a passenger restriction among other key provisions (IIHS, 2014b).

For the greatest gains in teen driver safety, IIHS recommends that states bar intermediate license holders from transporting any peer passengers and cites 15 states and DC for their no passenger restriction (AK, CA, CO, CT, GA, IN, ME, MD, MA, NV, OR, UT, VT, WA, WV) (IIHS, 2014c). The recommendation is supported by research that found a 21 percent reduction in the fatal crash rate of 15- to 17-year-olds when novice drivers were prohibited from driving with any teens versus two or more. Additionally, allowing just one teen passenger is associated with a 7 percent reduction in crash risk (McCartt, et al., 2003).

In addition to electronic device and passenger restriction laws, one state, New Jersey, requires GDL permit and probationary license holders under 21 years of age to display a reflectorized decal on the front and rear license plate of the vehicle they're driving to aid with enforcement. While the decal requirement has been controversial, researchers at the Center for Injury Research and Prevention at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) found that during the first year of its use, crashes involving 17-year-old probationary (intermediate) drivers fell 9 percent, while enforcement of GDL restrictions increased 14 percent (Curry et al., 2013).

A closer look at the data reveals that the average monthly rate of all GDL

citations issued per 10,000 teen drivers increased from 11.4 prior to enactment of the decal law to 23.4 after the law went into effect. Citations issued to teens for violating New Jersey's passenger restriction saw similar gains, increasing from 6.3 to 12.5 per 10,000 drivers (Curry et al., 2013). While there were relatively few citations issued for wireless device use (New Jersey GDL holders are banned from using any wireless communications devices while operating a motor vehicle), the number doubled after the decal requirement took effect (Curry, et al., 2013).

Of the 37 states that responded to GHSA's teen distracted driving survey, 17 indicated that an effort currently is or was recently undertaken to strengthen their teen distracted driving and/or GDL passenger restriction. A review of teen driving bills being monitored by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) found that 96 bills have been introduced and/or acted upon by 26 states since the start of 2014. Eighteen address distracted driving (i.e., enact a teen texting ban, move from secondary to primary enforcement, require questions on driver licensing exams or in driver education curriculum, increase fines), nine focus on either strengthening or weakening current passenger restrictions in GDL laws, and six address novice driver identification through the use of a placard or decal (two would repeal New Jersey's mandate; four call for a decal in New York and Massachusetts). Since January 2014, another 195 distracted driving bills that impact all drivers have or are also being considered by 43 states (NCSL, 2014).

Effective November 1, 2014, a New York driver under 21 years of age convicted of using a hand-held cell phone or texting while driving will receive a 120-day license suspension for the first offense and a one year suspension for the second offense.

Several states' recent cell phone-related public policy initiatives merit discussion:

New York will soon have the nation's toughest distracted driving penalties. Effective November 1, 2014, a driver under 21 years of age convicted of using a hand-held cell phone or texting while driving will receive a 120-day license suspension for the first offense and a one year suspension for the second offense. This follows on the heels of more stringent requirements, enacted last year, that include the issuance of five penalty points (previously three) for all drivers convicted of violating New York's hand-held cell phone/texting ban and a 60-day license suspension for the first offense and a six-month suspension for the second and subsequent offense. Governor Cuomo, the father of three teenagers, pitched the idea in his state-of-the-state address in January and subsequently included the legislation in his proposed budget.

California clarified its law that prohibits teens under 18 years of age from texting while driving to include hands-free, voice activated technology. SB194, the Teen Distracted Driving Prevention Act which took effect January 1, 2014, makes it clear that the 2012 California law that permits adult motorists to use hands-free texting and voice-activated devices such as those found on vehicle dashboards, doesn't include teens (Jullien, 2013). SB194, therefore, clarifies that teens under 18 are not allowed to use electronic devices of any kind while driving, regardless of whether it is operated manually or voice-activated.

New Hampshire expanded its prohibition against texting to include a hand-held cell phone ban for adults and a comprehensive electronic device ban for teens. The law, which takes effect July 1, 2015, defines all banned activities as reading, composing, viewing, or posting electronic messages; initiating, receiving or conducting a conversation; initiating a command or request to access the Internet; inputting information into a global positioning system (GPS) or navigation device; or manually typing data into any other portable electronic device. Additionally, it clarifies "while driving a motor vehicle" to include "temporarily halted for a traffic control device or other momentary delay" (State of New Hampshire, 2014). Motorists who violate the law will be fined \$100 plus penalty points for the first offense, \$250 plus points for the second offense and \$500 plus points for a subsequent offense within a 24-month period. The SHSO is tasked with developing an education program to alert the public.

Utah, which in 2013 banned all teen drivers under 18 years of age from using hand-held or hands-free phones, amended its texting and driving law to include a ban on hand-held wireless devices including cell phones, laptops and other electronics that can be removed from the vehicle for the purpose of manually writing, sending or reading a text message, instant message or e-mail; viewing or recording video; accessing the Internet; entering data; or dialing a phone number. The law does not, however, prohibit a driver 18 and older from using a hand-held cell phone to engage in a conversation

Missouri lawmakers have introduced six separate bills so far in 2014 to change the state's texting while driving law, which currently applies only to drivers 21 years of age or younger.

or obtain navigational information. A violation carries a maximum fine of \$100. More severe penalties are assessed for drivers who cause serious bodily injury while using a hand-held cell phone or have prior distracted driving convictions within a three-year period (Utah State Legislature, 2014). The law took effect on May 13, 2004, and was inspired by a couple that was struck while walking by a 50-year-old woman who allegedly was texting and speeding (the man was killed and his wife seriously injured). The driver was charged with vehicular homicide (Hands Free Info, 2014).

Missouri lawmakers have introduced six separate bills so far in 2014 to change the state's texting while driving law, which currently applies only to drivers 21 years of age or younger. The law prohibits a driver from using a hand-held wireless communications device to write, read or send a text. Two of the proposed bills would expand the state's law to include all drivers, while two others would not only remove the age limitation but ban the use of voice-activated, hands-free technology. The remaining two proposals would prohibit all drivers from using hand-held cell phones to text or talk (Copeland Law Firm, 2014).

New Jersey approved three distracted driving bills in 2013 – one provides for a charge of vehicular homicide if a death occurs as a result of driver cell phone use, another addresses public education and the third toughens the penalties for first and repeat offenders. Enacted on July 18, 2012, the Kulesh, Kubert and Bolis Law, named for five individuals who were seriously injured

or killed by distracted drivers, several of whom were teens, makes it easier for prosecutors to charge a driver with assault by auto or vehicular homicide if he was talking or texting on a hand-held cell phone before a crash. Under New Jersey motor vehicle statute, vehicular homicide is punishable by between five and 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$150,000. Assault by auto is punishable by up to 18 months in prison and a fine of up to \$10,000 (McArdle, 2012).

Nikki's Law, which took effect on August 14, 2013, requires the Department of Transportation to erect permanent signs and join with other states in using variable message signs to inform drivers that using a hand-held cell phone or electronic device while driving is illegal. The law is named for an 18-year-old who died when the driver of the vehicle she was riding in turned into the path of an oncoming pick-up truck. While no official cause was determined, the driver, Nikki's high school classmate, was believed to have been distracted at the time of the crash (Hands Free Info, 2013).

On July 1, 2014, the fine for violating New Jersey's cell phone/texting ban increased from \$100 to between \$200-400 for a first offense, \$400-600 for a second offense and up to \$800 for a third and subsequent offense. Additionally, a third offense carries three penalty points and a 90-day license suspension. A GDL holder who is cited for violating the state's hand-held cell phone/texting ban can be charged under both the GDL law, which carries a \$100 fine, and the amended statute.



State Enforcement Initiatives

AS MORE STATES PASS LAWS BANNING THE USE OF electronic devices, law enforcement officials in jurisdictions across the nation are actively enforcing distracted driving laws. From routine traffic patrols that include distracted driving enforcement as standard protocol, to targeted efforts focused on specific events such as the first nationwide *U Text, U Drive, U Pay* campaign conducted during Distracted Driving Awareness Month in April 2014, police are cracking down on violators. At the same time, states note that police officers are challenged by age-specific bans that prohibit teens and/or GDL holders from using electronic devices to talk and/or text as well as secondary laws. Additionally, the complexity involved in determining whether a motorist is actually engaging in illegal behavior such as texting versus dialing (the latter is permitted in most states) compounds the problem.

This likely explains why none of the states that responded to GHSA's teen distracted driving survey have enforcement programs focused solely on teens. Instead, law enforcement officials in some states are partnering with SHSOs and/or other statewide or local safety organizations to educate teens about the dangers of distracted driving. For example, the **Texas** Municipal Police Association's (TMPA) five law enforcement liaisons are crisscrossing the state talking to young drivers about the dangers of distracted driving. To date, they've reached approximately 20,000 teens with an interactive program that's designed to convey a simple message – "if you're on the road, stay off the phone" (Teens in the Driver Seat, 2014).

Law enforcement officials acknowledge that addressing distracted driving in the Lone Star State is daunting since only novice drivers younger than 18 are banned from texting behind the wheel. The state does limit the number of passengers a GDL holder may transport (no more than one passenger for those under 21 years of age), but the law allows for secondary rather than primary enforcement. That's why beginning in September 2014, driving school instructors trained by members of the Texas Highway Patrol will be required to deliver a new two-hour, distracted driving program mandated by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to their students.

DPS officials explain that driving schools were selected to launch the distracted driving program because they were recently granted legislative approval to administer the behind-the-wheel driver licensing test. “We started examiner certification in June, so it made sense to train driving school staff to deliver this program at the same time.” The program is designed for in-person or computer-based delivery (a series of questions are interspersed throughout the computer version to ensure students are engaged and complete the entire program). An online version is in development for teens who participate in the parent-taught program or who do not attend a driver education school authorized to conduct the in-person training. It is targeted for delivery in August 2014. Upon completion of the program, the teen receives a date- and time-stamped certificate that must be presented to the license examiner prior to taking the behind-the-wheel driving test.

Currently, all new drivers under 25 years of age receive information about distracted driving, whether taught by a parent or a driving school, through an approved curriculum. DPS approves the parent-taught curriculum, while driving schools use a curriculum administered by the Texas Education Agency. This new program, called *Impact Texas Teen Drivers* (ITTD) is modeled after an initiative developed by the California non-profit *Impact Teen Drivers* ([see page 26 for more](#)

TEXAS COED NEARLY DIES IN TEXTING CRASH

Chance Bothe is lucky to be alive. As the 21-year-old Texan was driving home from college in 2012, he failed to negotiate a curve in the road causing his truck to tumble down a 20-foot ravine. “I need to stop before I have a wreck and kill myself,” was the text he sent to a friend just before the crash. Bothe, who spent seven months in the hospital, including three weeks in a coma, suffered multiple injuries including a broken leg, ankles, ribs, sternum, neck, and nose. He also punctured a lung, crushed his eye sockets and forehead and fractured his skull. Doctors weren’t sure he would survive, telling his family if he did, he’d be blind and never walk again. Bothe defied the odds, albeit he is moving slower than before the crash, and is now taking his message about the dangers of distracted driving to high schools across the state (*Watkins, 2013*).

[information](#)). It emphasizes the problem of reckless and distracted driving using state-specific statistics, videos and materials designed to engage teens in identifying “what’s lethal” (Impact Teen Drivers, 2014a). Included in the program is the *GDL Made Simple* video, which serves as a reminder of the crash risk for teen drivers and Texas’ passenger and other novice driver restrictions.

With approximately 300,000 teens entering Texas’ driver licensing system annually, DPS officials believe the program is warranted. But will it have an impact? In 2012, Texas led the nation in the number of young drivers – 182 – killed in motor vehicle crashes (NHTSA, 2014b).

Meanwhile, the 44 states that currently have an all-driver texting ban as well as the



Passing a law may deter some motorists from driving distracted, but research confirms that enforcement coupled with impactful consequences and social norming campaigns are essential.

14 that also prohibit hand-held cell phone use are encouraged to make enforcement a priority, as “broad public awareness and high-profile enforcement are essential to successful policy implementation” (Ehsani, et al., 2014). Passing a law may deter some motorists from driving distracted, but research confirms that enforcement coupled with impactful consequences and social norming campaigns are essential (Ehsani, et al., 2014).

Recent NHTSA-funded demonstration projects point to the value of states investing in high visibility enforcement (HVE) coupled with paid and earned media to address distracted driving. Building upon the demonstration project conducted in Syracuse, New York, and Hartford, Connecticut, from April 2010 to 2011, which saw hand-held cell phone use drop 32 percent and 57 percent, respectively, the *Phone in One Hand, Ticket in the Other* program was replicated in **California** and **Delaware**. The enforcement area in California covered nine counties in the Sacramento Valley Region home

to nearly 4 million residents, while enforcement was conducted statewide in Delaware, which has a population of just under one million (NHTSA, 2014c)

The programs were coordinated by the SHSOs, which recruited law enforcement agencies, as well as partnered with NHTSA’s Office of Communication and Consumer Information to generate earned media coverage in conjunction with three enforcement waves conducted over an eight month period beginning November 2012. Thirty-seven police departments joined with the California Highway Patrol in the Golden State, while 98 percent of police agencies participated in Delaware’s first-ever distracted driving HVE effort. California law enforcement officials issued 10,800 tickets to drivers who were either talking or texting on cell phones, while 6,200 tickets were issued in Delaware (NHTSA, 2014 c).

Observed hand-held cell phone use dropped by approximately one third at each program site, from 4.1 percent

to 2.7 percent in California, and from 4.5 percent to 3 percent in Delaware. Additionally, driver awareness of the enhanced enforcement increased significantly, from 56 percent at baseline to 73 percent at the end of the final wave. Awareness of the campaign slogan also jumped from 16 percent at baseline to a high of 57 percent by program end (NHTSA, 2014c).

SHSOs are encouraged to partner with police agencies not only to fund and promote HVE campaigns targeting novice and experienced drivers who are distracted, but also to identify new enforcement techniques and training needs. In **New York**, for example, the State Police are deploying Concealed Identity Traffic Enforcement (CITE) vehicles to more easily spot motorists who are texting while driving. CITEs are sport utility vehicles that have platforms higher than an average vehicle, providing police a better vantage point to see into vehicles and detect motorists who are texting and driving. The vehicles are unmarked and come in a variety of colors so they blend into traffic.

Massachusetts State Police are also trying new, creative tactics to catch texting drivers. Some troopers stay in unmarked cars on the side of the road, while others slowly cruise the middle lane to watch as motorists pull out their phones. Still other plainclothes officers stand at intersections to keep an eye out for texting drivers and radio ahead to other officers who then pull the

FIVE TEENS DIE IN FATAL NY CRASH

Bailey Goodman was driving her friends to her parents' vacation home when her SUV swerved into oncoming traffic, hit a tractor-trailer and burst into flames. Five days earlier, the five teens, who were all 17 and 18 years of age, had graduated together from high school in Fairport, a Rochester, New York, suburb. Police point to Goodman's inexperience behind the wheel, speeding at night on a winding, two-lane highway and a series of calls and text messages on her phone as factors in the crash. She had only a junior (intermediate) driver's license, making it illegal for her to be driving after 9:00 p.m. without supervision and with so many young passengers. While police were unable to confirm if Goodman was doing the texting, several minutes before the first 911 call, she spoke briefly with a fellow graduate following her in another vehicle. Two minutes before the crash was reported, her phone was used to send a text greeting to a friend (*Associated Press, 2007*).

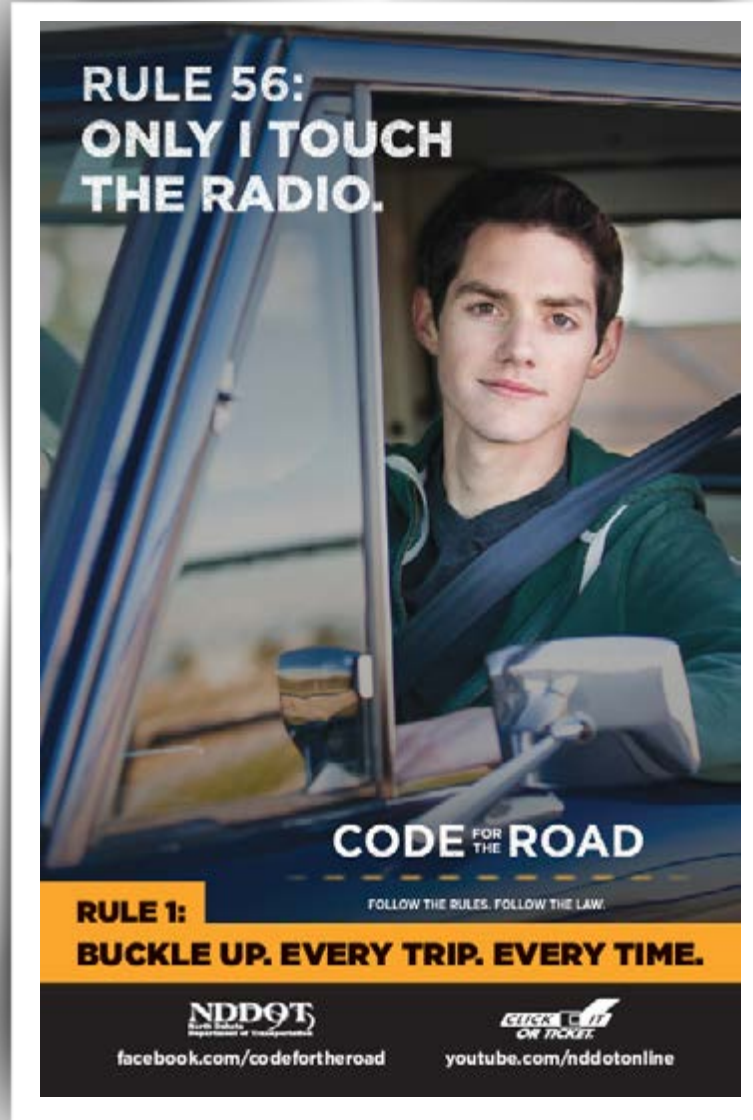
offender over. Police in Sacramento, California, are using DDACTS (Data Driven Approaches to Crime and Traffic Safety) to crackdown on distracted drivers. Officers are saturating corridors identified as high-collision zones, looking for distracted drivers who may be one cell phone or text away from a crash.

North Dakota invested a small portion (\$1,500) of the distracted driving grant funds it received in FY 2013 to provide law enforcement training in advance of a statewide HVE and paid/earned media campaign conducted during the April 2014 observance of Distracted Driving Awareness Month. Law enforcement

officers reviewed program goals, state (a primary texting ban applies to all drivers) and city ordinances and best practices (officers from the Fargo and Bismarck Police Departments shared strategies for identifying and stopping drivers who are texting). All police agencies were required to attend the training in order to receive overtime grant funds (\$42,000 was budgeted for the 2014 program).

The state's Traffic Safety Office also used \$100,000 of the grant funds to purchase media in support of the HVE activities. North Dakota's *Code for the Road* campaign, which began in 2013 and reminds motorists to *Follow the Rule. Follow the Law.*, was expanded to include a distracted driving message. While the target audience is adults 18 to 54 years of age, as well as parents of teen drivers and educators, radio and television ads featuring teen and adult male drivers highlight Rule No. 1 – *No texts or calls when I drive.* (Both broadcast and social media including Pandora and Hulu were used.) Additionally, high school activity ads, posters, web banners, and fact sheets were created to convey the message.

With the recent enactment of a statewide texting ban, the **Tennessee** Highway Patrol (THP), in partnership with the SHSO, is training officers and new recruits to look for the visual cues of distracted driving.



These include frequent head nods, an inability to stay in the driving lane, unsmooth vehicle operation (i.e., slow down, speed up), delayed braking, and a downward gaze or stare. The focus isn't just on technology, however, as officers are reminded to look for and cite motorists engaged in other distracting behaviors including

eating, grooming, reading, and tending to pets to name a few. SHSO officials also note that the THP is using a semi-tractor trailer to detect distracted drivers (the officer in the truck cab radios the offending motorist's license plate number and vehicle make/model to a nearby patrol car) and investing in more SUVs.

Police officers also need training that addresses graduated driver licensing laws. But simply providing training that addresses the nuts and bolts of the law (i.e., driving between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m., no more than one passenger under 21) isn't enough. Police officials, from patrol officers to command, must be fully aware of the risks for teens and how GDL works to address that risk. Additionally every department should have standard operating procedures (SOPs) in place in the event an officer stops a teen for a passenger violation. Since driving with multiple passengers significantly increases a teen driver's crash risk, a police officer shouldn't allow the licensee or his passengers to get back on the road once stopped and/or ticketed (National Safety Council, 2009). If a department, however, hasn't established protocols for dealing with this situation, a police officer may elect not to make a GDL stop. For this reason, knowing what to do with the teen driver, along with the teen's passengers and vehicle, are essential.

In **New Jersey**, the SHSO is funding a *GDL for Law Enforcement* training program developed and delivered by a retired law enforcement official affiliated with a county police academy. The four-hour program not only helps police officers connect the dots when it comes to how and why GDL works to address teen crash risk, but addresses why giving teens that violate the GDL provision a break

TEXTING A DRIVER COULD MAKE SENDER LIABLE

Linda and Dave Kubert of Dover, New Jersey, both lost a leg in a distracted driving crash caused by their then-17-year-old neighbor, Kyle Best. Little did Kyle's friend and texting partner, Shannon Colonna, also 17, know that she would become embroiled in a precedent setting legal case. The Kuberts, avid motorcyclists, were struck when Best, who purportedly was texting Colonna at the time, crossed the roadway's centerline. Not only did the Kuberts sue Best, but Colonna as well, claiming that she was "electronically present" in his pick-up truck immediately before the crash and "aided and abetted his unlawful use of his cell phone" (Hands Free Info, 2013). Cell phone records indicated that Best and Colonna texted each other 62 times on the day of the crash and the court agreed that the text likely was the cause. The case was dismissed in Superior Court, prompting the couple to appeal to the Appellate Court, which ruled "when the sender knows that the text will reach the driver while operating a vehicle, the sender has a relationship to the public who use the roadways similar to that of a passenger physically present in the vehicle. The texter has a duty to users of the public roads to refrain from sending the driver a text at that time" (Gershman, 2013).

isn't doing them any favors. The training also covers the genesis of New Jersey's decal requirement ([referenced on page 14](#)), known as Kyleigh's Law, which was instituted on May 1, 2010, to help police identify

teen permit and probationary (intermediate) license holders. Being able to determine a driver's age and licensing status allows for primary enforcement of the GDL provisions, which are proven to reduce teen crash risk.



State Education Initiatives

IS DISTRACTED DRIVING ECLIPSING DRUNK DRIVING

or speeding as the nation's leading traffic safety problem? While distraction accounted for 10 percent of fatal crashes, 18 percent of injury crashes and 16 percent of all motor vehicle crashes in 2012, there are limitations in the collection and reporting of distracted driver data (NHTSA, 2014a). The National Safety Council (NSC) estimates that 1.2 million or 21 percent of crashes in 2012 involved a motorist talking on a hand-held or hands-free cell phone. An additional 5 percent or more of crashes involved text messaging. Combined, this represents 26 percent of all crashes nationwide (NSC, 2014).

States recognize the increasing threat posed by distracted driving and are taking steps to educate the public about distraction. A 2013 review of state highway safety plans found that 40 address distracted driving, a 43 percent increase since 2010 (Sprattler, 2013). While all drivers are the focus, particular emphasis is being given to teens and young adults.

Some states and/or their partners are creating unique campaign messages and taglines, while others have adopted NHTSA's *Stop the Text. Stop the Wrecks.* campaign, launched in October 2011 to educate young drivers about the dangers of texting and driving. Of the 37 states that responded to the GHSA distracted driving survey employed for this report, 14 identified statewide (13) and/or local (8) programs aimed expressly at teens. Thirty-two states indicated having statewide (42) and/or local (25) teen-only programs that address multiple safe driving issues including distraction. Nearly half of these programs are either education only (42 percent) or involve education coupled with a media component (40 percent). More than half are peer-based (55 percent), most are delivered in schools (71 percent) and/or community-based settings (50 percent), and more than one-third (38 percent) are linked to driver education and training. One-quarter focus specifically on educating parents about teen distracted driving or engage parents in the discussion, while a little more than one-third (37 percent) indicate they are ethnically diverse. Only three programs, however, are available in a language other than English (Spanish).

State highway safety offices are either fully or partially funding 69 percent of these education programs, while the remaining programs receive funding from single or multiple sources including other government agencies, insurance carriers, universities, automakers, law enforcement organizations, local businesses, and foundations. One program is fee-based.

Distracted & Dangerous

Helping States Keep Teens Focused on the Road

State Education Initiatives



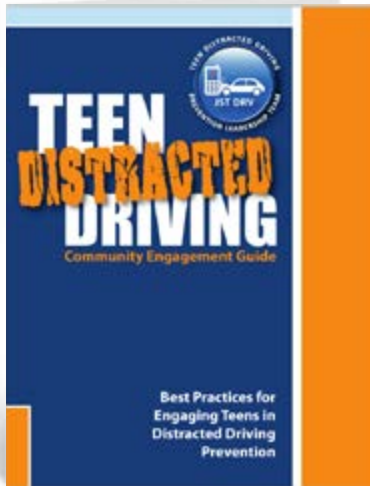
Teams of 16- to 20-year-olds are being trained annually to pilot innovative distracted driving programs in communities nationwide.

Insurance carriers, automakers and telecommunications companies, in particular, are not only helping to sponsor statewide and/or local programs, but investing significant resources in the development and deployment of their own educational initiatives that specifically target novice drivers and/or their parents. From contests and pledge drives to phone apps, sophisticated computer simulators and behind-the-wheel driving programs conducted on a closed course that enable teens to experience first-hand how distraction impacts their driving abilities, a myriad of resources are available for use by states and local communities.

Teens are also being encouraged to take a leadership role in addressing the problem. The National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS), a collaborative network of national organizations, business and industry partners, and federal agencies that serve youth and focus on youth safety and health programs, hosted the first National Teen Distracted Driving Prevention Leadership Team

(TDDPLT) in 2010. TDDPLT members represent local and national organizations from across the country and are advocates and youth leaders dedicated to promoting teen safe driving. Since then, additional teams of 16- to 20-year-olds are being trained annually to pilot innovative distracted driving programs in communities nationwide. To help teens use their voices to positively impact their peers, NOYS, with guidance from the first Leadership Team, also developed a [Teen Distracted Driving Community Guide](#), that includes best practices and ready to implement ideas (NOYS, 2011).

Besides addressing distraction caused by electronic devices, programs have also been developed to help local communities reduce the influence of peers on novice driver behavior. Programs such as [Ride Like a Friend, Drive Like You Care \(RLAF\)](#), a school-based, peer-to-peer initiative developed by The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia with support from State Farm, focuses on the relationship between teen drivers and their peer pas-



Researchers point out that in addition to legislation and enforcement, campaigns that shift attitudes, norms and social expectations have been effective in reducing risky driving behaviors such as drinking and driving and lack of seat belt use.

sengers. Emphasis is placed on building awareness about how passengers impact teen driver crash risk and establishing beliefs among teens and their peer passengers that result in safe driving (CHOP, 2014). Like the NOYS Guide, the RLA program was built with input from teens and includes tools to empower them to create and implement impactful campaigns that address what it means to be a responsible driver or passenger.

Are these educational efforts likely to convince novice drivers to put down their phones and focus on the road and/or to limit other distractions such as those caused by peer passengers? Researchers point out that in addition to legislation and enforcement, campaigns that shift attitudes, norms and social expectations have been effective in reducing risky driving behaviors such as drinking and driving and lack of seat belt use (Ehsani, 2014). Whether these efforts will have the same impact on distracted driving is not yet known. But there are early indications that young drivers have a heightened recognition of the risks associated with texting while driving, for example,

after being exposed to information via awareness campaigns (Maheshwari & D'Souza, 2014).

There's also a body of research that points to the importance of giving teens, rather than adults, responsibility for developing and delivering novice driver safety messages. Doing so is likely to spark greater interest, understanding and acceptance among this age group. It's also seen as an opportunity to leverage peer pressure, typically viewed as negative, to develop prevention and intervention programs that bolster feelings of safety and positive self-worth (Sella-Shayovitaz and Varenhorst, as cited in Henk & Fette, 2010).

What follows is a summary of best practices and novel approaches that are being employed at the state or local level to educate teens about the dangers of distracted driving. They were identified by the states as "exemplary" or "promising" and subsequently investigated through online research and telephone interviews with key staff members responsible for program administration.



Impact Teen Drivers

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER LETHAL? THAT'S THE QUESTION California-based **Impact Teen Drivers** (ITD) asks teens, parents and community-members in their quest to prevent reckless and distracted driving and save lives. Established in 2007 through a partnership between the California Association of Highway Patrolmen, California Teachers Association and California Casualty, ITD is an evidence-based program that uses teen-targeted videos, interactive materials such as the probability wheel that reveals your chances of being involved in a crash based on various forms of distraction, presentations, posters, lesson plans, activity outlines, PSAs, social media, and more to empower teens to take control of protecting themselves and their friends when they're on the road. All of the materials are available free to schools nationwide through ITD's web portals: www.impactteendrivers.org and www.whatslethal.com.

The program is designed to start a dialogue among teens so they take ownership of what they learn about the risks and severity of distracted driving and leverage positive peer pressure to make good decisions. The focus, according to the ITD team, isn't on scaring teens, but appealing to them on a "visceral level"

by using stories of real teens and their families (ITD, 2014a). The program uses emotion, humor and facts that are taken from the latest research and conveys this information in terms and words that resonate with teens (ITD, 2014b – video).

ITD's bedrock program is *What Do You Consider Lethal?* (WDYCL). The 60-minute presentation, designed for use by teachers, safety educators, first responders, health professionals, parents, students, and community members, focuses on generating dialogue and encouraging teens to take the lead in peer-to-peer messaging. (A 10-Step Facilitator Guide provides a step-by-step-tutorial.) A 90-minute Parent-teen Workshop combines the WDYCL presentation with strategies for parents, including information on graduated driver licensing laws, and open discussion (ITD, 2014c).

Training is key to ITD's outreach and success in reaching teens. The ITD team annually trains the California Highway Patrol (CHP) Public Information Officers on current teen safe driving research focusing on distracted driving and GDL, the importance of understanding teen culture and trends, how to use the WDYCL program, as well as other community and school-based resources including social norming media campaigns. CHP receives over a million dollars in grant funds through the California Office of Traffic Safety to facilitate the program in high schools and communities across the state including a high visibility teen-centric media campaign.

Distracted & Dangerous

Helping States Keep Teens Focused on the Road



California

In addition to working with CHP officials, ITD also offers a two-and-a-half-hour *Lead the Leaders* training program to help students fine tune their peer-to-peer traffic safety messaging, and a 5-hour, *Train the Trainers* session for adults who are seeking to enhance their knowledge of distracted driving, bolster their presentation skills and train others to deliver the WDYCL program. An *Affected Family Member Training* is also available to assist families who are in a healthy place in their healing process. ITD works with these families to help them craft their story so that it connects with the audience on an emotional level while conveying traffic safety messaging (ITD, 2014c).

ITD also invites teens to tell them how they talk to their friends, parents and siblings about the dangers of reckless and distracted driving, through *Create Real Impact*. Launched in 2011 and conducted twice a year, the contest gives 14- to 22-year-olds the opportunity to showcase through art, music, video, and creative writing what they're doing to solve the problem of reckless and distracted driving. All qualified entries are judged via an online voting process that's designed to drive teens to the website and facilitate learning, and by a panel of judges who score each based on creativity, idea execution and message effectiveness. A \$500 cash prize is awarded to the top vote-getter and \$1,500 to the judges' pick in each of the four categories.

To date, ITD has reached more than 2 million high school students in California and nationwide. The ITD team has provided training to educators, police

officers, SADD and 4-H chapters, injury prevention and traffic safety program representatives, universities, statewide coalitions, and SHSO officials in 21 states (AL, AZ, CO, ID, IL, IN, FL, MD, MI, MN, MO, NH, NY, ND, OH, OR, PA, TN, TX, VA, WI). Individuals are also utilizing the ITD program and materials in 14 other states including Alaska and Mississippi.

The WDYCL program has been evaluated through observational surveys conducted at high schools two weeks prior to delivery and at 6- and 9-month intervals afterward. Noticeable improvements in behavior were observed, particularly when the program was coupled with enforcement. Following the WDYCL program, seatbelt use increased to 96% and all distracted driving behaviors decreased by up to 7.7%. The distraction with the greatest observed decrease was talking to teen passengers, which was reduced from 22.4% to 9% following the program. In addition to this study, pre- and post-surveys are administered to teens who participate in the program to measure attitudes and behaviors, while police officers and educators who participate in the Train the Trainer program complete a post-test to assess their gains in knowledge and ability to teach the program. These surveys consistently demonstrate significant increased knowledge and skills among program participants.

For more information:

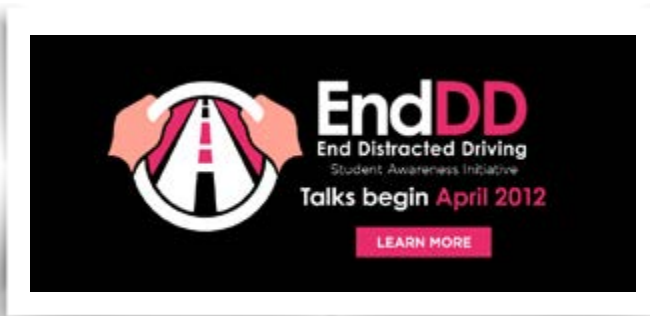
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Create Real Impact gives 14- to 22-year-olds the opportunity to showcase through art, music, video, and creative writing what they're doing to solve the problem of reckless and distracted driving.



End Distracted Driving

WHEN JOEL FELDMAN'S 21-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER, Casey, was struck and killed by a distracted driver in July 2009, he never imagined he would parlay what he describes as “telling a sad story,” into an interactive, fun and impactful presentation that is changing teens’ attitudes and behaviors about distracted driving. What’s more the **End Distracted Driving Student Awareness Initiative** (EndDD), sponsored by the Casey Feldman Foundation, is delivered by a network of more than 900 volunteer speakers, 800 of whom are trial lawyers who have volunteered thousands of hours to this cause.

Feldman, a trial lawyer who earned a masters degree in counseling after Casey’s death, readily admits he drove distracted before his daughter’s was tragically killed. (Casey was in the crosswalk at a four-way stop intersection during daylight hours and was struck when the driver reached across the center console for a drink). He worked with researchers at the Center for Injury Research & Prevention at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), psychologists and teen safe driving experts, to develop the 55 to 75-minute program.

EndDD integrates “health communications, behavioral science and behavior change theory, and teen-targeted persuasion principles specifically designed to avoid an unanticipated boomerang effect” (Jacobsohn & Winston, 2012). This means that instead of an individual adopting the suggested positive behavior or attitude (i.e., not texting and driving), the information presented is received as an attempt to restrict personal freedom which may prompt the individual to actually engage in the negative behavior (Gulliver, 2014).

Like Impact Teen Drivers, EndDD employs research, facts, emotion, and humor to educate teens. Facilitators use a PowerPoint presentation and script, both downloadable at no cost from EndDD.org, to help teens understand what distraction is as well as engage in a discussion about its various forms, not all of which are illegal. The presentation is designed not to be confrontational. Teens are surprised when facilitators admit they had often driven distracted themselves and won’t lecture or tell them what to do, but rather ask for their help in solving what is not just a teen problem. Humorous and tragic videos discussing real people whose lives have been affected by distracted driving are woven into the presentation to help teens explore how the choices they make can have life-long consequences. EndDD.org created a number of videos that are used in the program, including one that is part of the USDOT *Faces of Distracted Driving* series. Throughout the presentation teens are asked to commit to taking specific steps to drive safer and to formulate a plan for distraction-free driving using the [EndDD.org Family Safe Driving Agreement](#).

In addition to asking teens to reflect on their own driving behaviors, they’re taught that they can effectively intervene when others drive distracted. Teens participate in role play exercises to help them try out and gain confidence in using bystander intervention strategies. The goal of EndDD.org is to have teens become safety advocates for their peers, parents and communities and to change the driving culture so that distraction-free driving will not only be socially accept-



When teens learn first-hand the facts and consequences of distracted driving, they're more likely to make positive choices that are long-lasting.

able but expected. Teens also participate in a simple interactive exercise – writing backwards from 100 to zero while engaged in a cell phone conversation – to demonstrate how easily their skills are diminished when they attempt to multi-task. The program is grounded in the belief that when teens learn first-hand the facts and consequences of distracted driving, they're more likely to make positive choices that are long-lasting (EndDD, 2014).

Evaluation is also built into the program. EndDD worked with CHOP to develop pre- and post-surveys that include both qualitative and quantitative questions. Teens are asked not only to evaluate the program, but also to indicate if they're adopting the behavioral objectives. Data obtained to date reveals the program is beginning to have an impact. Teens are talking with their parents about distracted driving resulting in a reduction in parent texting (so far the drop for teens isn't statistically significant). Teens also agree that it's okay to speak up when they observe unsafe actions in the car. The presentation is reviewed and updated annually based on input from researchers and the fourth version will be released in the fall of 2014.

Although facilitators do not need to be lawyers, the majority of EndDD.org presentations are given by trial lawyers. "While the public perception about trial lawyers may be mixed, trial lawyers have enthusiastically endorsed the campaign and are reaching out in communities across the country and Canada to speak with teens," noted Feldman. "When I shared my story with them and asked for their help, 500 signed up in the first two weeks. They're sympathetic to the cause, good communicators, tend to stick to the script, and their volunteer efforts have

been praised by educators, law enforcement, safety advocates, and employers across the country." Driver education instructors, healthcare professionals, injury prevention coordinators, and safety professionals also regularly facilitate presentations and EndDD.org works with youth organizations supporting their safety programs and efforts.

Since 2012 approximately 200,000 teens and 25,000 adults have participated in the program through schools, colleges and businesses. An online presentation for parents, prompted by many teens commenting that they wished their parents were attending the program with them, is in the works, as well as a distracted walking segment. Presentation videos and a distracted driving brochure can be downloaded from EndDD.org.

While EndDD has the most traction in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island, Virginia, Georgia, Louisiana, Colorado, Texas, and Florida, it has also reached audiences in 36 other states and several Canadian provinces. The program can be tailored to incorporate stories and information specific to a state or community and EndDD.org regularly partners with local safety organizations. A list of registered facilitators is available on the EndDD.org website. The campaign currently works with 26 state trial lawyer associations and requires all facilitators to register with the campaign and sign an agreement before downloading presentation materials.

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Save A Life, It Can Wait

CONNECTICUT WAS THE ONLY STATE TO QUALIFY FOR A federal distracted driving grant in FY2014 and leveraged a portion of that money to reach teens with a strong anti-distracted driving message. Working in partnership with AT&T and the Grand Rapids, Michigan-based **Save a Life Tour** (SALT), the SHSO launched a 30-high school tour, SALT's most expansive one-state tour ever, that began in December 2013 and ran through April 2014.

SALT uses a combination of high-impact visuals, dynamic speakers and state-of-the-art simulators to engage teens and help them make positive choices when they're behind the wheel. The SHSO first partnered with SALT on a four school pilot program in 2012, followed by another in 2013. For this latest endeavor, the SHSO wanted to couple the SALT simulators with AT&T's new video [*From One Second to the Next*](#). Directed by award-winning filmmaker Werner Herzog, the video features the stories of four individuals tragically impacted by distracted driving. It was produced in 2013 and is part of AT&T's national [*It Can Wait*](#) distracted driving campaign. The initiative educates the public, especially teens, about the dangers of texting and driving and urges everyone to pledge to never text and drive.

Since videos are already built into the SALT presentation, incorporating the AT&T production required significant adjustments. SHSO officials agree, however, that doing so was worth it. "From the feedback we're getting," they note, inclusion of the video is resulting in a "much higher level of impact. Teens are telling [us] they were moved by what they saw."

Students who participated in the program were asked to complete a pre- and post-survey. The pre-survey asked teens about their driving habits, including whether they read or send text messages or make or take calls while driving, and their knowledge of Connecticut's novice cell phone restrictions. The post-survey asked teens how they now view distracted driving and the choices they'll make when driving, including their willingness to speak up when they see a friend engaging in a distracting behavior behind the wheel. It also queried them on what they felt was the most effective aspect of the presentation – the presenters, video or driving simulators. The teens overwhelmingly (90 percent) said the video and simulator had the greatest impact on their attitudes about distracted driving.

The Connecticut Highway Safety Office's goal is to take SALT to every high school in the state. For now, they're focused on reaching another 30 high schools during the 2014-15 school year. The program is completely turnkey; SALT handles all set up and works directly with the schools on logistics, insurance and paperwork. The cost is \$2,850 to stage a one-day event; discounts are provided for multiple bookings.

Neighboring **Rhode Island** is also committed to educating teens about the dangers of distracted driving. While the Highway Safety Office has also worked with the Save A Life Tour, it is currently partnering with the Attorney General, the Rhode Island State Police and AT&T to bring the **It Can Wait** campaign to all 75 of the state's high schools. "We're in a school at least once a week," said a SHSO official.

The program, which is funded entirely by AT&T, features a discussion about the dangers of reading and sending text messages while driving. Students also view the 10-minute video, *The Last Text*, which features real stories of lives altered or ended as a result of a texting motorist. A member of the audience, typically a school official, is invited to attempt to safely text while driving on a state-of-the-art driving simulator while the student body looks on. Before the program ends, everyone is asked to take the no texting and driving pledge and to encourage others to join them. There is no evaluation component associated with the program, but SHSO officials indicate they're receiving positive feedback from students and school officials.

In addition to educating teens through high school presentations, the Rhode Island Highway Safety Office is also leveraging social media. "No one under 18 can use a cell phone while driving in our state," said a SHSO official, "but

teens haven't been getting this message." To address this disconnect, the SHSO worked with teens to produce a series of YouTube videos, created by and featuring teens, that began airing in May 2014. The SHSO also met with driver educators to review the law and identify key discussion points. Every driver educator also received a copy of the teen-produced videos for use in their classrooms.

JOGGER KILLED BY DISTRACTED 16-YEAR-OLD

A Connecticut 16-year-old was arrested and charged with negligent homicide with a motor vehicle, underage use of a handheld cell phone while driving and failure to drive in the proper lane after fatally striking 44-year-old jogger, Kenneth Dorsey. An avid runner, Dorsey was on a morning jog and training for a marathon when he was struck by the SUV the teenage girl was driving. Police declined to say exactly what she was doing on the phone, only that they found evidence she was using the keypad before striking Dorsey. While individuals convicted of negligent homicide face up to six months in jail, Dorsey's father "hope[s] that her punishment is that she doesn't forget. And maybe she passes that on to her friends and down the road to her own family" (*Associated Press, 2012b*).

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ThinkFast Interactive

SHSO OFFICIALS IN TENNESSEE AND MICHIGAN ARE partnering with Nissan to make learning about distracted driving fun and interactive. The automaker, which moved its headquarters to Nashville in 2008, recently provided support for 75 **ThinkFast Interactive** (ThinkFast) game show presentations at high schools and middle schools across Tennessee. The automaker also has an office in Michigan and sponsored the program at 15 high schools in 14 counties this past spring, along with 25 ThinkFast programs in Mississippi high schools.

ThinkFast uses an MTV-style production set, mainstream music and videos, and an entertaining host, and combines each state's teen driver safety rules, regulations and penalties, with pop-culture and academic trivia to educate teens about safe driving. Administrators like the program because of its ability to connect with up to 1,000 students in a one-hour program. "Teachers love the program, because the kids are tricked into learning," said an official with the Tennessee Governor's Highway Safety Office (GHSO). "We've been working with ThinkFast for the past six years and reach 25 to 30 schools annually with our safe driving message. Nissan's commitment enabled us to schedule an additional 75 shows."

The program is designed to directly connect with the audience via a multi-digit, wireless system. The students are organized in teams of three to five to promote comprehension of important safety awareness information. Along with awareness questions, students also participate in on-stage challenges, where they are asked, for example, how they would react if a friend is texting and driving. The other students then vote via the wireless system for the student who best handles the challenge.

ThinkFast is a progressive game — teams with the highest total scores compete for the school's championship in a final round utilizing contestant panels (think Jeopardy). All of the results can be captured and are available for later assessment, and up to 250 teams of five can play simultaneously. Highway safety officials provide state-specific traffic safety data and information about teen driving and other laws that the ThinkFast team uses to develop safety questions. Distracted driving is one of the key topics woven into the game.

Prevention, responsibility and awareness, according to the ThinkFast team, are non-intrusively enforced throughout the program. Providing information that helps teens make good choices is the program's focus. Educators and administrators give the program high marks and teens walk away excited about the experience. SHSO officials like the program because it enables them not only to reach a large teen audience with important safety messages, but it also helps them learn what teens do and don't know about traffic safety.



The overall goal of the Reduce TN Crashes campaign is to increase awareness of safe driving practices among teens by facilitating and rewarding activities that are rooted in promoting teen traffic safety.

“ThinkFast shares all of the data they collect through the audience response system with us,” said a TN SHSO official. “That enables us to better determine what we should focus on when we develop messages to reach teens.” GOHS, Nissan and the ThinkFast team also collect evaluation surveys and have consistently been able to document a measured change in student attitudes and knowledge prior to and after participation in the program.

ThinkFast officials have produced shows in 18 other states, including Rhode Island, Kansas, Alaska, Virginia, and Washington, DC. The program is funded by SHSOs as well as universities, coalitions, SADD chapters, county health departments, and corporate sponsorships. Each presentation reaches an average of 500 students and 300 shows are produced annually.

ThinkFast is also one of the approved activities featured in the **Reduce TN Crashes** campaign. Developed by the Tennessee Tech University Business Media Center (TTUBMC) in partnership with GOHS, Ford, State Farm, Bridgestone, and the Tennessee Trucking Foundation, the program combines innovative awareness technologies with creative marketing to empower the state’s more than 600 high schools to increase peer-guided traffic safety activities.

Using the internet portal www.reduceTNCrashes.com, schools register to participate in the program and receive guidance from safety educators. Next, they implement traffic safety activities designed to address teen safe driving practices. The website includes links to teen traffic safety activities available in the Volunteer State. The complexity of the activities range from posting signs in school parking lots and

common areas that warn students about the dangers of distracted driving to more multifaceted events such as hosting a ThinkFast presentation or a Ford Driving Skills for Life program ([more about the latter on page 35](#)).

The overall goal of the Reduce TN Crashes campaign is to increase awareness of safe driving practices among teens by facilitating and rewarding activities that are rooted in promoting teen traffic safety. All participating schools submit, via the website, the details of their activities and are awarded points for their effort. Gold, silver and bronze levels have been established.

Since the campaign’s launch in October 2013, 57 schools in more than 40 counties are registered and conducting teen safe driving activities. Fifty-eight percent have posted metal *Don’t Text and Drive* signs and *One Text or Call Could Wreck It All* banners supplied by GOHS. Schools have registered more than 180 distracted driving activities to date.

As Reduce TN Crashes evolves, GHSO, TTUBMC and academic partners are committed to helping teens evaluate and report on the effectiveness of their own interventions. Currently, the team is working on the development of an evaluation app that teens can use to conduct pre- and post-driving behavior intention surveys.

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Put it Down

THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DOT) launched its **Put it Down** distracted driving awareness campaign in October 2011 with an emphasis on young drivers 16 to 24 years of age. Despite not having a texting or hand-held cell phone ban, DOT, SHSO and law enforcement officials, joined with safety advocates to call on teens, parents and all motorists to just drive.

In 2013, the effort received a significant boost thanks to passage of a secondary texting while driving ban that took effect October 1. All seven of the state's transportation districts partnered with educational institutions, community-based organizations, hospitals, safety advocacy groups, fire and police agencies, and local governments to convey the Put it Down message to novice and experienced drivers across the state.

In Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties (District 6), where 40 partners held 40 outreach events between July and November, DOT officials estimate the campaign reached more than 40 million people. Partners not only hosted events, but also distributed and displayed *Put it Down*-branded collateral materials (featuring all partner logos), and disseminated weekly e-mail blasts and information via social, print and broadcast media. The Monroe County Tax Collector's office even joined in the effort, hosting four events at high school football games and shopping centers. The message was also conveyed to members of the Miami-Dade County Refugee Task Force, with a goal of identifying opportunities to distribute the campaign's multilingual materials to minority populations (Florida DOT, 2013).

The statewide campaign also includes a safety pledge that a driver and witness (family member or friend) are asked to sign. The pledge provides a means to interact with teens and adults at outreach events and engage in a discussion about the dangers of distracted driving. Additionally, Delete Teen Crashes Day was held on October 15, 2013, just prior to the start of National Teen Safe Driving Week, to call attention to the number one killer of teens – car crashes – and distracted driving, which is a prevalent factor in these crashes.

This past April, in observance of the first national Distracted Driving Awareness Month, the SHSO used website banners, social media, digital billboards, and a proclamation from the Governor to remind motorists to *Put it Down*. More than 200 police agencies joined in the effort to enforce Florida's texting ban. Additionally, the *Orlando Sentinel* is teaming up with *Ford Driving Skills for Life* ([see page 35](#)) to create a booklet for high school seniors that highlights the dangers of texting while driving.

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Operation Teen Safe Driving, Strive 4 A Safer Drive & Ford Driving Skills for Life

LAUNCHED IN TAZEWELL COUNTY, ILLINOIS IN 2007 IN

response to the deaths of 15 Illinois teens in motor vehicle crashes over a 15 month period, *Operation Teen Safe Driving* (OTSD) is now in 105 high schools across the state and has engaged more than one million teens in identifying and addressing risky driving behaviors through peer-to-peer and community outreach initiatives. Two years ago, distracted driving was added to the list of traffic safety topics that must be addressed.

All Illinois high schools are invited to participate in the program by submitting an application explaining how they'll address traffic safety in their school and community. These are reviewed in the fall by a panel of traffic safety experts, who select and announce the top 15 schools in the six regions of the state. Each school receives a \$2,000 grant from the Illinois Division of Highway Safety to implement their programs from Decem-

ber through March. Schools submit a final report in April outlining their program elements and outcomes including press coverage. A top school is then selected from each region and awarded prize money for a post-prom event, while all schools submitting a report receive program continuation funds. Additionally, the top five schools from each region are invited to send students to a Ford Driving Skills for Life *Ride and Drive* event (DSFL).

Michigan adopted the OTSD program in 2011 and rebranded it *Strive for a Safer Driver* (S4SD). Since then, the program has doubled to involve students in more than 600 Michigan high schools. Like its Illinois counterpart, S4SD, provides funding and resources to help teens talk to their peers about safe driving. Through the support of the Office of Highway Safety Planning, AAA and Ford DSFL, up to 50 high schools in the top counties for teen traffic fatalities and serious injuries are selected to participate in the program. Each receives a \$2,000 grant to create teen-led traffic safety campaigns addressing distracted driving, seat belt use, speeding, underage drinking, or winter driving. The top Michigan schools also send students to a Ford DSFL *Ride and Drive* event.

Officials from both SHSOs agree that distracted driving is a popular topic and a centerpiece of many of the teen-led campaigns. In Illinois, for example, one high school developed an *It's About Your Selfie* campaign to educate teens about the dangers of using their phones to take photos



In Michigan, program success is measured not only by monitoring crash data, but in the positive feedback received from teens and teachers involved in the program.

as well as text and talk while driving. In Michigan, students from the Link Crew at Edsel Ford High School took their message about the dangers of distracted driving to the larger public during a basketball game. The night included a driving simulator, a halftime speech about the dangers of distracted driving during the varsity game, and a request that all attending the game sign a pledge not to text while driving. The Link Crew's efforts, however, extended beyond texting to include other issues such as loud music and too many passengers in the car.

This message is reinforced at the Ford *Ride and Drive* events attended by students not only in Illinois and Michigan, but many other states. Thanks to its partnership with GHSA, Ford's *Ride and Drive* events have reached thousands of teens in more than 100 cities, while its web-based *Driving Skills for Life Academy* has reached another half million. Ford also makes teen safe driving grants available to states, many of which use the funds to develop programs that include a distracted driving component.

"We've always addressed distracted driving in our program," said a DSFL official. "Under the guidance of professional drivers, teens drive the course distraction-free. Then we have them drive the course again while trying to text and review what happened. We focus on helping teens understand that everything you do requires all of your attention. So, if you want to type a perfect text while driving, your vehicle speed is going to slow down and when that happens there's a good chance you'll get rear-ended."

Selfies were recently added to the hands-on event due to their increasing

popularity with teens. "We invite teens to take a selfie while driving the course," explained the DSFL official. "They typically hit a cone, which could have been a pedestrian, or they go extremely slow and that's not likely to end well if they're on the road. All feedback is presented in a positive manner so that teens are more likely to remember that information when they're in the driver or passenger seat and make better choices."

Are these programs having an impact? Illinois HSO officials note that fatalities involving teen drivers have decreased or remained flat since peaking at 155 in 2007. In Michigan, program success is measured not only by monitoring crash data, but in the positive feedback received from teens and teachers involved in the program. Response to the DSFL events is also overwhelmingly positive.

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SmartDrive, Turn Off Texting

DRIVING HOME THE DANGER OF DISTRACTED DRIVING

in a meaningful way is at the heart of programs in Delaware and Vermont. Both use the power of video coupled with a low-tech, on-the-road experience to get teens thinking about the choices they'll make when they're in the driver's seat.

Distraction & Reaction is a prevention and awareness program developed and delivered by Delaware-based **SmartDrive** in that state, as well as on Maryland's Eastern Shore and in Pennsylvania's Chester and Delaware Counties. The free program uses a self-paced online component, combined with a film, *Driven to Distraction II*, created by DuPont's Coastal Films and provided exclusively to SmartDrive, to teach teens about the science of distracted driving. Teens then participate in a hands-on science experiment as they maneuver a Gem Car (a golf cart-like vehicle) through a closed course. During the drive, they're distracted by time constraints, a cell phone conversation, excessive passengers, and texting.

The one-hour program is funded in part by the Delaware Office of Highway Safety, the Delmarva Broadcasting Company, State Farm, DuPont, the Delaware Department of Insurance, and several other public and private organizations. A GoPro camera records the teens' drives and the footage is reviewed with them to show how distraction impacts their performance. Teens also receive a report card and are encouraged to sign a distracted driving pledge.

SmartDrive's primary program, however, is a free, online state-certified defensive driving course. Students complete three modules, one of which addresses distracted driving, that include true/false, multiple choice and essay questions presented in an entertaining and challenging multimedia format. Students accumulate points as they complete the various sections, including points for parents who are actively involved with their young drivers. Each year, winners are selected in each region and awarded a \$4,000 college scholarship, while schools with the highest participation are awarded cash prizes for prom-related activities.

Since its founding nine years ago by the CEO of the Delmarva Broadcasting Company, SmartDrive has educated nearly 40,000 teens. The program is not currently evaluated, but the Delaware Division of Motor Vehicles is undertaking a project to evaluate the driving performance of teens that complete an online course versus teens that do not.

The **Vermont** DMV, meanwhile, is credited with developing the four-year-old **Turn Off Texting** program. Delivered by the Youth Safety Council of Vermont (YSCVT), the program travels to schools across the state, giving teens the opportunity to experience first-hand the dangers of texting while driving. Students navigate a golf cart through a course of traffic cones, then drive the course again while texting. Their errors – the cones (aka, pedestrians, parked cars, pets) they run into while texting – bring the danger of texting and driving to life in a risk-free setting. Each pass through the course is timed and scored, and the results are reviewed with the teen.

The program is free to all public and private high schools and is typically delivered through the driver education program (a teen must hold a learner's permit to participate). In advance of the hands-on demonstration, the teacher is asked to show the AT&T video, *From One Second to the Next*, which includes a segment about a Vermonter impacted by a distracted driving crash, and the *It Can Wait* documentary. At that time, teens also complete a pre-demo survey that asks about the crash risk posed by texting and e-mailing while driving, how likely they are to do it and if they would speak up while riding as a passenger in a vehicle driven by someone who is texting or e-mailing. A post-survey is administered to the teens following the demo to gauge their responses to the same questions, as well as their reaction to the program. (Survey results were not available.)

YSCVT partners with law enforcement and others trained to work

VT TEXTING-WHILE-DRIVING TRIAL ENDS IN PLEA DEAL

A Colchester, Vermont teen accused of texting, crashing and almost killing a pedestrian struck a deal with the state, ending the trial prematurely. Emma Vieira replied, "Guilty, your honor," when she was asked, "What's your plea...to count one, which is gross negligent operation with serious bodily injury to another?" The 19-year-old also pled guilty to a misdemeanor negligent operation charge. Under the deal, she'll serve up to six months in jail and a five-year deferred sentence. She's also required to complete 500 hours of community service with an organization specializing in brain injuries. Vieira's victim, 53-year-old Deborah Drewniak, suffered a brain injury and now struggles to speak (*Reading, 2012*).

with teens to deliver the program during the school year. Demand is great, but weather does impact delivery. Funding is provided by the Governors Highway Safety Program, AT&T and 802Cars.com (new and used car dealerships). *Turn Off Texting* is currently YSCVT's primary program, but the non-profit is working to identify additional opportunities to partner with high schools and community organizations to deliver the distracted driving message.

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Live Life Slo Mo

WANT TO GET TEENS' ATTENTION? PARTNER WITH A ROCK band. That's exactly what the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) did to educate teens about the dangers of distracted driving.

The genesis for the partnership was actually the idea of the lead singer of the Colorado-based band Rachel and the Kings. The lead singer, a socially conscious mom, contacted CDOT and the result was **Live Life in Slo Mo**, a contest showcasing how teens live in the moment – free of distractions – using the band's new hit song, *Slo Mo*. CDOT considered it the perfect follow-up to their 2013 teen distracted driving campaign, which featured text message bubbles placed on the floor in school hallways asking teens to think about what they're missing when they drive distracted. The graphics were placed in 18 high schools on Colorado's front-range.

For CDOT's 2014 effort, teens 13 to 18 years of age were invited to create a 60-second video using any part of the musical track from the band's song. That could include living life in *Slo Mo* in school, extracurricular activities, and with family and friends. The video had to include a message about distracted driving using examples such as texting or talking on a cell phone while driving, eating, playing loud music, or riding in an overcrowded car. Students, however, couldn't demonstrate any of these actions or film any part of the video in a moving vehicle. The contest was promoted via traditional (i.e., press releases, in-school posters) and social media.

In addition to creating a video, students also had to conduct a pre- and post-observational distracted driving survey at their school that lasted at least 40 minutes and noted all distracting behaviors exhibited by their peers (i.e., texting, talking on a cell phone, eating/drinking, reaching for an object, passengers, pets, reading, grooming). The pre-survey had to be completed before entering the contest and only entrants of the winning videos were required to conduct post-surveys. The survey exercise was designed to help teens recognize the magnitude of the problem at their high school as well as provide ideas for their videos. Students were asked to upload their videos to YouTube and submit the link and the results of their pre-survey, using the contest application found on CDOT's Facebook page.

The 10-week contest ran February 25 to April 30; 12 entries were received from high schools across the state. All videos were judged by Rachel and the Kings and a CDOT representative, and the top three posted on CDOT's Facebook page. The public was invited via social media to vote for their favorite video May 6-9. Additionally, the top schools were notified by e-mail and encouraged to promote the online voting. The winning school received a \$2,000 donation and the opportunity to join the band on-stage as their video was shown at the Rock for Youth concert in late May 2014.

CDOT officials plan to run more contests using Facebook and other social media platforms, such as Instagram.

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High School Distracted Driving Grant Project

THE WASHINGTON TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION (WTSC)

is giving teens the opportunity to tackle the problem of distracted driving and [*obtain a \\$500 grant for the school group of their choice*](#) – no strings attached. The program, which is funded through a grant from State Farm, has prompted teen educational projects in more than 230 high schools.

Working with a school advisor or teacher, a group of teens must complete five action steps from a list of 15 provided by WTSC. These range from developing and distributing a brochure or flyer describing the dangers of distracted driving, to surveying students, creating a video or writing an article for the school or community newspaper. Once students identify their five action steps, they're required to write a letter to WTSC explaining what they'll do. Upon receiving notification that their plan is approved, the group completes their five action steps and takes photos documenting their work. To complete the project, the group submits a follow-up letter to WTSC from their advisor stating what activities they did that includes photos and samples of their work. Sample action step and follow-up letters are included in the promotional materials making it easy for schools to participate (WTSC, 2014a).

The Commission receives new grant applications daily, and the program has grown significantly since it was first launched in 2012 (at that time it focused solely on distracted driving, impaired driving was added in 2013). WTSC officials indicate

that “once students get going with the project, they always do much more than asked of them under the grant rules.” Program accomplishments as of April 2014 include (WTSC, 2014b):

- Teens have designed, printed and distributed 11,321 distracted and impaired driving brochures.
- At 94 high schools, teens developed news articles and submitted them to their local newspapers for publication.
- Teens held up large banners reading Don't Text and Drive alongside 288 busy Washington roadways, each for at least one hour.
- Teens have constructed 42 Memory Walls honoring those who died or were severely injured in crashes that have been seen by 2,200 students.
- Forty-one teen groups developed educational videos and posted them on YouTube.

The program has also prompted other new and creative ideas including a flash mob, an intersection and a legislative rally, writing traffic safety messages on high school windows using washable markers, and developing table tents with distracted driving messages for a high school cafeteria. Teens have also organized 35 all-school assemblies, brought in speakers and, in one case, placed a crashed car in front of a school to drive home the message about teen driver safety.

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There's an App for That

THREE STATES – KENTUCKY, IOWA AND NORTH DAKOTA

– are harnessing the power of mobile apps with the hope that teens and, in particular, their parents will leverage the technology to help keep young drivers safe.

The **Kentucky** Highway Safety Office (KHSO) is working with Mobile Life Solutions to make its smartphone app **Text Limit** available to all residents free of charge for the first year. The app, which costs \$24.99 annually (KHSO is using a grant from State Farm and federal funds to cover the cost), works with the phone's GPS. It allows an administrator, such as a parent, to set a speed limit where texting, calling and surfing the web is prohibited, but does not disable 911 or emergency service calling.

"We selected this app because it works on all phones including Apple devices," explained a KHSO official. "With so many teens and adults owning iPhones, this is critical for keeping Kentucky's 3 million motorists safe on the road." This isn't KHSO's first foray with Mobile Life Solutions; the agency also makes the Drive Sober app available to Kentuckians in conjunction with the *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* campaign.

Currently, there are 1,600 new users (2,000 phones) of the Text Limit app. Mobile Life Solutions plans to work with insurance carriers to encourage agents to let policy holders, particularly those with novice drivers, know about the KHSO offer. There's also a plan to partner with the Kentucky Auto Dealers Association to place point-of-sale materials in showrooms.

The **Iowa** Department of Transportation, meanwhile, has contracted with Aegis Mobility to provide a mobile app, **TEXTLR**, to reduce distracted driving and fatalities. Iowa is the first state to develop its own app and plans to market it to the parents of teens 14 to 17 years of age at no cost. Iowa teens may obtain a permit at 14; approximately 18,000 did in 2013.

"Parents hold the purse strings when it comes to driving," said an Iowa DOT official. "But we also want them to think not only about the costs associated with driving, but also the risks. The TEXTLR app is a way to help reduce distractions for drivers and [promote] conversations between parents and...young drivers who are most at risk."

The app, which is being developed for both iOS and Android platforms, will disable text and phone capabilities when driving (except emergency calls) on the Android platform. The app, which is scheduled to launch November 2014 includes other planned features such as:

- The ability to monitor and receive reports on driver behavior



including drive time, speeding, fast acceleration, and hard braking.

- A secure, password-protected parent portal providing reports on driving behaviors, including route-specific events displayed on maps.
- Parent notifications sent via e-mail when a teen exceeds configurable thresholds.

Iowa DOT officials indicated that they'll use several touch points to market the app to parents including when a teen applies for a permit and when he obtains an intermediate license. In both instances, a parent must be present and provide permission. Iowa also allows teens to obtain a minor school license at age 14-and-a-half, with the permission of a parent and the school superintendent, principal or school board chair. Information about the app and the risks for teen drivers will be made available to school officials to share with parents.

The price tag to develop the app is \$100,000 and the cost to make it available to teens will depend on the adoption rate (estimated cost is \$3.99 per month). Iowa DOT officials hope to sign-up 5,000 teens during the first 12 months of rollout. While the evaluation parameters have not been identified, the state plans to conduct research to gauge teen and parent reaction to the app. Additionally, Aegis Mobility has agreed to share with the Iowa DOT all data it collects from teens that are using the app (data will be scrubbed of personally identifiable information prior to sharing) to assist them in analyzing teen driver behavior.

The **North Dakota** Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association (NDDTSEA) and the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) have developed a new **Online Mobile App Resource** for parents of teens. Housed on NDDTSEA's upgraded website, the resource is designed to make it easier for parents to see what mobile phone applications are available to prevent texting and driving, and decide what makes the most sense for their family (www.nddtsea.org/resources/distracted-driving/mobile-app/).

At a minimum, NDDTSEA officials hope parents will visit the website, review the information and discuss distracted driving with their teens (NDDOT, 2014a). The website provides guid-

ance to parents about how to talk to their teens about distraction. It spells out the risk for novice drivers, the importance of starting the conversation early (even before teens are driving), and parents as role models. It also discusses partnering with teens to set rules along with consequences and rewards, encouraging them to speak up when their friends drive distracted, and helping teens establish their own rules when they're in the driver's seat including limiting the number of passengers, insisting that everyone buckle up and asking passengers to refrain from distracting behaviors. This and other helpful information is provided in a series of downloadable infographics designed to jumpstart the conversation (NDDTSEA, 2014).

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Teen Triple Threat, GenerationXt, YOVASO

WANT TO ERADICATE DISTRACTED DRIVING FROM THE nation's roadways? Put youth in charge. In a number of states, including **Massachusetts, Oklahoma** and **Virginia**, teens are taking the reins and inspiring not only their peers, but adults to join them in calling for social change.

For the Salit triplets, Matthew, Brian and Timothy, founding, planning and leading the **New England Distracted Driving Summit** is all in a day's work. The Seekonk High School juniors were prompted to act when a local teen they competed against in track was killed in a crash caused by a driver who was texting. Their subsequent participation in NOYS' Teen Distracted Driving Prevention Summit in Washington, DC, coupled with Matthew's attendance at the Harvard Leadership Institute, sparked their interest and provided the tools to help them put their idea into action.

The first statewide summit was held at the State House in Boston in May 2013, and drew 250 students and teachers from 25 high schools across Massachusetts. Speakers included government officials, victim advocates, and NOYS representatives, who discussed the magnitude of the distracted driving problem and urged youth to take the lead in solving it through advocacy and peer-to-peer outreach. The University of Massachusetts' Distractology 101 tractor-trailer, which is with equipped with two driving simulators, was on also onsite to demonstrate the impact of distraction on driver safety. Following the conference, more than 60 high schools implemented existing campaigns (i.e., Act Out Loud, Celebrate My Drive) or developed their own.

The 2014 Summit, held in March in Seekonk, drew 400 students and teachers from both Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Speakers included Rhode Island Attorney General Peter Kilmartin, national AT&T spokesperson Reggie Shaw and victim advocate and End Distracted Driving founder, Joel Feldman. Teens received information to help them develop and lead safe driving events in their schools and communities.

The Salits are already making plans for the 2015 summit, and expect to draw even more students from schools throughout Southern New England. There is no cost to participate thanks to sponsorships and in-kind support provided by local businesses and state and national



organizations including AAA, AT&T, the Massachusetts Trial Lawyers Association and NOYS. "It's a very professional conference," said a Massachusetts Highway Safety official. "The Salits bring in top-notch speakers to educate and motivate their peers and provide tools to help them become leaders in their community. They even scored a visit from the New England Patriots' Rob Ninkovich, who posed for photos with every teen."

Thanks to the Summit, the Salits estimate more than 70,000 teens have been reached through school-based events. At their high school in Seekonk, distracted driving events are held every other month to keep the message front and center. They've brought in speakers, hosted pledge days and produced PSAs, all with the goal of ensuring that no one is injured or killed as a result of distracted driving.

Teens in northeastern **Oklahoma** are also taking a leadership role in educating their peers and adults about distracted driving through **Generation tXt (GentXt)**. Founded in 2009 by eight Tulsa high school students, GentXt has grown to a 30-member community group made up of teens from four high schools. The teens are supported by a volunteer leader who is a local pediatrician and a part-time adult coordinator employed by the Crime Prevention Network.

The teens meet the second Sunday of every month from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. to discuss and plan their activities with a focus on educating their

MA TEEN SENTENCED TO PRISON IN FATAL TEXTING CRASH

Aron Deveua of Haverhill, MA was sentenced to two-and-a-half years behind bars (one year to serve, the remainder suspended) for a 2011 crash that claimed the life of Donald Bowley, Jr., 55, and seriously injured Bowley's girlfriend. Prosecutors say the then-17-year-old high school student sent 193 text messages the day of the crash, including some just minutes before impact, and dozens more after. His car crossed the center line and crashed head-on into Bowley's vehicle. Bowley, a father of three, died 18 days later from injuries suffered in the crash. Deveua was one of the first persons convicted under a 2010 state law that created the criminal charge of texting while driving negligently and causing injury. In addition to a prison sentence, he was ordered to perform 40 hours of community service and surrender his driver's license for 15 years. He testified that he wasn't sending or receiving text messages moments before the crash, but instead was distracted and thinking about his homework (*Associated Press, 2012a*).

peers and adults about the dangers of texting and driving while also providing safe-driving strategies. They conduct awareness activities and distraction games at community events, speak at high school events and assemblies and share the teen perspective at an annual Distracted Driving Awareness Seminar convened by the City of Tulsa. In addition, every Sunday for the past four years, the teens have facilitated a 30-minute presentation about the dangers of distracted driving for teens (and their parents) enrolled in the Oklahoma Driving School. (Tulsa public schools do not offer driver



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education, which is required for teens who want to obtain full driving privileges at age 16-and-a-half.) The teens are analyzing the impact of their presentations through pre- and post-surveys, as well as using a driving simulator to call attention to the dangers of texting and driving.

In an effort to bolster their ranks and ensure the organization's viability (the original members actively recruited their replacements before graduating from high school), teen leaders developed a three-step process to encourage teens to establish a GentXt campaign in their school – build your team, spread the word, participate in the community group. While anyone can join, teens are encouraged to partner with existing school clubs (i.e. Key Club, Student Council) and/or community groups (church youth groups, scouts) and/or their peers who want or need community service hours.

Once a school's GentXt team is assembled, the members are asked to spread the word about the dangers of texting and driving through simple promotions conducted during school events such as freshmen orientation, in conjunction with national safe-driving campaigns in the fall, or before prom and gradua-

tion. GentXt teen leaders developed a PowerPoint presentation with an easy-to-follow script to aid with outreach along with "It's Not OK to Text & Drive" banners that teens (and adults) are encouraged to sign.

Besides peer education, GentXt members are also engaged in safe-driving advocacy. The teens have visited the state capitol more than 10 times over the past four years to lobby for a primary all-driver texting law. (Teens holding a permit or intermediate license under Oklahoma's graduated driver license law are not permitted to text or use a handheld device while driving. Additionally, the state has a secondary inattentive driving law that applies to all motorists.) The first year, the teens conducted an event at a mall to raise awareness of the law's shortcomings and gathered signatures on a petition they presented to the legislature. They also mounted an online petition drive and a door-to-door campaign using the information they collected (i.e., names, addresses, zip codes) to create customized constituent support sheets for individual legislators.

They launched another petition drive in Spring 2014, obtaining thousands of signatures and zip codes from con-



YOVASO

**YOUTH OF VIRGINIA SPEAK
OUT ABOUT TRAFFIC SAFETY**

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cerned citizens, and once again traveled to Oklahoma City, where they staged Generation tXt Day to rally support for their cause. Eleven teen leaders manned information tables, walked the state house halls to speak one-on-one with legislators and held a press conference that generated strong media coverage. The teens pointed out 44 states currently have an all-driver texting ban, but not Oklahoma. GentXt is hopeful that 2015 will be the year their state will pass a universal law against the epidemic of texting while driving.

Youth of Virginia Speak Out (YOVASO), a statewide, peer-to-peer advocacy program sponsored by the Virginia State Police Association, empowers teens to take the lead in addressing unsafe driving behaviors. While its roots are in southeastern Virginia, YOVASO has safe driving clubs in high schools in all regions of the commonwealth, and is expanding into middle schools. The program receives funding from the Virginia Highway Safety Office.

Students work together in either a YOVASO or other school-based service learning club at their school to advocate for safe driving among their peers and to develop strategies that target young

drivers in their school and community. The program uses a three-step, three-“E” process to help teens be successful peer leaders: teens are educated about safe driving practices and learn how to be advocates through basic and advanced training, receive encouragement and support from adult advisors, and are empowered to speak out and take action through the provision of knowledge, resources and programs (YOVASO, 2014a).

YOVASO focuses attention on a number of risky behaviors that trip up teens, including speeding, underage drinking and distraction caused by electronic devices and too many passengers. The organization’s *Arrive Alive* safe driving campaign is conducted in the spring to call attention to the most dangerous driving months for teens – May through September. YOVASO or other school safe driving clubs are encouraged to develop and implement peer-to-peer initiatives for a chance to compete to win prizes. To be eligible for the latter, high schools must conduct call-to-action activities that increase student, faculty and staff knowledge about the dangers of distracted driving; develop an innovative Public Service Announcement that focuses on the dangers of summer driv-

**Distracted
& Dangerous**

Helping States Keep Teens
Focused on the Road



Since statewide expansion of YOVASO in 2007, teen fatalities have declined from 133 in that year to 83 in 2012.

ing and encourages safe behaviors; and conduct two distracted driving checks (pre- and post-campaign, minimum of 100 cars) in the parking lot to measure the impact of their prevention efforts on all types of distracted driving habits.

To be considered for prizes, schools must submit their PSAs, distraction check forms and a final evaluation form outlining their campaign activities electronically. While they're encouraged to submit pictures, videos, media coverage, and other information that illustrates the breadth of their campaigns, judging is centered on the PSA. YOVASO works in partnership with the UNITE International Arrive Alive Tour, which posts the PSAs on its website (www.arrivealivetour.com) and invites online voting. The grand prize-winning school receives a day with the Arrive Alive Tour, which uses virtual reality goggles and in-car simulators to demonstrate the dangers of distracted and impaired driving. Second and third place schools receive cash prizes (YOVASO, 2014b).

YOVASO uses both quantitative (i.e., number of schools involved, teens trained) and qualitative (i.e., change in behaviors and knowledge gained pre- and post-campaign) measures to evalu-

ate impact. They are considering adding a third observational survey – three months post-campaign – and will also be working with a Virginia Tech graduate student to develop better outcome measures for use by all students in the upcoming school year. Since statewide expansion of YOVASO in 2007, teen fatalities have declined from 133 in that year to 83 in 2012.

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Conclusion

TEENS RECOGNIZE THE DANGER POSED BY TEXTING AND

driving as well as driving and talking on a cell phone (though more work is needed to ensure that they, as well as their parents and all drivers, understand that hands-free isn't risk free). Teens know their friends can be an in-vehicle distraction, which new research suggests may be even more dangerous than the use of electronic devices. But ongoing research is needed to understand the dynamics of these various forms of distraction so that State Highway Safety Offices, law enforcement agencies and safety organizations can leverage their limited resources to develop strategies that effectively combat distraction behind the wheel.

The good news is that newly-licensed teens are less likely than their older counterparts to drive distracted as a result of electronics. The bad news is that as these same teens gain driving experience, their propensity to text, talk and check e-mail while driving increases and reaches the highest levels during their late teens and twenties. As this generation of teens ages into their thirties, will they continue to exhibit the same level of unsafe behavior or mature out of it? Again, research is needed to fully understand what will happen as today's teens assume the roles and responsibilities that come with adulthood.

For now, however, states are relying heavily on legislative mandates to address distracted driving. While nearly every state prohibits teens from using electronic devices while driving and

limits the number of peer passengers they may transport, enforcing this patchwork of laws, many of which are secondary, creates significant challenges for law enforcement officials. Should states enact comprehensive laws prohibiting the use of communications devices by all drivers younger than 18 or 21 or, at minimum, graduated driver license holders? Or does it make more sense to pass all-driver bans that are easier to enforce?

Research points to the latter, but currently only 14 states and DC have adopted such a policy, and congressional incentives don't seem to be working because the eligibility criteria are too difficult for states to qualify. As for banning all teen passengers, 15 states currently have this restriction in their GDL laws. Getting the other states to implement this proven provision may be difficult, as many state legislatures suffer from GDL fatigue.

Finally, what will it take to change the social norm? While teens and adults agree that distracted driving is a significant problem, they engage in it anyway. States are partnering with many non-profit and private sector organizations to develop and implement programs that enable teens to experience first-hand the dangers of distracted driving. But are these initiatives having a real impact on changing their attitudes and behaviors now, and what about for the long-term? Will technology that disables cell phone use while driving be the most viable solution or will today's teens take the lead and be the generation that not only taught their parents how to text, but got them to stop as well?

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