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Occupant Protection Countermeasures

- Strong laws
 - Primary belt law centerpiece of state OP program
 - Seat belt use requirement as part of GDL
- Highly publicized enforcement
 - Either solely OP or combined with other issues (e.g. impaired or distracted driving)
- Educational campaigns
 - Target different user groups (e.g. teens, tweens, minorities, rural populations, part-time users)
 - Use social media where appropriate

Obstacles to Primary Belt Laws

- Racial profiling
- Big brother

Overcoming Those Obstacles

- Racial Profiling
 - Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for African Americans between 15-24 and for Hispanics between 1-44 (NHTSA 2005)
 - Michigan study on impacts of primary law on minorities
 - Primary laws have been endorsed by major national organizations such as the Congressional Black Caucus, NOBLE, ASPIRA, the National Conference of Black Legislatures and the Conference of Black Mayors

Big Brother

- Not an individual choice
 - PA law currently requires all drivers and front seat passengers ≥ 18 to wear a safety belt. Difference is how law is enforced, not whether it is required or not.
- No different than government regulation of food, air quality, water quality for safety reasons
 - Driving is a privilege not a right
- Wearing a seat belt is single most effective countermeasure in event of a crash
 - Reduces crash risk by 45%
 - Without belt, occupant can be ejected from vehicle which increases risk of death 25 times
- There is broad public support for seat belt laws (AAAFTS) and stronger seat belt reminder systems (IIHS)

Strategies for Overcoming Obstacles

- Cultivate minority legislators who will support primary belt law (TN)
- Put a face on issue (OK)
- Make argument about cost of inaction (NHTSA fact sheet)
- Organize community coalition to support primary law (MO)
- Work with Governor's staff on issue
- Survey state residents' attitude about primary laws
- Consider increasing fine (ACTS report)
- Convince municipalities to enact primary law (KY for secondary law)
- Step up enforcement of secondary law (CA)

Countermeasures for Teen Driving

- Balanced program is critical
- Strong GDL law is centerpiece of program
 - Congrats to PA for strengthening law
- Strong parent program a necessity (CT, MA, GA, VA)
- Visible enforcement
 - As part of enforcement campaigns for all drivers
 - Special enforcement at high schools or other teen-centered locations

Teen Driving Countermeasures

- Improve driver education for teens (NHTSA driver ed assessments) (NY, MD, DE, VT) and admin standards
- Involve teens in program development and implementation (IL, TX)
 - Competition and incentives work
- Keep media informed
- Form community or statewide coalition (NJ)
- Use technology (IA, KY)
- Consider use of decals (NJ, DE)

Teens and Seat Belt Use

- Teens have one of the lowest belt use rates of any population group
 - 55% of teen fatalities unrestrained in 2012
- Teens are more likely to die or be seriously injured (both as drivers and passengers)
- States are doing relatively little to address this issue
- KS, MO are two good examples of teen belt programs

Resources

- NHTSA fact sheets and assessments
- GHSA teen driver publications
- IIHS GDL fact sheets
- blharsha@gmail.com