

Zero Fatalities – Utah Teen Driving Safety Task Force

Location: Utah
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 Category: **Emerging Practice**

BACKGROUND

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 15-19 year-olds in Utah. On average, motor vehicle crashes account for 40 deaths, 330 hospitalizations, and 5,400 emergency department (ED) visits a year for residents ages 15-19 years. Motor vehicle crash hospitalization and ED visit rates are also highest in the 15-19 age group. Teen drivers represent 7% of the licensed drivers in Utah, yet they are involved in a disproportionate percent of crashes; 27% of all motor vehicle crashes and 18% of all fatal crashes.

As a result of the State and Territorial Injury Prevention Directors Association (STIPDA) roundtable workshop, in 2006 the Utah Teen Driving Task Force was formed. This group represents state, local, and private organizations concerned about coordinating activities to improve the safety of teen drivers, passengers, and pedestrians.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The goal of the task force is to reduce fatalities to 1.0 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled by the close of 2008. To meet this goal, a 2% annual reduction in fatalities was established beginning every year thereafter.

Objectives include:

- Bringing together stakeholders in Utah with an interest in teen driving to ensure activities are coordinated throughout the state
- Creating an effective social marketing campaign designed to decrease risky behaviors (such as distracted, drowsy, drunk driving, and not buckling up) among teenage drivers and passengers
- Continuing to support overall teen driver education
- Supporting continued innovation in driver education methods
- Continuing the annual Utah Student Safety Program Conference for high school student leaders and advisors, with follow-up local programming

TITLE VMCH BLOCK GRANT MEASURES ADDRESSED

#7: Rate of injury-related hospital admissions per population ages 0 through 19 years.

- Providing Peer Leader Training and quarterly anti-drinking/drug-usage theme campaigns for various Utah high schools via the Governing Youth Council

TARGET POPULATION SERVED

The sample size is 149,989 and this represents 15-19 year olds statewide who currently have been issued drivers licenses in Utah.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The task force operates under a multi-faceted education program, “Zero Fatalities” that addresses the top five contributing factors of fatalities on Utah’s roads: drowsy driving, distracted driving, aggressive driving, impaired driving, and not buckling up. The group developed a catch phrase “Don’t Drive Stupid” for teens and promotes educational activities for this audience.

The tools used with the Don’t Drive Stupid program include websites, interactive presentations, resource guides, educational material, posters, displays, incentives, grassroots efforts and other behavior modification tools that best fit our audience. Teen educators are used to disseminate information about safe driving practices and teen input was used in the development of many of the materials.

This effort is remarkable because all agencies involved are operating under the “Zero Fatalities” campaign when implementing transportation-related activities. Successful efforts include: TV/radio commercials, public events, driver education curriculum, and local media stories.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES/EVALUATION DATA

As of April 2009 the following has been accomplished:

- Approximately 100 educational outreach events conducted or participated in since Jan 1, 2008
- More than 100,000 pieces of educational material and incentive items distributed
- More than 65 Media Related stories/Events
- Observational seat belt use at participating high schools reached as high as 91% usage rate Utah has seen a 42% decrease in fatal crashes among teens since the campaign began

PROGRAM COST

Zero Fatalities was created in January 2006, Don't Drive Stupid in March 2007. Both efforts are ongoing. The printed outreach materials total nearly \$50,000. This covers the cost of designing and producing booklets, online materials and classroom postings. Estimated cost per client for materials is \$50,000/149,989 (teens) = 33 cents.

ASSETS & CHALLENGES

Assets

- The leadership of the participating programs saw the need to share what was going on in their agencies with the hope of coordinating resources as well as activities to obtain better results.

Challenges

- The demand for the activities and products produced was vastly underestimated.

Overcoming Challenges

- Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) recognized the need for re-printing the Teen's Guide to Smart Driving booklet and felt that spending nearly \$8,500 for a second printing was well worth the educational investment. The booklet has been posted on-line as well to further disseminate the message.

LESSONS LEARNED

It is important to include parental input early on to reinforce messages being received by teens at school, driver's education, media, and other community events.

FUTURE STEPS

The response for the Teen Memorial booklet has been so great that UDOT has completed a second printing so that every student going through driver's education in the public schools in Utah will be given a booklet beginning with the 2009-2010 school year.

COLLABORATIONS

This project involved collaborations with the following agencies:

Utah Teen Traffic Safety Task Force
 Utah Department of Transportation
 Utah Department of Public Safety
 Utah Department of Health
 Primary Children's Medical Center
 Representative Tim Cosgrove, Utah House of Reps
 Utah Department of Education
 Utah Driver License Division
 Utah Highway Patrol
 Utah Parents Teacher Association
 Salt Lake Valley Health Department
 Utah Safety Council
 Emergency Medical Services for Children

PEER REVIEW & REPLICATION

To date, there has not been any formal peer review of the activities associated with the campaign, but these efforts have been recognized by peers at the national, state, and local levels. Also, in 2009 the teen memorial was selected as one of six finalists by STIPDA for an innovative initiative project and the booklet received a Public Health Hero award in May 2009 from the Utah Public Health Association.

This program has not been officially replicated, but the New Jersey Office of Highway Traffic Safety has implemented several aspects of the Don't Drive Stupid program and other states are looking into implementing the campaign.

RESOURCES PROVIDED

Websites, www.ZeroFatalities.com and www.dont-drive-stupid.com, have been developed for the public.

Key words: Intentional/Unintentional Injuries, Drinking and Driving, Health Promotion, Adolescents, Families/Consumers, Teens

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