



NEWS

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Physician group & National Safety Council shed light on data showing deadliest states for youth-related driving fatalities and ask for states' help

For Immediate Release

Chicago, IL (6/28/06) – Prior to the busy July 4th holiday weekend, the physician-led traffic safety advocacy group End Needless Death on Our Roadways (END) and the National Safety Council today issued an analysis that shows the deadliest states for youth-related driving fatalities. The data also shows youth-related fatalities are on the increase in 20 states and unacceptably high nationwide. The analysis is based on each state's motor-vehicle fatalities involving 16-20 year old drivers as a percentage of its overall traffic fatalities.

The announcement came as the two groups expanded their *Prescription for Teen Driver Safety* program by calling on states and traffic safety advocates to cooperate in a comprehensive survey designed to address the youth-related driving fatality epidemic we face in this country. The survey, which will be conducted by the National Safety Council and END, will analyze youth driving programs across the nation.

"This report shows that the number of people dying in crashes involving young drivers has not been significantly reduced over the last ten years," said John Ulczykcki, Director - Transportation Safety Group of the National Safety Council. "Over that time, many states have enacted Graduated Driver Licensing laws and numerous education programs have been implemented by the public and private sectors to address the issue. However, the death toll is not changing much."

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“The continuing high number of deaths cannot be acceptable to anyone. Young drivers are involved in 20% of all fatal motor vehicle crashes, even though they comprise just six percent of the driving population. This was true ten years ago and unfortunately it's still true today.”

“We believe the solution to this crisis involves many elements, including GDL and primary safety belt legislation, parent and teen education, and strong enforcement of traffic and GDL laws,” Ulczycki said. “By surveying actions being taken around the country, we will better understand the nature and scope of the programs underway and why some programs and laws are successful in reducing crashes involving young drivers. Then we can determine how these successful programs can be replicated in cities and states across the nation.”

“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. Thomas Esposito, Co-Chairperson of END and Vice-Chairman of the American College of Surgeons, Chicago Committee on 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,” he said.

“Statistics only begin to tell the story of the real effect of fatal motor vehicle crashes,” according to Dr. Andrea Barthwell, Co-Chairperson of END and President and CEO of EMGlobal, LLC. “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,” Barthwell added.

“To address this crisis, END and the National Safety Council are continuing a proactive program called *A Prescription for Teen Driver Safety*. Today, we are calling on every state to cooperate in a comprehensive survey of its individual efforts to curb the youth-related driving fatality epidemic we face in this country,” said Dr. Barthwell.

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“We’re not looking to pick on states for poor performance. The reality is every state can do much better. Our goal is to find out what works and what doesn’t so that we can do better. The problem is clear and it exists everywhere. We must stop teens from killing and being killed,” Barthwell said.

The *Prescription for Teen Driver Safety Survey* is a comprehensive questionnaire that will examine a broad range of topics that relate to teen driving including youth driving laws, law enforcement, driver education, parental involvement and data. “It is our hope that the survey will initiate a thought process that will lead to comprehensive planning in addressing teen driving fatalities and injuries in each state,” Barthwell concluded.

The *Prescription for Teen Driver Safety State Ranking and Analysis* is attached. Information contained in the ranking and analysis is 2004 data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s Fatality Analysis Reporting System.

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