



## NEWS

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### **Physician groups issue third annual list of deadliest states for youth-related driving**

*New data shows 16 to 20 year-olds involved in overwhelming number of deaths  
Bring to light the epidemic in (State) and around the nation*

#### **For Immediate Release**

Chicago, IL (7/2/07) – Prior to the hectic and often deadly July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday, the physician-led groups End Needless Death on Our Roadways (END) and the Eastern Association for the Surgery of Trauma (EAST) today issued the third annual list of the deadliest states for youth-related driving fatalities. The list is based on each state's motor-vehicle fatalities involving 16-20 year old drivers as a percentage of its overall traffic fatalities. The data shows youth-related fatalities actually declined nationally but still represent a disproportionately high percentage of traffic deaths.

The announcement came as the two groups push their *Prescription for Teen Driver Safety* program that addresses the youth-related driving fatality epidemic around the nation. By doing so, it is the intention of the physician members of these two groups to encourage states and traffic safety advocates to take action via laws and public education to slow the spread of this epidemic.

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“We are cautiously optimistic regarding the improvement in national youth-related driving fatalities from 2004 to 2005. However, the number of people dying in crashes involving young drivers has simply not decreased significantly in recent years,” said Dr. Tom Esposito, M.D., Co-Chairperson of END and Vice-Chairman of the American College of Surgeons, Chicago Committee on Trauma. “In 1994, 21% of all people killed in traffic crashes died in a crash where at least one driver was age 16-20. In 2004, that percentage was 20%. Our youngest drivers have always and continue to be involved in far too many traffic crashes and fatalities.”

“Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) laws have been implemented by many states. Some are very good and some pretty weak, but, all told, the death toll is not changing much,” Esposito continued. “The continuing high number of deaths at the hands of our youngest drivers is unacceptable. Over the last ten years, young drivers have been involved in 20% of all fatal motor vehicle crashes, yet they comprise just six percent of the driving population and drive far fewer miles than adults.”

According to 2005 data, nationally, 7,177 people died in youth-related traffic crashes - over 16% of all traffic fatalities in the country. (*Name of State*) ranks (*place*) in the country for traffic fatalities involving at least one 16-20 year-old driver. Of the (*number*) total traffic fatalities in (*state*) (*number*) or (*percent*) involved at least one 16-20 year-old driver.

“The solution to this crisis is multi-fold and includes GDL and primary safety belt laws, parent and teen education and strong enforcement of traffic and GDL laws,” said Dr. Andrea Barthwell, M.D., Co-Chairperson of END and President and CEO of EMGlobal, LLC. “We commend many states that have recognized the problem and are beginning to enact more common-sense laws and programs that are proving successful in reducing crashes involving young drivers. The data tells us, however, that there is much more work to be done.”

“We sincerely hope that making this data available will get the attention of policy makers and parents alike. We want every state to take notice because it is truly an issue in every state,” Barthwell added. “Our goal is to encourage states to find answers to the question of why a significant percentage of its total traffic fatalities involve 16-20 year-old drivers – an age group that makes up a very small percentage of the driving population. We must stop teens from killing and being killed,” Barthwell continued.

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“Here in Illinois, for example, the teen driver laws have seen many positive changes in recent years such as increasing the practice driving hours from 25 to 50, requiring safety belt use for all motorists under age 19 and banning cell phone use by drivers under age 18,” said Barthwell. “These are all reasonable restrictions for our young, inexperienced drivers and they appear to be having a positive effect; an effect that should only continue to reduce youth-related fatalities over time.”

“In addition, Illinois Senate Bill 172, which makes extensive changes to Illinois teen driving laws, including a strict requirement of 6 hours of supervised practice driving and a stricter curfew is awaiting the governor’s signature,” added Barthwell. “We encourage Governor Blagojevich to sign this bill, and thank him, Secretary of State Jesse White and the Illinois General Assembly for their steadfast support of combating the teen driving problem.”

“There is absolutely no question that youth-related driving fatalities are an epidemic in the United States, and it has been a problem for far too long,” according to Dr. Kimberly Nagy, M.D., President of the Eastern Association for the Surgery of Trauma. “Our youngest drivers, who drive much less than do older people, are involved in 1 out of every 5 motor-vehicle fatalities in this country. Clearly, there’s room for improvement,” she said.

“But statistics only begin to tell the story of the real effect of fatal motor vehicle crashes,” according to Nagy. “Everyday, doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals see the tragic results of car crashes; the loss of sons and daughters, moms and dads, and friends. Emergency department physicians each day must simply shake their heads at the devastation. Tragically, that devastation comes all too often at the hands of our nation’s young, inexperienced drivers,” she added.

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To address this ongoing epidemic, END and EAST are continuing a pro-active program called *A Prescription for Teen Driver Safety*. At the heart of that program are these suggestions for parents and policymakers:

**Prior to receiving a driver's license, all under 18 year-old drivers must have:**

- Parental certification of 30-50 practice hours of behind-the-wheel training with an adult (over age 21) licensed driver, with at least 10 of those hours being at night.
- Must hold a learner's permit for at least 6 months.

**Under 18 year-old drivers must follow these rules:**

- Unsupervised nighttime driving between 10pm and 5am is prohibited
- No more than one under-18 passenger, except family members.

**Under 18 year-old passengers must:**

- Be buckled in all seating positions.

**Under 21 year-old drivers must follow this rule:**

- Receipt of any alcohol-related violation (DUI/DWI, zero-tolerance, use of fraudulent ID to purchase alcohol, illegal transportation/open container violation, etc) means your license is denied until age 21.

The *Prescription for Teen Driver Safety* State Ranking and Analysis is attached.

Information contained in the ranking and analysis is 2004 and 2005 (the most recent available) data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Fatality Analysis Reporting System.

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State	2004 Traffic Fatalities Involving at Least One 16- 20 Year Old Driver(s)	2004 Total Traffic Fatalites All Ages	2004 Percentage of Traffic Fatalities Involving at Least One 16-20 Year Old Driver(s)	State	2005 Traffic Fatalities Involving at Least One 16- 20 Year Old Driver(s)	2005 Total Traffic Fatalites All Ages	2005 Percentage of Traffic Fatalities Involving at Least One 16-20 Year Old Driver(s)
District of Columbia	13	43	30.23%	Delaware	32	134	23.88%
Delaware	35	134	26.12%	Maine	37	169	21.89%
Maine	50	194	25.77%	Iowa	88	450	19.56%
Colorado	165	665	24.81%	Wisconsin	159	815	19.51%
New Hampshire	42	171	24.56%	Missouri	244	1,257	19.41%
Minnesota	139	567	24.51%	Massachusetts	85	442	19.23%
Nebraska	62	254	24.41%	Vermont	14	73	19.18%
Rhode Island	20	83	24.10%	Minnesota	107	559	19.14%
Oklahoma	185	774	23.90%	Alabama	212	1,131	18.74%
Hawaii	33	142	23.24%	North Dakota	23	123	18.70%
Ohio	292	1286	22.71%	Kansas	80	428	18.69%
Indiana	215	947	22.70%	North Carolina	286	1,534	18.64%
Vermont	22	98	22.45%	Indiana	174	938	18.55%
North Carolina	346	1557	22.22%	Mississippi	171	931	18.37%
Alabama	254	1154	22.01%	Ohio	241	1,323	18.22%
Louisiana	197	904	21.79%	Colorado	108	606	17.82%
Mississippi	196	900	21.78%	Arkansas	114	648	17.59%
Missouri	243	1130	21.50%	Texas	611	3,504	17.44%
Michigan	249	1159	21.48%	Nebraska	48	276	17.39%
Pennsylvania	320	1490	21.48%	Tennessee	217	1,270	17.09%
Washington	120	563	21.31%	Utah	48	282	17.02%
Arkansas	150	704	21.31%	Georgia	293	1,729	16.95%
Virginia	194	925	20.97%	Michigan	190	1,129	16.83%
Texas	733	3583	20.46%	Oklahoma	135	802	16.83%
Iowa	79	390	20.26%	Oregon	80	488	16.39%
Massachusetts	96	476	20.17%	California	709	4,329	16.38%
Kentucky	193	964	20.02%	New Hampshire	27	166	16.27%
Kansas	92	461	19.96%	South Dakota	30	186	16.13%
Tennessee	257	1288	19.95%	Illinois	219	1,361	16.09%
Oregon	90	456	19.74%	Kentucky	156	985	15.84%
Connecticut	57	291	19.59%	Florida	559	3,543	15.78%
Georgia	320	1634	19.58%	Connecticut	43	274	15.69%
Arizona	223	1150	19.39%	Maryland	95	614	15.47%
Utah	56	296	18.92%	Idaho	42	275	15.27%
Idaho	49	260	18.85%	Pennsylvania	244	1,616	15.10%
Illinois	254	1356	18.73%	South Carolina	158	1,093	14.46%
Wisconsin	147	792	18.56%	Washington	93	647	14.37%
Florida	602	3244	18.56%	Arizona	169	1,177	14.36%
California	757	4120	18.37%	Virginia	136	947	14.36%
New York	270	1493	18.08%	New Mexico	70	488	14.34%
Wyoming	28	164	17.07%	New York	201	1,429	14.07%
Maryland	108	643	16.80%	Nevada	60	427	14.05%
New Mexico	87	521	16.70%	West Virginia	52	374	13.90%
Montana	38	229	16.59%	Louisiana	132	955	13.82%
South Carolina	166	1046	15.87%	New Jersey	96	748	12.83%
Alaska	16	101	15.84%	Rhode Island	11	87	12.64%
West Virginia	65	411	15.82%	Montana	30	251	11.95%
South Dakota	31	197	15.74%	Wyoming	20	170	11.76%
Nevada	59	395	14.94%	Hawaii	16	140	11.43%
New Jersey	109	731	14.91%	Dist of Columbia	5	48	10.42%
North Dakota	11	100	11.00%	Alaska	7	72	9.72%
United States	8,535	42,636	20.02%	United States	7,177	43,443	16.52%

*Data from NHTSA's Fatal Analysis Reporting System  
Ranking based on 2005 Data, the most recent available*