

2014 Report on Effectiveness of Connecticut's Teen Driving Laws

Commissioner Andres Ayala, Jr.



The DMV Center for Teen Safe Driving

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Introduction

Diligent work on teen driving awareness along with continued emphasis on Graduated Driving Licensing laws in 2014 produced a tremendous achievement -- For the first time in 12 years, no 16- or 17-year-old passengers died in a crash of a vehicle driven by another 16- or 17-year-old driver in Connecticut. And 2014 also saw only one death of these youngest drivers. In the backdrop of 2014 marking a decade in which Connecticut started these special and restrictive laws for 16- and 17-year-old drivers, these statistics are a remarkable achievement toward the goal of zero passenger and driver deaths. In addition, according to a new Connecticut Children's Medical Center study just released, Connecticut's GDL law can be associated with a significant decrease in fatalities among novice teen drivers. It also found that half of the fatal crashes occurred when a novice teen driver was in violation of the new GDL law.

Major Highlights in 2014:

- No 16 or 17-year-old passenger deaths.
- Only one death among 16- and 17-year-old drivers who are governed by the state's GDL program.
- There remains a 64-percent reduction in the deaths of 16- and 17-year-old drivers when comparing Connecticut from 1999 to 2003 before any restrictive teen driving laws to a recent period 2011-2014 following the strengthening of teen driving laws. Restrictions were first put in place in 2004 and enhanced in 2008.
- A new study by CCMC shows the state's GDL is reducing fatalities and that the teen driving laws – not maturity – are behind the reductions by limiting exposure to hazardous situations.
- In this age group crashes with injuries show a 13-percent decline for 2013, the most recent year for crash data, compared to 2012 and 2011.
- GDL violations are up slightly for the year compared to previous years.
- Delayed licensing among 16 and 17 year-olds continues as numbers show a consistent decline compared to those before the 2008 laws went into effect. Meanwhile, the population of this age group has remained nearly the same.

As noted in last year's report, a cottage industry of safety efforts developed since 2004 when the state introduced Graduated Driver Licensing laws with restrictions for 16 and 17 year-olds. Parents, teens, school officials, state policymakers and safety advocates have created new programs, developed messaging campaigns, engaged youth and confronted the daily challenges of reminding these vulnerable drivers that one mistake could cost them their life or the lives of their friends.

Connecticut started its move into Graduated Driver Licensing on January 1, 1997, when the state first required a learner's permit. Prior to that change, learner's permits were not required for anyone. The new permit mandated various training requirements, including home training for six months or driver's education for four months prior to taking skills test for license. Yet, the permit and its training requirements alone did not reduce the significant number of injuries and deaths for 16- and 17-year-old drivers. In 2003 the state legislature passed the first set of curfew and passenger restriction laws to become effective in January 2004. They stemmed in particular from a fiery crash in Glastonbury two years earlier in which three seniors in high school as well as a 38-year-old father of three in another vehicle were killed on a December evening on Hebron Avenue. That crash and its horrific elements, including a finding that the young driver was drunk at the time of crash, added increased attention to a growing debate about curbing the driving privileges for 16 and 17 year-olds. In 2007 another series of high-profile crashes occurred, taking the lives of teen drivers and their passengers. Again the state was riveted to these drivers' behaviors as well as whether training and restriction laws for this age group were doing enough. A Governor's Task Force on Teen Safe Driving, convened in the late fall, recommended during the spring of 2008 extended curfews, passenger restrictions, beefed-up training, enhanced penalties, including fines and license suspensions for violations. It also recommended the first in the nation 48-hour suspension of a license for just a charge of violating the laws and a two-hour joint parent-teen information session required for any 16 or 17 year-old seeking a driver's license. The Governor and the state Legislature adopted these recommendations into law, which on August 1, 2008, went into effect.

Beginning 10 years ago with the first set of restriction laws and following through with the measures four years later to strengthen them, an industry of public education, public health initiatives and community outreach developed both in Connecticut as well as nationally as other states reacted to the same issues. A core issue in this continuous awareness campaign is

explaining that teens have a built-in disadvantage. Medical studies show that teen brains do not fully develop until about 25 years old. This means they have difficulty fully understanding risky situations into which they place themselves.

This message also can be found later in this report through summaries from a sample of the advocates' activities. A notable new addition this year is "Be The Key" in Glastonbury, championed by high school senior Audrey Apanovitch following the July 2013 crash and death of her close friend Jane Modolesky. She formed a safe driving club called Be The Key in her high school and coupled it with a companion community organization. The DMV, Governor's Highway Safety Office and Connecticut Children's Medical Center helped her to launch her effort. She along with her school club members and other parents engaged her community to rally around teen safe driving through a number of events and programs. She received a grant from the Glastonbury Education Foundation to kick off her efforts. One of her major successes was winning \$100,000 for her school through State Farm insurance's nationwide Celebrate My Drive contest nationwide. It pulls together communities to support teen safe driving. School officials will be using \$20,000 of that money on a variety of teen safe driving awareness activities.

In addition, major contributors to public education include the Department of Transportation's Highway Safety Office, the state Department of Public Health, hospitals, law enforcement, including the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association, the Connecticut State Police, high schools, a variety of safety advocates and corporations, such as Travelers, Allstate Foundation, Arbella insurance and State Farm. They all have joined together in Connecticut to provide resources and support for promoting safety. Bloomfield author and teen safe driving advocate, Timothy Hollister, has published a safety guide for parents: Not So Fast – Parenting Your Teen Through the Dangers of Driving. In 2014 work started on translating it into Spanish for release in the Fall 2015.

"I Applaud all the work done since the passage of tougher laws to save lives and we need to remain aware that even more work is needed every year to reach new teen drivers and the many people who influence them."

Andres Ayala, Jr.
DMV Commissioner

"We have made significant progress with GDL laws in Connecticut, but we need to get parents more engaged to make certain their teens obey the GDL laws. Half of teens who die in car crashes are violating a GDL law," said Dr. Brendan Campbell, Director of the Pediatric Trauma Program at Connecticut Children's Medical Center, whose 2014 study showed Connecticut's teen driving laws are helping to reduce fatalities. He was a member of the 2007 Governor's Task Force on Teen Safe Driving.



Dr. Brendan T.
Campbell

Note: A debt of gratitude to Harley Polverelli and Gene Interlandi of the state Department of Transportation for helping to assemble crash statistics used in this report. A special thanks for reviewing this report goes to: Timothy Hollister, JD, author of Not So Fast – Parenting Your Teen Through the Dangers of Driving; Sherry Chapman, President, Mourning Parents Act, Inc.; Mario Damiata, University of Connecticut Transportation Research Center and former regional program manager for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; C. Steven Wolf, MD, Chairman of Emergency Medicine, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center; Brendan Campbell, MD, pediatric trauma surgeon and Director of Pediatric Trauma at Connecticut Children's Medical Center; David Shapiro, MD, trauma surgeon, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, and advisor to the DMV; Garry Lapidus, PA, Director of the Connecticut Children's Medical Center Injury Prevention Center; Pina Violano, RN, Director of the Injury Prevention Center at Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital; Kevin Borrup, JD, Associate Director of the Connecticut Children's Medical Center Injury Prevention Center and Neil Chaudhary, PhD, Vice President, Preusser Research Group, authorities on transportation research issues. Report prepared and compiled May, 2015, Wethersfield, CT.

LICENSING

The state continued a trend of fewer 16 and 17 year-olds obtaining licenses when compared to the years prior to the enactment in 2008 of tougher teen driving laws. Connecticut, like many other states, has experienced issues with delayed licensing based on recent downward economic trends in the last several years and strong graduated driver licensing laws for young teens. Both of these have led to teens waiting beyond the 16th birthday to obtain a license. In some instances, teens wait until they are 18 or older. This can reduce or eliminate training that teens receive, cut the kinds of learning experiences behind the wheel and increase the potential for crashes. There are no training requirements for those 18 and older. However, advocates and state officials have begun discussions about ways to address this issue with training and delayed licensing. Further research is needed before adequate proposals to address the matter can be drafted.

In the two years prior to the adoption of tougher GDL laws in Connecticut, an average of nearly 30,000 teens 16 and 17 years-old obtained a license. In the

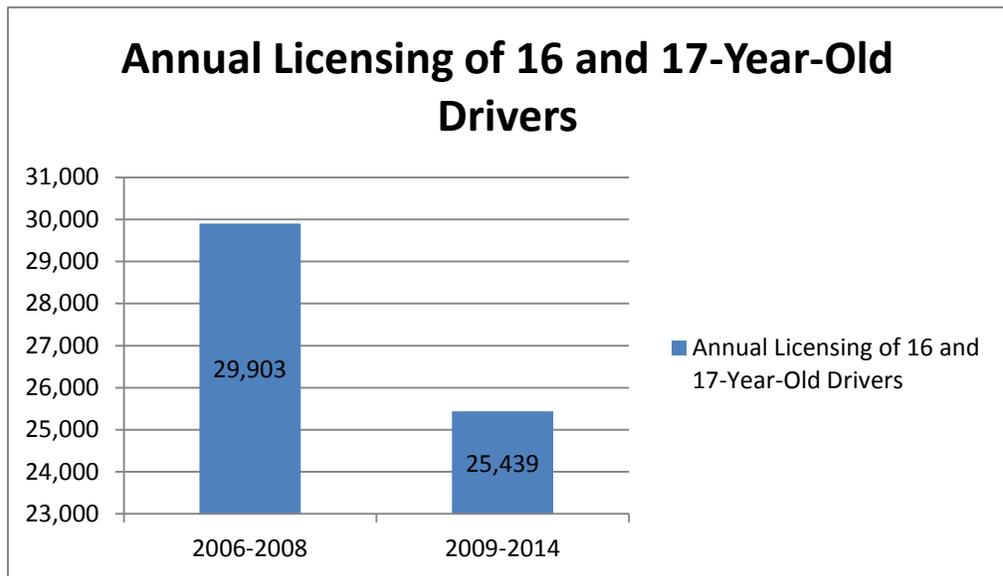


Figure 1 – State Department of Motor Vehicles

years that followed, that average has dropped to nearly 25,500. Meanwhile, the average for 18 and 19 year-olds has remained about 10,500 per year, except in 2008 and 2009 when there were slight dips. Transportation researchers have seen these two dips as anomalies and most likely the result of the economic troubles facing families and young adults. As the country began to recover, the consistency in licensing at this age has returned.

For several years now the question has persisted about the reasons for the overall 5,000 decrease in 16 and 17 year-olds getting licenses after stronger laws were passed. Population changes alone do not account for this drop, say researchers.

It is clear that delayed licensing is occurring in Connecticut, say researchers, but specific reasons are hard to pinpoint given law changes, a difficult economy, shifting teen attitudes about getting a driver's license and overprotectiveness from parents willing to be chauffeurs for their older teenage children.

Trends indicate that some 16 and 17 year-olds have waited until they were older, and likewise some of the 18 and 19 year-olds delayed until their early 20s, mostly because of expense of owning and maintaining a vehicle. The economy has driven older teens to remain at home and a New York Times story in 2010 coined the term, "The changing timetable for adulthood." The age marking who is a "teen driver" is becoming vaguer. More safety advocates, public health professionals and members of the news media are referring to the entire population of 16 to 19 years-old as "teen drivers," even though a different set of laws distinguish those two groups of these teens.

When looking at the issue nationwide, the majority of American teens today delay getting a driver's license, according to a 2013 study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. Less than half (44 percent) of teens obtain a driver's license within 12 months of the minimum age for licensing in their state and just over half (54 percent) are licensed before their 18th birthday, causing concern among safety experts that young adult drivers are missing the benefits intended by graduated drivers licensing (GDL). These findings mark a significant drop from two decades ago when data showed more than two-thirds of teens were licensed by the time they turned 18.

When 16 or 17 year-olds do attempt to obtain a license in Connecticut, they are required to attend a two-hour joint parent-teen information session for permit holders and parents. Connecticut Children's Medical Center conducted a pilot study to observe classes in 10 different driving schools that were holding these sessions.

Kevin Borrup, associate director of the CCMC Injury Prevention Center, reported that instructors had positive interactions with parents and teens. Areas that were not well covered included the risks of teen driving, nighttime driving, brain development, financial liability and support (i.e. enforcement) of the GDL law. Schools did an excellent job in covering the provisions of the GDL law and the issue of distracted driving

He said that a parental survey conducted as part of the study revealed the following: 1) 82 percent of parents thought the class was the right length 2) 92 percent thought the instructor was knowledgeable and 3) 90 percent thought the class helped them to better coach their teenage driver

The study showed that the two hour class is a valuable tool for reaching parents and teens, he said. It seems to be supported by a vast majority of that target audience whose opinions reflected two earlier and larger studies done by DMV. "There are content areas that can be improved. In addition, physical tools could be added to the class such as a handout on the GDL law, a logbook to track teen driving hours, and finally a parent-teen agreement. More work needs to be done in partnering with the DMV on this effort, but the state is off to an excellent start," he said.

CRASHES AND INJURIES

For the 2014, a downward trend in lower fatalities for 16- and 17 year-old drivers continued.

Notable was that for the first time in 12 years no 16- or 17-year-old passenger died in a crash of a vehicle driven by any licensed driver, according to the state Department of Transportation.

The zero-passenger fatality rate is in sharp contrast to a high in 2002

and again in 2003 of seven passengers each year when just counting 16 and 17 year-olds in vehicles. In 2014 among drivers there was only one death in this age group. A 17-year-old driver from East Hartford. The state continued a trend of successive low

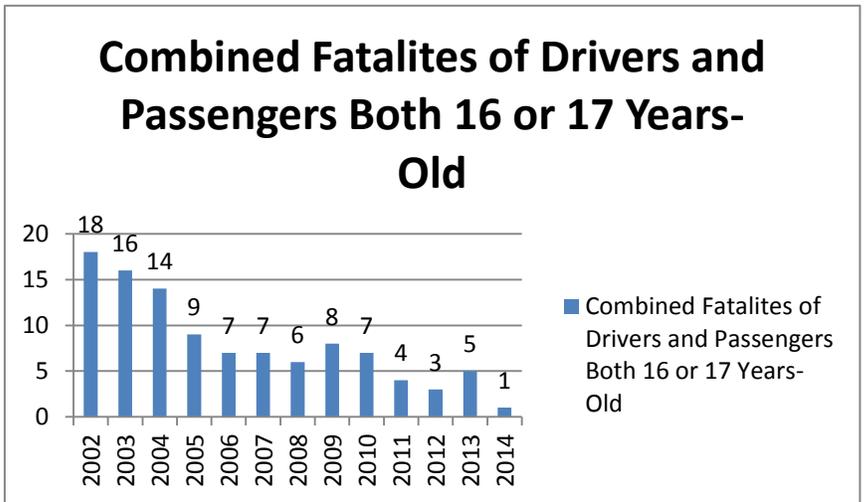


Figure 2 - State Department of Transportation

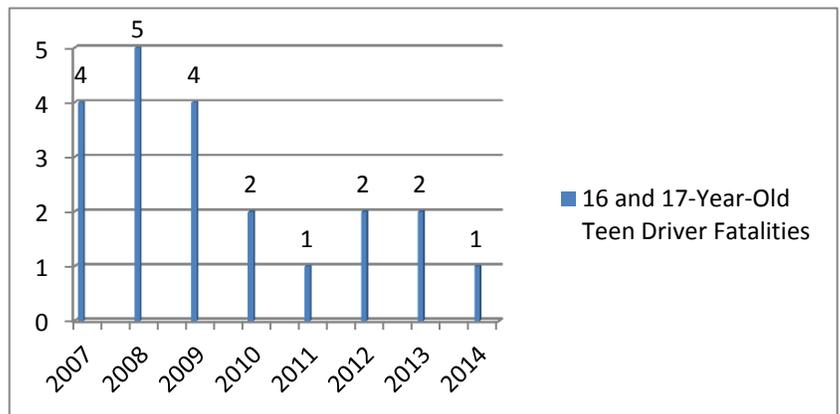


Figure 3- State Department of Transportation

fatality rates among these teen drivers following the 2008 enactment of tougher laws, which included an extended curfew, stronger passenger restrictions, more training and higher fines and increased penalties for violations. Parents were also engaged more by advocates and the state to monitor teen drivers.

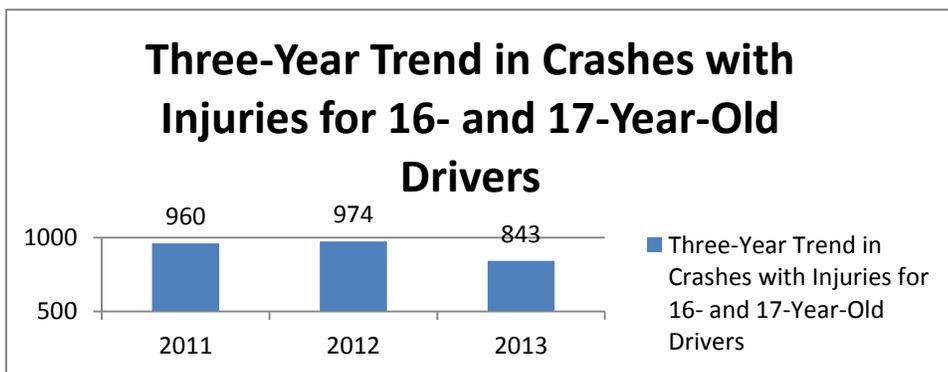


Figure 4 - State Department of Transportation

A 64% drop
has occurred in 16- and 17-year-old driver deaths when comparing four-year totals in Connecticut before it imposed restrictions and after (1999-2003 and 2011-2014).

Source: CT Department of Transportation

In 2013, the latest year for compiled statistics on teen driver crashes, those causing injuries show a 13-percent decline over the previous two years. Total crashes that included property damage only showed a one-percent decrease in for that specific age group. One view is that behaviors causing more serious crashes as well as miles travelled may changing in a positive way to produce lower injury rates. Nonetheless, numbers of licensed drivers in this age group were relatively consistent in 2011-2013. Further review of driving and licensing trends is needed.

A look at statistics when Connecticut did not have any special laws for teen driving shows dramatic change since restrictions were imposed. There has been a 64-percent reduction in the deaths of 16- and 17-year-old drivers when comparing for totals for 1999-2003 (the immediate four years before any restrictions began) to 2011-2014 (the latest four-year numbers following tougher restrictions). From 1999 through the end of 2003 there were a total of 37 driver deaths in this youngest age group. After 10 years of various restrictions, driver deaths dropped to a total of 13 for 2011 – 2014.

Neil Chaudhary, PhD, Vice President, Preusser Research Group, an authority on transportation research issues, said, “PRG found that there was a higher decline in novice teen driver crash rates than those that existed for 18-19 year old drivers. The recession and delayed licensure were

clearly factors, but it is clear that the GDL played a role in the higher decline for novice drivers. There were no similar declines for drivers aged 40 to 59 during the same time period of the study. Declines for novice teen drivers were also greater than declines for the same age group at the national level. Declines were also greater in Connecticut for novice driver crashes occurring at night.”

Crash and Injury Prevention Programs at Connecticut Hospitals

Marisol Feliciano, Director of Violence and Injury Prevention, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, has reported on the wide variety of work underway at Connecticut hospitals to prevent these crashes, injuries and deaths. Here are excerpts from her findings:

- Public health institutions such as hospitals are critical components in helping explain the teen driving problem from a community and social norming perspective. Saint Francis Hospital conducted a survey of other injury prevention and trauma centers around the state and found nine hospitals actively implementing some form of teen driving outreach programs.
- Hospitals reporting active sustained programs for at least the past five years include Backus Hospital (Norwich); Bridgeport Hospital, Bristol Hospital, St Vincent’s Hospital (Waterbury), Connecticut Children’s Medical Center. Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center (Hartford), Norwalk Hospital, Manchester Memorial Hospital, and Yale-New Haven Hospital. Many implement similar programs through community presentations or interaction with teens in a hospital-based setting
- Activities include bringing students to the hospital to witness mock trauma exercises for car crash victims in the Emergency Department; sometimes emergency medical technicians from the medical helicopter transport program Lifestar are included in presentations. There is hands-on programming sometimes involved with other units of the hospital, such as critical care, physical therapy and trauma surgeons or emergency department nurses. Students are also given the opportunity to select the kinds of programming in which to participate. Mandated public health courses also used as a vehicle to enable students to participate in the program.

Special Study: Teen Driving – Violating the Law Found at Root of Half of Fatal Crashes

The Connecticut Children’s Medical Center undertook a special study in 2014 on Connecticut specific crashes with fatalities involving 16- and 17-year-old drivers from August 2008 to December 2013. This is the first study, according to the researchers, that combined multiple data sources, including Department of Transportation crash files, Department of Motor Vehicle licensure data and driving records, medical examiner reports, and press stories. They give a well-rounded picture of crash circumstances for fatal crashes involving novice teen drivers. They also helped to determine whether these teen drivers were violating the GDL law. The most notable finding is that half of novice teen drivers involved in a fatal car crash were in clear violation of the GDL law, suggesting that prevention methods remain a strong deterrent to fatal crashes.

The study’s authors and contributors are: William T. Schreiber-Stainthorp; Kevin Borrup, JD, MPA; George C. Bentley, PhD; Neil K. Chaudhary, PhD; William K. Seymour, MPA; Shefali Thaker, MPH; Garry Lapidus, PA-C, MPH; and Brendan T. Campbell, MD, MPH. It was presented at the Eastern Association for the Surgery of Trauma Annual Scientific Symposium in January 2015. The following is an excerpt from the study.

“Comparison of the teen car crash data reported in our study mirrored contemporaneous national data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) that is maintained by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The crash data from FARS demonstrated that crashes involved a single car in 50% of the time, 37% of those who died in crashes were teenage drivers, 31% of fatalities were passengers of those teenage drivers, and a majority of teenage fatalities were male (i.e., 65%).

“The ability of GDL’s to reduce crash risk is thought to be due to either increasing the aptitude of novice teen drivers or decreasing their exposure to dangerous driving behaviors. A recent study suggests that exposure may be the more critical element of GDL effectiveness. The findings from our study demonstrate that exposure to dangerous driving behaviors (i.e., violation of GDL laws) occurs frequently in fatal crashes involving novice teen drivers in Connecticut.

“This study has several significant limitations. First, the analysis was limited to fatal crashes only. Motor vehicle crashes have a low case-fatality rate, so fatal crashes are rare events when it comes to motor vehicle crash-related injuries. Our study did not assess the level of GDL

compliance in non-fatal crashes, which would be important to understand prior to targeting novice teen drivers with new initiatives intended to increase GDL compliance.

“A second limitation of this study is that it did not look at potential unintended consequences of the stricter GDL law. Looking at trends in DMV licensing data after the passage of the new GDL law in 2008 showed that many Connecticut teens simply delayed licensure until their 18th birthday, and thereby avoided having to comply with the new GDL restrictions. This trend among Connecticut teens may have transferred crash fatalities to the over-18 age group.

“GDL systems have been uniformly but only partially effective (in the 20-40% range) at reducing the incidence of teen car crashes despite very low levels of enforcement by police and a general lack of public awareness about the GDL systems. Previous work by our group and others has demonstrated that parents are surprisingly receptive to learning about GDL provisions and driving safety. A telephone survey of 300 parents of learner drivers in Connecticut demonstrated that parental knowledge about current GDL provisions was mixed. Parents were knowledgeable about who could accompany teen drivers and knew that cell phone use is prohibited, but as many as 24% were incorrect about passenger limits in the restricted licensing stage and 40% lacked understanding knowledge about the 11 p.m. nighttime restriction.

“If parents are to be expected to enforce GDL laws in their family, they must know the details of GDL laws. Future efforts to further lower crash risk for novice teen drivers should evaluate opportunities to improve GDL compliance among novice teen drivers using measures that target both parents and law enforcement. We have begun such an effort in one Connecticut town, where we have organized a community coalition to increase awareness, adoption, and enforcement of GDL systems among teens, parents, police and the community in order to maximize the full impact of the law. We are using the policy and program lessons learned from the 30-year history of increasing seat belt use and reducing driving under the influence to help guide this work.”

While the observed decrease in fatal crash rates for 16- and 17-year-old drivers in Connecticut after the passage of the stricter GDL law is encouraging, it is alarming that half of novice teen drivers involved in fatal motor vehicle crashes were violating Connecticut’s GDL law, the authors wrote.

“This study highlights how the GDL system in Connecticut falls short and demonstrates that a significant opportunity remains to prevent fatal teen car crashes. Next steps should include the development and evaluation of programs directed toward parents and law enforcement that are

designed to increase novice teen drivers' compliance with graduated driver licensing laws," they concluded.

VIOLATIONS

One of several measures of effectiveness of teen driving laws is convictions for violating them. Though summonses are issued first, a variety of circumstances

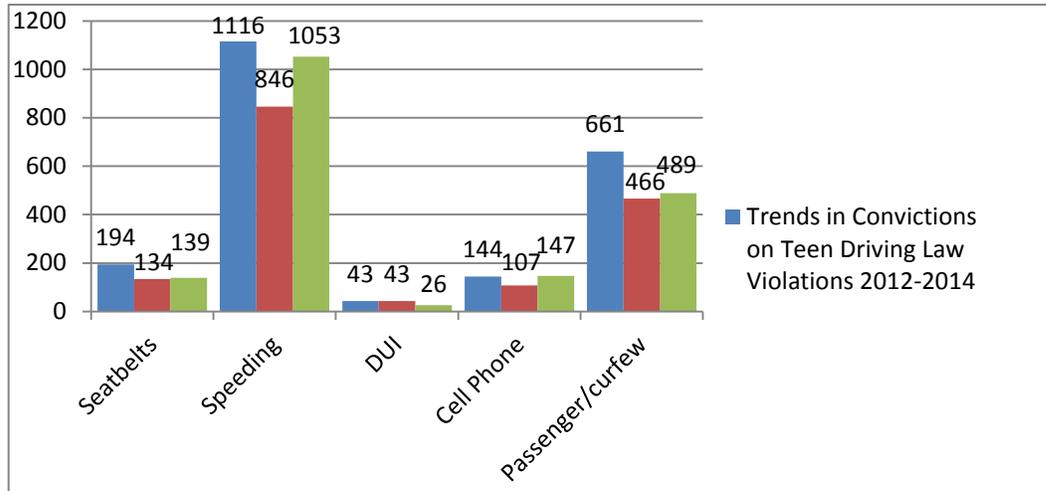


Figure 5 - State Department of Motor Vehicles

surround allegations of a violation. However, a conviction in court brings the official stamp on a driving record about a violation. As a measure, violations indicate how often various behaviors occurred. Summonses and convictions can send powerful messages to teens. A society governed by laws will not tolerate unsafe behaviors behind the wheel that endanger themselves, their passengers and others on the road.

Statistics until 2014 had shown a steady drop in convictions since the state started enforcing the new laws in August 2008. In nearly every category - from seat belts to passenger restrictions and curfew to cell phone use and distracted driving - the numbers of convictions each year steadily declined. However, the numbers in 2014 indicate a slight rise in most categories comparing the most recent three years.

There has been no detailed research on enforcement of the revised laws and effectiveness of the laws due to enforcement. The Hartford Courant, however, undertook an analysis of DMV's 16- and 17-year-old teen drivers' records. "Experts say the reason for the drop in convictions is multifaceted, but they say that it's not as simple as teens driving more safely, and that a lack of enforcement may be partly responsible," wrote Kelly Glista in a September 2013 story, [Stricter State Laws Translate Into Fewer Tickers to Teen Drivers](#). Police and lawmakers remarked on a

range of reasons including an inability to enforce all laws, the risk of illegal profiling because someone looks young and shouldn't have passengers, the reluctance of officers to write tickets, a lack of police resources to focus on young drivers to the exclusion of others, and a general concern about balancing good police community relations with enforcement.

The 48-Hour Suspension

Another measure is the instances in which police issued the required immediate 48-hour suspension of the license for violations of certain teen driving laws. Those numbers have dropped nearly 44 percent in 2014 compared to just after the new laws were passed. State law requires that the suspension be given for violating the teen driving

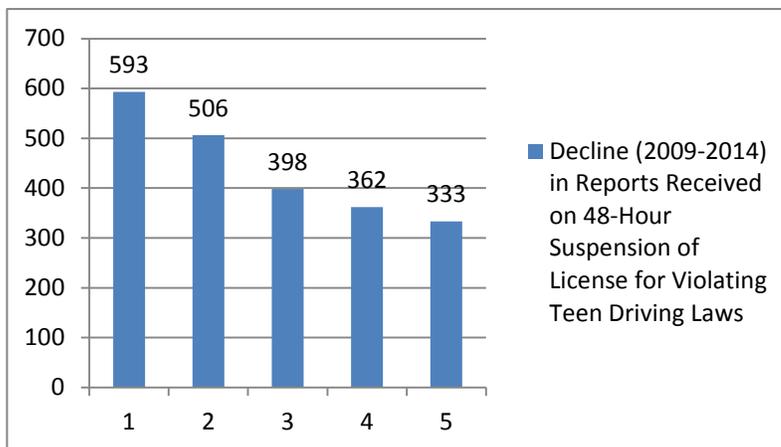


Figure 6 - State Department of Motor Vehicles

laws. The Connecticut Police Chiefs Association, the State Police and the

DMV will be reviewing the numbers in 2015 to determine the reasons behind the decrease. The Governor's Task Force on Teen Safe Driving saw the suspension as a deterrent to violating the laws because teens would not be able to drive a car home and parents would need to sign for the license's return.

Police have remarked that this state law's use of the word "shall" in terms of doing a 48-hour suspension is confusing because "shall" implies mandatory action, but law enforcement need and use discretion in whether to issue a summons. In addition, the 48-hour suspensions are not entered into the DMV computer system for access by law enforcement during a stop. They have also discussed the issue of consistency in law enforcement across Connecticut's 169 towns and the state police. DMV and the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association and State Police review will include issues related to promoting consistency and understanding the differing views among officers about GDL and its enforcement.

UNDERAGE DRINKING AND DRIVING

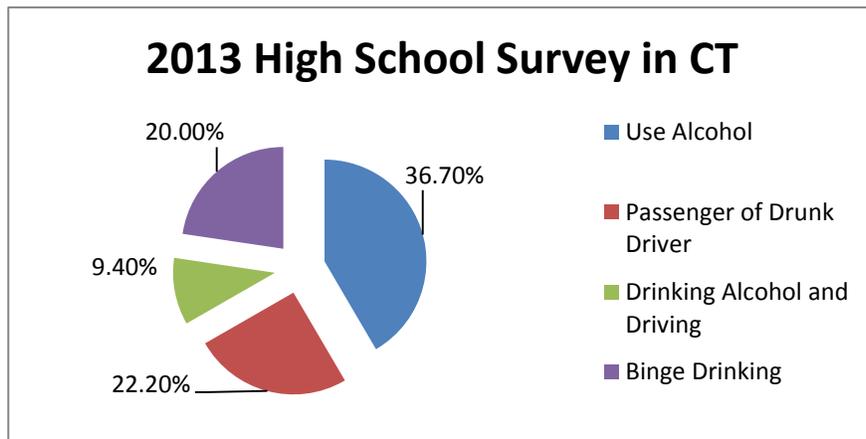


Figure 7 - State Department of Public Health

State law prohibits anyone under age 21 from driving with a blood alcohol content of .02% or more. The laws specify criteria for alcohol and drug tests to determine use, which can bring criminal penalties and driver's license suspensions for violations.

Underage binge or

high-risk drinking that has a high level of toxicity is a significant public health concern, especially if someone gets behind the wheel of a vehicle. Too often teen driver fatalities involve the use of alcohol by the driver, passengers or both. The impacts can be life-long if not devastating and life-threatening.

The State Department of Public Health through its 2013 Connecticut School Health Survey reports have shown a decrease since 2005 in alcohol use and abuse in high-school age youth. In 2013, about 36.7 percent of teens reported having at least one alcoholic drink in the month before taking the survey. That is a decrease from 45.3 percent reported in 2005, and an even greater decrease since 1997 when over half of students (52.6 percent) reported drinking in the past month. There was also a decline seen in students reporting an episode of binge drinking in the past month. Binge drinking is defined as having five or more drinks of alcohol in a row, within a couple of hours. About 20.0 percent of students reported recent binge drinking, in comparison to students in 2005, when about 27.8 percent reported binge drinking. The younger that youth start drinking, the more vulnerable they are to abuse alcohol later in life, so it is encouraging to see that fewer state youth in 2013 (14.9 percent) reported having their first drink of alcohol younger than age 13, compared to 21.3 percent of youth in 2005.

However, underage drinking and driving still remains a serious public health concern that gets the attention of myriad agencies involved with helping to create awareness of the dangers. In 2013 they formed a collaborative that resulted in a number of public outreach and education activities. In 2014 that outreach continued. The state Department of Transportation launched, with the collaborative, a special television campaign aimed at parents.

Called “It’s Not My Kid,” the campaign focused on the dangers of underage drinking and driving, which happens with increased frequency during the summer months. It featured 30-second television and radio advertisements as well as social media messages, billboard advertising and brief audio clips at gas station pumps.

Underlying the campaign purpose was the Connecticut’s 2013 self-reporting School Health Survey findings.

“The leading cause of death for American teenagers is motor vehicle crashes and we have taken significant steps to deter the kinds of irresponsible behavior and poor decisions made by inexperienced drivers when they get behind the wheel,” said Governor Dannel P. Malloy. “When it comes to raising awareness among teens and parents about the dangers of reckless and impaired driving, we have found that television, radio and social media campaigns are most effective. We want teenagers to know that drinking and driving more often than not has dire consequences, and this campaign brings that message home.”

The television ad shows a mock news story about an underage drinking incident with a teen known as “Not My Kid.” It centers on a drunk-driving fatality and ends with the message, “The sobering truth is that it could be your kid unless you lay down the law. Talk to your teen before underage drinking destroys.” A radio ad follows the same script as well as an additional one entitled, “Not My Little Girl” that includes an ambulance being called to an underage drinking party and where a young girl has fallen and hit her head.

All the ads emphasize the tag line “underage drinking destroys” as an effort to reflect the blunt consequences of tragedy that can follow episodes of drinking as well as drinking and driving. It also invites viewers and listeners to consider the number of harmful effects on the teens as well as families and communities.

With a break in school and summer providing more free time to teens, the potential for excessive drinking as well as driving rises with trips to summer concerts, visits to the beach, parties in the woods near homes, house and pool gatherings while parents are away or even asleep. Parents must be aware of this serious issue and develop prevention strategies, say members of the coalition.

“Emergency medical service systems and emergency departments across the country are saddled with the results of teen binge drinking from private parties, college parties, and concert venues. Patients are brought in comatose or nearly so from the effects of alcohol and or drugs,” said Dr. C. Steven Wolf, MD, chairman of Emergency Medicine at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center. For several years, he also has helped to lead prevention efforts, especially at concert venues in the state through the North Central Connecticut Emergency Medical Services Committee.



Dr. C. Steven Wolf

Dr. Wolf said the dangers rise dramatically when these underage drinkers get behind the wheel and could hurt themselves, passengers and other innocent people on the road.

TEEN DRIVING OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The following reports reflect major activities undertaken by key safety advocates who dedicate significant portions of their time addressing the safety for teens and educating them and their parents about ways to prevent crashes, injuries and deaths. Activities have varied from testimonials and presentations to mock crashes and special projects by students to raise awareness in their communities and high schools. Prior to the state creating a task force in 2007 and ramping up public awareness of issues related to teen driving, there were just a handful of groups doing these kinds of educational efforts.

DMV Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Teen Safe Driving

The DMV has established a Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Teen Safe Driving. The following are members:

Safety Advocate Members:

- Pina Violano, RN, Injury Prevention Program, Yale-New Haven Hospital
- Kevin Borrup, JD, MPA, Injury Prevention Program, Connecticut Children's Medical Center
- Mario Damiata, University of Connecticut Transportation Safety Research Center, and former staff member National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
- Richard Hastings, JD, Ridgefield, Parent

- Timothy Hollister, JD, Bloomfield, parent, blogger on teen safe driving, *From Reid's Dad*
- Sherry Chapman, Mourning Parents Act, Inc.
- Joseph Cristalli, Governor's Highway Safety Office, Department of Transportation
- Tracey Gove, West Hartford Police Department, representing the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association
- Lt. Paul Vance, spokesman, Connecticut State Police
- Francis J. Carino, JD, Supervisory Assistant State's Attorney, Office of the Chief State's Attorney
- Steven Wolf, MD, Chairman of Emergency Medicine, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center
- Garry Lapidus, PA, Director of the Injury Prevention Center, Connecticut Children's Medical Center
- Sebby Giannone, Frank's Driving School
- The Hon. John Nazzaro, Superior Court Judge
- Faith VosWinkel, Office of the Child Advocate
- Neil Chaudhary, PhD, Preusser Research Group, Inc., a transportation research study firm
- Andy Groher, JD, Riscassi and Davis, Conn. Trial Lawyers Association
- Stephanie Ford, Connecticut Association of Schools
- David Shapiro, MD, trauma surgeon, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center

Student Members 2013-2014

- Katie Cimini, Mercy High School
- Ama Appiah, Mercy High School
- Allie Caselli, Nonnewaug High School
- Stephanie Lewis, Nonnewaug High School
- Hannah McCollam, Nonnewaug High School
- Estefania Maya, Wethersfield High School
- Audrey Apanovitch, Glastonbury High School
- Sophia Pelletier, Mercy High School
- Benjamin Harlee, Hartford Classical Magnet School
- Abhishek Gupta, Xavier High School

The Committee meets twice a year or more as needed to discuss issues related to teen driving. It advises the Commissioner on a number of issues pertaining to legislation and policy. Committee meetings provide a forum for information sharing and incubation for new ideas to take into

communities. Discussions among members can lead to collaborative approaches to innovative techniques for addressing parents and teens. To give a sense of the many activities, below is a sampling from just a few safety advocates on advisory committee:

Department of Motor Vehicles Teen Safe Driving Center

- A teen safe-driving video contest co-sponsored with Travelers. The theme developed by DMV teen advisors was: Teen Drivers: Put Your Brakes on Distractions. The deadline for entries was January 15, 2014, judging was in February followed by awards in April. Nearly 550 students representing 46 high schools submitted a total of 137 videos 2014 contest. In mid-2014 a new corps of advisors created the 2015 contest them launched in September 2014. The chose "Steer Your Friends in The Right Direction." The video contest is the oldest video contest in the U.S. sponsored by a DMV and aimed specifically at teen driving. It has received accolades for its endurance over time and outlasting the test of being a fad. Teen advisors play a key role in the contest, especially in designing a theme, learning critical public health analysis related to teen driving, organizational and time management skills and sharpening presentations skills by explaining their contest design to high-ranking state and corporate officials. This experience is guided by DMV with the assistance of Dr. David S. Shapiro, trauma surgeon and researcher in public health, at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center.
- Updated laws and training brochure funded by Travelers insurance; also planned with Travelers and other safety advocates a January 2015 teen driving summit to examine progress and challenges in the mission of teen safe driving in Connecticut.
- DMV continued to lead an underage drinking coalition to look at underage drinking as well as its coupling with drinking and driving.
- DMV participated with Connecticut Children's Medical Center, the Department of Transportation's Governor's Highway Safety Office and a community group in Glastonbury to help create the first state-endorsed community mobilization program for teen safe driving. It was received well and won a \$100,000 grant from State Farm insurance. The money was awarded to Glastonbury High School with \$20,000 earmarked for teen safe driving programs. Discussion also began on taking the mobilization model to Manchester and Bridgeport in 2015 to continue this pilot project in communities with different and similar demographics to test its applicability. DMV also helped to organize a number of activities through this community mobilization effort and press interviews.

- DMV began a new teen driver and passenger safety program called: “You’re NOT Just Along for The Ride – Safety is EVERYONE’S Responsibility.” It is funded through two grants totaling \$30,000 from State Farm insurance. Posters, banners and brochures have been developed as part of the program and have been given to high schools throughout Connecticut by the Connecticut Association of Schools. DMV held a press conference with Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman at Connecticut Children’s Medical Center to announce the program.
- DMV also received a nearly \$5,000 federal grant through the DOT’s Governor’s Highway Safety Office for continued outreach and educational activities on teen safe driving.
- DMV also worked with Connecticut Children’s Medical Center on a path-breaking study entitled, *Teenage Motor Vehicle Crash Fatalities in Connecticut, 2008-2013: A Critical Appraisal After the Passage of a Stronger Graduated Driver Licensing Law*. The study reviewed all fatal crashes involving 16- and 17-year-old drivers since tougher teen driver laws were passed in 2008 and for five years prior. It found that strengthening the teen driving laws reduced fatal crashes, but in nearly half of those that did occur the driver was in violation of the laws.
- DMV continued to work with partner AAA on a variety of teen driving outreach and educational activities.
- DMV sponsored with Connecticut Attorney General George Jepsen a press conference during national teen safe driving week to raise awareness of safety issues. It also worked with his office on a number of other related outreach efforts.
- DMV continued to work with partners at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center on a variety of issues related to teen driving and drinking and driving.
- DMV and Connecticut Children’s Medical Center teamed up to start a two-phase evaluation of the state-required two-hour parent-teen educational awareness program required for all first-time license applicants under 18 years-old. The purpose is to redesign and improve the program, which is offered through driving schools.

Governor’s Highway Safety Office, State Department of Transportation



- The Connecticut Department of Transportation’s Highway Safety Office (HSO) continued a diverse and proactive variety of programs to impact teen drivers in 2014. As a member of the Coalition for the Prevention of Underage Drinking, the HSO was responsible for securing

the funding to develop, produce and broadcast the popular “Not My Kid” television and radio commercials. This commercial focused on targeting and challenging parents to be more involved in the social lives of their teens, specifically at locations such as concert venues in Connecticut where underage drinking is an epidemic. Due to an overwhelming amount of teens arriving severely intoxicated to hospital emergency rooms as a result of drinking at these shows, this important endeavor was the culmination of many meetings held by the coalition to target unsafe drinking as well as underage drinking and driving.

- The HSO also continued its sponsorship with Kramer International’s “Save a Life Tour”, a high-impact distracted driving program for high schools in Connecticut. This program visited 30 schools during the 2013-2014 school year and began again during the 2014-2015 school year with 60 schools scheduled to host the program. The program features the AT&T documentary, “From One Second to the Next”, which depicts four real victim and perpetrator distracted driving impact stories that caused devastating consequences. The students then have the opportunity to use two distracted driving simulators which send the students text messages as they drive in the simulator to allow them to experience this dangerous behavior in a safe environment. To date, this program has reached approximately 100 Connecticut high schools and thousands upon thousands of students. The HSO intends to continue this program in the coming years.
- The HSO’s partnership with the Connecticut Association of Schools and the Interscholastic Athletic Conference entered its second year in 2014 and has provided an excellent avenue to reach teens and teen drivers, their families and their communities throughout the state during athletic competitions. With signage, public service announcements, tabling events and in-game promotions at up to 15 state tournament locations the HSO has been a presence at both boys and girls sports tournaments in each season. These messages reach not only the students participating in the games but also a diverse group of communities that attend these events.
- Accompanying these programs was the continuation of the partnership with the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and the funding of their “Power of Parent’s” program. This is a 30-minute workshop given to parents based on the parent handbook, which motivates parents to talk with their teens about alcohol. Handbooks are presented to every parent in attendance at each workshop. The workshops are presented by trained facilitators who

have each attended a facilitator training led by the MADD Connecticut Youth Department. Aside from this relationship a partnership was also formed with the Governor's Prevention Partnership group in 2014 to develop a high school program to influence teens not to drink and drive. By reaching out to SADD chapters at the school a new and effective curriculum has been under construction to influence teens to make smart decisions regarding consumption of alcohol as well as drinking and driving.

- Additional in-house HSO grants were awarded to law enforcement agencies for the specific targeted enforcement of underage drinking as well as underage drinking and driving. In order to receive this funding the municipalities submitted statistics and documentation of their underage drinking problem and the HSO provided them additional funding for police officers to enforce these laws. Another in-house grant was the School Resource Office (SRO) Pilot Program which provided law enforcement agencies that have a dedicated SRO in their school the opportunity to apply for a Fatal Vision starter kit. These starter kits provided the opportunity for teen students in up to 40 schools to experience the simulation of being under the influence in a safe and controlled environment to deter them from both drinking and driving impaired. Furthering this endeavor the HSO also assisted and participated in mock crashes and special events such as safety fairs and "Take a Stand" days at Connecticut high schools devoted to encouraging teens to make safe decisions regarding drinking and driving.

Connecticut Children's Medical Center – Injury Prevention Program



- The mission of the Injury Prevention Center (IPC) at Connecticut Children's is to reduce unintentional injury and violence among Connecticut residents. The IPC conducts research and implements a number of community programs such as The Allstate Foundation funded Drive It Home Connecticut and the Capstone projects, the Connecticut Health and Education Facilities Authority funded Road Mentor project, and the Kohl's Road Safety Campaign that either solely focus on teen driving safety or make a significant contribution to teen safety messaging. The IPC also leads a statewide coalition, the Connecticut Teen Driving Safety Partnership, that includes parent –survivor advocates, state agencies, public health organizations, and the medical community.

- *Research Studies* - The IPC conducted two main studies related to teen driving safety in 2014. In the first, Dr. Brendan Campbell led a team of researchers at the IPC in showing that the strengthening of Connecticut's GDL law was associated with a significant decrease in fatalities among novice teen drivers. Importantly, when there were crashes, half of the fatal crashes occurred when a novice teen driver was in violation of the new GDL law. This study supports that Connecticut's law is working. In the second study, Kevin Borrup led a field-based study of driver training schools and the implementation of the two-hour mandatory parent class. The major finding of the study was that while the vast majority of parents supported the class and found it valuable, there were significant gaps that need to be addressed. The IPC is currently working with its partners to address these gaps.
- *Kohl's Road Safety Campaign* - With the support of Kohl's Cares, the IPC launched the Kohl's Road Safety Campaign in 2013. The goal of this campaign is to improve road safety for everyone, but the campaign does include a particular focus on teen driving safety. In 2014, the Kohl's Road Safety Campaign created and disseminated a curriculum kit designed to provide supplementary materials to driving schools in support of the mandatory two-hour parent class. Materials included in the kit are a parent-teen agreement, a summary of Connecticut law, and a driving log book to document the 40 hours of required on-the-road training. Kits were made available for more than eighty (80) of Connecticut's driving schools. These materials are available online at

www.kohlsroadsafety.org.



- *Road Mentor* - "Road Mentor: a new driver's ally" is an app-based system conceived as a tool to assist and support parents in providing guidance and supervision to novice teen drivers during their 40 hours of required on the road

practice during the learner's permit phase, and later during the first 12 months of licensure before they turn 18 years old. The system was developed with the support of the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA). The Road Mentor app is now available on both the iTunes and Google Play stores. Road Mentor links a user's smart phone to a car's on-board diagnostic (OBD) port, enabling the collection of real-time vehicle performance information. A web portal provides parents with a user-friendly

interface on which to view driver behavior information and to receive specific teen driving training and safety guidance. Parents receive weekly reports via email on the driving experience along with tips and driving instruction support tools. Reports accessible on the smart phone after each drive can give a new driver unbiased feedback and an opportunity to work on specific skills.

<http://www.connecticutchildrens.org/community-child-health/injury-prevention-center/community-outreach/road-mentor/>

- *Drive It Home*

With the support of The Allstate Foundation, the "Drive it Home: Connecticut" project engaged teens and parents in a dialogue about driving behaviors and how to manage the new driver's experience through a series of comedic theatrical productions in Spring of 2014. The Drive it Home Show uses sketch comedy and the real life experiences of parents to help parents provide ongoing coaching tips for new teen drivers. The production is based on a talk show format with "Dr. Bill" counseling a mom and her daughter on safe driving. The original Drive it Home Show was a scripted comedic theater production developed by The Allstate Foundation and the National Safety Council, in collaboration with Second City Communications (comedy sketch group). In 2014 there were three participating schools and organizations. They were responsible for developing the entire production. Newington Children's Theatre Company, Hartford Public High School's Law and Government Academy, and Glastonbury Youth Services all created their own productions. A full recording of the locally produced show is available at www.driveithomeconnecticut.org.

- *The Allstate Foundation Capstone Project* - The Road Safety Capstone Project, currently in development, seeks to engage students in a learning experience that will give them an opportunity to create a self-directed project in which they plan, implement, and present their work as a culminating high school experience. Creativity, problem-solving, and investigation are the hallmarks of projects in a true capstone experience. High school students in The Road Safety Capstone Project will receive support from staff at Connecticut Children's Medical Center in pursuing projects that are grounded in a public health approach. In this capstone experience students will learn about research, analysis, and citing references. Their work will result in a final presentation before their schools capstone community and a group of outside experts. The process and products for the

Road Safety Capstone Project will involve and include a project proposal, capstone journal, final report, presentation/poster, and a reflective paper on their experience. The skills gained through the Road Safety Capstone Project are broadly applicable to other topics and other experiences, preparing a student for lifelong learning. Through the generous support of The Allstate Foundation, Connecticut Children's will provide awards to students who successfully complete the capstone experience. A supported website will serve as a resource for students and will provide a forum for disseminating their work.

- *Be the Key* - Following the death of a Glastonbury teenager in a motor vehicle crash, members of the Glastonbury community came together to form an initiative called "Be the Key." "Be the Key" is an awareness and educational program designed to increase knowledge of and compliance with Connecticut Graduated Teen Driver (GDL) laws. In collaboration with the Connecticut DMV, DOT, the IPC supported the program by providing staff support and technical assistance. The program encouraged parental oversight and teen voluntary compliance with CT GDL laws and general rules. The intent is for "Be the Key" to be the prototype for accelerating adoption of CT GDL laws in other towns across the state.

Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center – Injury Prevention Program



- Overview - Let's Not Meet By Accident 2013 – 2014
Academic School Year Program Let's Not Meet By Accident is a comprehensive Community Outreach educational program that encourages adolescents to make "healthy choices in risky situations". This is an interactive, hands-on program which starts at the Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center helipad with the Life Star crew and a Saint Francis Hospital Trauma Department Nurse. The participants move into the Emergency Department Trauma Resuscitation Room to observe a "mock" trauma lead by a trauma surgeon or Emergency Department Nurse. This visual experience is followed by a speaker from the Program! MPACT, Mourning Parents Act, whose life has been directly affected by injuries or fatalities suffered due to a traumatic injury. The students are then debriefed, and participate in exercises that provide tools for them to make healthier choices. To further highlight the risks of distracted driving, students participate in a simulated obstacle course while wearing fatal vision impairment goggles which demonstrate how the body reacts and responds while impaired. Additionally, teens are given different scenarios of risky behaviors and use group work to discuss what changes

they would make that could result in a life-changing difference in the scenario. This program impacts teens by engaging them and developing their skills in making healthy choices by using conflict resolution skills, humor, personal responsibility and positive peer pressure in a developmentally appropriate and socially acceptable manner. The program is concluded with a question and answer period with hands on exercises so that all are able to reflect their experience. What the teenagers see, hear, touch and feel is in real settings with real trauma surgeons and real people whose life has been directly affected by traumatic injuries. This program is offered free of charge to area schools to educate students to make "healthy choices in risky situations". Many schools regularly partake of the program, and many have even added it to their required health class curriculum. Let's Not Meet By Accident is offered two to three times a month on Thursdays during the school year. Groups up to 60 persons can be accommodated.

The majority of participating teens understand the message about distracted driving or drinking and driving. What they don't comprehend as clearly is the risks and consequences of their choices. The teens participate in acting skits that showcase the lessons learned throughout the day. One sample skit involves friends going to a party; the driver is texting and gets into a crash. Teens are sharing safety messages with each other the deadly consequences a choice they make on any given day may have on themselves and others. Group discussions incorporate the Graduated Driver Licensing's main components (extended learner permit period, night time driving restrictions, and passenger restrictions). By combining these elements teens learn they can take an active role in reducing teen crashes. The activities teach the students that the majority of teen crashes are caused by errors associated with inexperience, driving distracted, poor speed management and driving too fast during poor road conditions. Getting the teens to make the smart choice is how injuries are prevented and lives are saved.

- 2013-2014 program summary - Over 8,000 high school students have attended the program since its inception in 1990, and 620 High School students participated this past academic school year 2013-2014. The high schools in the community are our biggest collaborative partner. Our program collaborated with 16 different High Schools; from 12 different towns from throughout CT. That also included the Commonwealth Academy from Springfield, MA. In attendance were a variety of students from the Hartford CREC Schools of Excellence, such as CREC Medical and Professions and Teacher Preparation

Academy, Sports and Medical Academy, Green Technology and Engineering Academy. The Violence and Injury Prevention Program of Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center donated approximately \$1600 in scholarships to schools for travel to offset costs from class bus trip to our program. 20 different guest speakers joined our program. Mostly were predominantly from, !MPACT, Mourning Parents Act, Teen Safe Driving Program. Our program contracted the services of the Looking In Theater from the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts. A group composed of teenagers from the greater Hartford area who present dramatic scenes dealing with important social, family and personal issues as they affect adolescents, among them showcased for our LNMBA program: teen driving distracted, drinking and driving, bullying, violence, stereotypes and prejudice.

- Students who have attended the Let's Not Meet By Accident program are our most vocal advocates. They clearly articulate the power of this program on their decisions and the impact it has had on them.

When asked the most important thing the participant learned, students responded:

"That my actions can affect my future forever."

"Actions you do have consequences that will greatly affect you and others you love."

"That even drinking a few drinks can lead to a terrible unexpected death of someone you love."

"Not to do drugs, or drink and drive, because they can cost me my life."

"Accidents happened and you aren't iron man, you can get hurt."

When asked in what ways the program affected their future choices, students responded:

"It will make me more aware when driving and I will make better & smarter choices (not showing off)."

"I learned that taking a small risk like not wearing my seatbelt can influence the rest of my life as well as those I love."

"It will remind me every time about the consequences of every choice I make and it will help me remember how to be safe in certain situations."

"How one second can change your life, and that no one is 'immune' to it."

"What happens when you drink n' drive = death."

Let's Not Meet By Accident demonstrates the consequences of unhealthy choices to adolescents and the expansive impact these choices can have on their lives and those of their families.

Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital – Injury Prevention Program



The Injury Prevention and Research Center (IPRC) at Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital continues to focus on making motor vehicle safety as one of its priorities. The IPRC is actively involved in the following programs:

Types of Passenger Effects on Teen Driving Behaviors

- Even though there has been ample research performed on the increased crash incidence for novice teen drivers with passengers, little has been done in regards to the effects that different types of passengers play on distracting and other behaviors of novice teen drivers. With funding from the Allstate Foundation, Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital's IPRC conducted a study to identify the effects on the behavior of novice teen drivers dependent upon the type of passenger (parents/guardians, siblings, other teens or no passengers) in the vehicle. About 2,500 questionnaires were administered at 12 high schools across CT, including both public and private and all girls and boys schools. While driving friends or alone, the teen driver reported a more recent lapse in seatbelt use and communication-based distraction. In general, males texted more and reported having a hand-held device than females. Teens reported that they were less likely to drink with siblings or parents in the car. However, driving alone or with friends showed the highest use of alcohol. Teen drivers also reported that friends were more likely to have consumed alcohol while they were driving and were more likely to be males. Surprisingly, parents were likely to use teens as a designated driver-This was in the 1st 6 months of getting a license!

Underage Drinking Driving Forums

- Four underage drinking and driving forums were held at Monroe High School (150 students/200 parents), Trumbull High School (425 students/ 450 parents), and Foran High School (175 students/200parents) and Jonathan Law High School (150 students/175 parents) both in Milford. These schools have made this a top priority and a mandatory requirement with students having to attend the forums with at least one parent or they

have to write a 10-page paper on driving and drinking. Speakers consisted of a Yale-New Haven Hospital trauma surgeon, Dr. Gary Kaml, sharing an experience of having to tell families about their loved one's injuries or worse death, as well as those from law enforcement- represented by the school resource officers that are familiar with the students and the local community, experts describing the use of the internet and other social media to check on teens, most importantly teen and young adult drivers share their personal experiences and subsequent consequences because of driving under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The final presenter is a local attorney who presents information on the consequences of social hosting of parties and the legal liability.

Let's Not Meet by Accident program

- Let's Not Meet by Accident program provides the opportunity for local high school students to experience first-hand the evolution which occurs in a Trauma Center as a result of distracted driving or poor life choices while driving or a passenger of a teen driver. Students are then presented with information of critical care scenarios and then taken to the ambulance bay and shown what occurs in the pre-hospital arena including having one of the teens experience being a severely injured patient strapped to a stretcher and being transported to the Emergency Department. The next portion of the program offers all of the students an opportunity to witness a full work-up of a trauma victim in the emergency trauma bay as a result of a motor vehicle crash. Students are welcomed by nurses, chaplain, emergency room physicians and a trauma surgeon. After a lively discussion, students are met by a law enforcement officer that discusses legal and long-term consequences of poor choices and the impact they may have on their future and career opportunities. This program gives the students and educational professionals an up close and personnel look into what happen when wrong choices are made.

Teen Safe Driving Multi-Cultural Video Award

- Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital Injury Prevention Program continues to sponsor the Teen Safe Driving Multi-Cultural Video Award presented at the DMV-Travelers Teen Safe Driving Video Contest. This \$500 award in 2014 was presented to the school whose video demonstrates of diversity in reaching teens of multi-cultural backgrounds.

!IMPACT (Mourning Parents Act, Inc.)



- Mourning Parents Act, Inc., also known as !IMPACT, is a non-profit organization whose mission is to eliminate tragedies caused by inexperienced drivers through awareness, education and legislation. Volunteers with !IMPACT have either lost teenage family members or friends in motor vehicle crashes, or are survivors of crashes involving teen drivers.
- In 2014, !IMPACT continued to offer its *Drive 4 Tomorrow* safe teen driving program to high schools, driving schools, hospitals and church groups throughout the state. The program is offered at no charge, and outreach extended to thousands of teens and an increasing number of teen/parent groups. *Drive 4 Tomorrow* presentations can be arranged by contacting !IMPACT President, Sherry Chapman at 860-464-4111.
- Among other highlights of 2014,
- !IMPACT president, Sherry Chapman, was honored by Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety in DC as one of 13 citizen advocates throughout the United States to receive the prestigious Highway Safety Hero award.
- !IMPACT was instrumental in establishing December 7-13, 2014 as Safe Teen Driving Awareness Week in Connecticut, which was designated by Proclamation by Governor Dannel P. Malloy.
- The group piloted a new program, the *Drive 4 Tomorrow Care Kit*, which was offered to high schools to emphasize safe driving during Awareness Week;
- !IMPACT expanded its billboard awareness program by redesigning its billboards and broadening the scope of its safety messages to include driver distraction
- !IMPACT continues to serve as an active participant on the Connecticut DMV Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Safe Teen Driving and was honored to serve as a judge in the Connecticut DMV's annual safe teen driving video contest.

Tim Hollister, author of the teen safe driving blog, *From Reid's Dad*



- Bloomfield resident Tim Hollister served as a roving ambassador for safe teen driving in 2014, in connection with the September 2013 publication of his book for parents of teen drivers, *Not So Fast: Parenting Your Teen Through the Dangers of Driving* (Chicago Review Press, www.nsfteendriving.com). Tim's son Reid died in 2006 at age 17 in a one-car crash on Interstate 84 in Plainville. After

serving in 2007-08 on the statewide task force that recommended to the legislature and the Governor an overhaul of Connecticut's teen driver laws, Tim continued working on safe teen driving, first launching a national blog for parents of teen drivers, From Reid's Dad, www.fromreidsdad.org, in 2009, and then in many forums and events, becoming a nationally known speaker and advocate. In 2014, Tim's activities included:

- Teaching on a monthly basis at two driving schools (Avon and AAA West Hartford) the first part of Connecticut's two-hour safe teen driving class, required for parents whose teens have a learns permit.
- Speaking to parent groups at Connecticut high schools, including Fitch High in Groton and Conard High in West Hartford.
- Speaking at several Connecticut libraries in a joint presentation with Garry Lapidus, Director of the Injury Prevention Center at Connecticut Children's Medical Center.
- Serving as the featured speaker at the Town of Glastonbury's kickoff event of its "Be The Key" program.
- Serving as the keynote/luncheon speaker at the Connecticut Trauma Association's annual conference in March.
- Serving on the DMV Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Safe Teen Driving.
- Attending the Lifesavers Conference as a guest of the Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility.
- Supporting through his blog Glastonbury High School's successful effort in the State Farm "Celebrate My Drive" competition, in which the school received a \$100,000 prize;
- Contracting with Chicago Review Press for the September 2015 publication of Not So Fast in Spanish (entitled *No Tan Rapido*).
- Establishing, for award in June 2015, the Reid Hollister Scholarship, which will be a \$2,500 grant by the National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS) to the college student who devises the best social media campaign to combat distracted driving.
- Posting more than thirty times on his blog, and sending dozens of tweets on Twitter (@fromreidsdad).
- Making a national television appearance on the "Home and Family Show" on the Hallmark Channel, broadcast from Los Angeles, in October, during National Safe Teen Driving Week.
- The national traffic safety community took note of Tim's advocacy and public service. In September 2014, based on a nomination made by Connecticut Children's Medical Center and supported by the Connecticut Department of Transportation, the Governors Highway

Safety Association in September gave Tim its Peter O'Rourke National Public Service Award, recognizing both the publication of Not So Fast, and Tim's other advocacy activities.

CONCLUSION

This report highlights the benefits and challenges in teen safe driving in Connecticut. It demonstrates the intricate work among the variety of safety partners who spread a safety message from border to border. With their work and the tougher laws, Connecticut is reaping rewards in terms of fewer crashes, injuries and deaths compared to a decade ago. A poorly performing economy, which developed about the time the additional restrictions occurred, helped to reduce both the number of teen drivers and the number of miles driven by them. With each new crop of 16- and 17-year-old drivers that come every year, communities need to renew their commitment to road safety. That is why the community mobilization project, which began in Glastonbury, needs to be piloted in other communities so they can then make good on their pledge to work in their own unique ways to keep the safety discussion invigorated. Community spirit can guide, as it has done since fatal crashes in 2002 that led to the 2004 start of teen driving restrictions and curfews and more fatal crashes in 2007 that prompted strengthening those laws. The tragedies of the past and all their painful effects are reminders about the consequences from turning a focus away from this very important public health issue.

Connecticut Children's new study shows just how significant the graduated driver licensing laws are for teens. The study, while showing that teen driving laws are working as intended, also points to the reality that in nearly half of fatal crashes teens were in violation of these laws. It spotlights the importance of prevention and the purpose of those laws to save lives and prevent crashes, injuries and deaths. Connecticut Children's, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center and Yale Children's Hospital show strong and dedicated support for injury prevention in this critical area. Advocates like Tim Hollister, author of From Reid's Dad blog, and Sherry Chapman, president of the bereaved parents' and friends' organization Mourning Parents Act, are models for communities around the state looking for examples of leadership in promoting safety. Law enforcement and the state Department of Transportation Governor's Highway Safety Office also show consistent dedication and desire to be engaged in promoting an understanding of these critical safety lessons for teen drivers. Connecticut's driving schools are also doing their part to teach and remind young drivers about life-saving rules and behavior when behind the wheel.

The report this year does not focus on the crashes, injuries, deaths and licensing of 18- and 19-year-old drivers. Newly licensed older teen drivers, whose brains are still not fully developed to understand cause-and-effect of risky behaviors, may also need further regulation. As reported last year, the growing body of statistical evidence, medical studies and cultural understandings is that this group continues to retain serious vulnerabilities behind the wheel. As stated earlier in the report, trends indicate that some 16 and 17 year-olds have waited until they were older for licensure and likewise some of the 18 and 19 year-olds delayed licensure until their early 20s mostly because of expense of owning and maintaining a vehicle. The economy has also driven many older teens to remain at home, a notion captured in a 2010 New York Times story that coined the term, "The changing timetable for adulthood." Getting a license is not seen as the rite of passage that it once was, as DMV stated in last year's report. Advocates, researchers and policymakers need to conduct, sponsor or collaborate on more studies of this population to determine whether a new trend has developed and the ways to address safety issues that come with it.

