

Violence and Injury Prevention Program

Monthly Digest

June 2012

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Like “PaStrengtheningFamilies” on Facebook!

In the April VIPP Digest, we talked about the Strengthening Families framework developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy. This positive approach is based on five researched-based protective factors:

For adults:

- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections for Families
- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
- Concrete Supports in Times of Need

For children:

- Healthy social and Emotional Development

Recognizing the importance of the approach, various stakeholders convened a PA Strengthening Families Leadership Team focused on sustaining and weaving these five factors into policies, program and practice across various child and family service systems. The Team is always looking to find new ways to connect with partners to share resources and ideas that will assist in building stronger families and prevent child abuse and neglect.

Acknowledging the power of technology, especially social media, the members of the Leadership Team developed a Facebook page as a means of reaching individuals to raise awareness about the positive elements that increase the well-being and overall health of families and children. The goals of the PA Strengthening Families page are to share examples of ways to intertwine the framework into every day practice, highlight news and events from partners and engage in conversations about how we can support each other to ensure families have the resources and skills needed to build strong and healthy foundations.

If you are interested in learning more about PA Strengthening Families or would like to engage in conversation about your efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect, search for us on Facebook at

<http://www.facebook.com/PaStrengtheningFamilies> or via the web at www.pa-strengthening-families.org.

Helmet Use Among Motorcyclists Who Died in Crashes and Economic Cost Savings Associated With State Motorcycle Helmet Laws — United States, 2008–2010

In 2010, motorcycle crashes made up 14% of all road traffic deaths, yet motorcycles accounted for <1% of all vehicle miles traveled. Helmet use consistently has been shown to reduce motorcycle crash-related injuries and deaths. To examine the association between states' motorcycle helmet laws and helmet use or nonuse among fatally injured motorcyclists, CDC analyzed 2008–2010 data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, as well as economic cost data. This report summarizes the results of that analysis.

The report can be downloaded from [here](#).

U.S. high school students improve motor vehicle-related health behaviors

However, challenges remain in other key areas such as texting while driving

U.S. high school students have shown significant progress over the past two decades in improving many health-risk behaviors associated with the leading cause of death among youth—motor vehicle crashes—according to the [2011 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)](#) released today by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). However, youth are engaging in other dangerous practices such as texting and emailing while driving.

Although motor vehicle crashes account for more than 1 in 3 U.S. teen deaths each year, findings from this survey show dramatic improvements during the past 20 years in motor vehicle safety among youth:

- From 1991 to 2011, the percentage of high school students who never or rarely wore a seatbelt declined from 26 to 8.
- From 1991 to 2011, the percentage of students who rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol during the past 30 days declined from 40 to 24.
- The percentage of high school students who had driven a car during the past 30 days when they had been drinking alcohol decreased from 17 in 1997 to 8 in 2011.
- Between 2009 and 2011 encouraging improvements were also shown in the percentage of students wearing a seat belt, not riding with a driver who had been drinking alcohol and not driving a car when they had been drinking alcohol.

Despite this progress, the YRBS found that the use of technology among youth has resulted in new risks; specifically, 1 in 3 high school students had texted or e-mailed while driving a car or other vehicle during the past 30 days. The survey also found that 1 in 6 had been bullied through email, chat rooms, instant messaging, websites, or texting during the past 12 months. 2011 was the first year the YRBS included questions about bullying through electronic media and about texting or emailing while driving.

“We are encouraged that more of today’s high school students are choosing healthier, safer behaviors, such as wearing seat belts, and are avoiding behaviors that we know can cause them harm, such as binge drinking or riding with impaired drivers,” said Howell Wechsler, Ed.D., M.P.H., director of CDC’s Division of Adolescent and School Health. “However, these findings also show that despite improvements, there is a continued need for government agencies, community organizations, schools, parents, and other community members to work together to address the range of risk behaviors prevalent among our youth.”

The 2011 YRBS data are available at www.cdc.gov/yrbs.

Updated CSN Bicycle Safety Resource Guide

With the start of summer, the Children’s Safety Network is providing this special issue of our newsletter on bicycle safety, a topic which is also linked to initiatives to promote healthy weight and reduce obesity. This newsletter issue contains data on bicycle-related injuries; information about bicycle helmet laws, prevention strategies and programs, evaluations of the effectiveness of wearing bicycle helmets and of making environmental changes to support safe bicycling; policies and campaigns to encourage bicycling; and bicycle helmet ratings and other safety guidelines.

[Click here for the 2012 CSN Bicycle Safety Resource Guide.](#)

Prepare NOW for Safe Routes to School activities this fall

The school year may be winding down, but why not get a jump on your Safe Routes to School activities next fall by making plans now?

Let the Pennsylvania Safe Routes to School Resource Center help you. Here are some things you can do now to help ensure your students have safer routes for walking and biking next school year:

- Plan to celebrate international [Walk to School Day](#) with other schools around Pennsylvania and the globe on Wednesday, **October 3rd**.
- Sign up to receive a [Walk or Roll to School Day kit](#). Deadline to register is **August 31st**. Materials to help your school promote Walk to School Day and create safer walking and biking routes will be mailed in September. Materials are also available [online](#).
- Attend a [Bicycle Education Training](#) course and learn how to teach bicycle safety to school-aged children. Sessions will be held statewide in **September and October**. [Registration](#) will open later this month.
- Prepare to apply for a [SRTS Noninfrastructure Grant](#) to fund school activities that promote, educate, and encourage walking and biking to school. Applications will be accepted from **October 3rd through November 15th**, but you can get a head start by reading the [guidelines](#) and reviewing the [application](#) now.
- Prepare to conduct an [evaluation of students and parents](#) this fall on behaviors and attitudes about walking or bicycling to school. **NOTE:** These evaluations are a prerequisite to applying for a [noninfrastructure grant](#).
- Incorporate [walking and bicycling lesson plans](#) available from the Pa. Safe Routes to School Resource Center into your curriculum. Lesson plans on bicycle safety target [third and sixth](#)

[grades](#). (NOTE: Lesson plans conform to Pennsylvania curriculum standards for health, safety, and education.) Lesson plans for pedestrian and bicycle safety target [second and fifth grades](#).

For more information on how the Pa. SRTS Resource Center can help you, contact us at www.saferoutespa.org, info@saferoutespa.org, or (717) 763-0930 (ask for "Safe Routes").

A first-of-its-kind, week-long public awareness campaign, "Wake Up to Medicine Abuse."

[The Partnership at Drugfree.org](http://ThePartnershipatDrugfree.org), in collaboration with Mallinckrodt, the pharmaceutical business of Covidien, Cardinal Health and PhRMA, has announced a first-of-its-kind, week-long public awareness campaign, "Wake Up to Medicine Abuse." This initiative will bring the public and private sectors together in a national education effort and call-to-action to curb the abuse of medicine, one of the biggest drug problems in the United States today.

"Wake Up to Medicine Abuse Week" will take place September 23-29, 2012, and will both encourage and help parents and the public-at-large to take action: first, by talking with the kids in their lives about the dangers of abusing prescription and over-the-counter medicines, and second, by safeguarding and properly disposing of unused medications.

"Up to this point, national efforts to prevent the intentional abuse of medicine have been inadequate given the scope of the problem and human toll this abuse behavior is taking. In announcing 'Wake Up to Medicine Abuse,' The Partnership at Drugfree.org and our partners are taking a first step together, calling on all public and private sector organizations with a stake in this problem – federal agencies, state and local governments, distributors, drug stores, medical societies and both the branded and generic pharmaceutical industry – to join with us in this concerted effort and call to action to reduce this dangerous behavior," said Steve Pasierb, President and CEO of The Partnership at Drugfree.org.

Pasierb added, "This intensive week is an important step to convey the message that abusing medicine can be just as addictive and just as deadly as abusing illicit street drugs. We will call on parents to talk with their kids about this dangerous behavior by using research-based information and tips we will provide, and encourage everyone to both secure current medicines and properly dispose of old medications. Without a major public mobilization effort that can eventually be sustained year-round, we are not going to be able to move the needle on this deadly epidemic."

Through a destination website where visitors can learn more about the problem and what they can do, new public service announcements, and public outreach, education and events, "Wake Up to Medicine Abuse Week" will shine a spotlight on this public health crisis, including both prescription and over-the-counter medicines.

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To subscribe to the VIPP Monthly Digest please contact [Carol Thornton](#).