Allstate Foundation

FOUNDATION GRANT PROGRAMS TEEN DRIVING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SAFERLIVES

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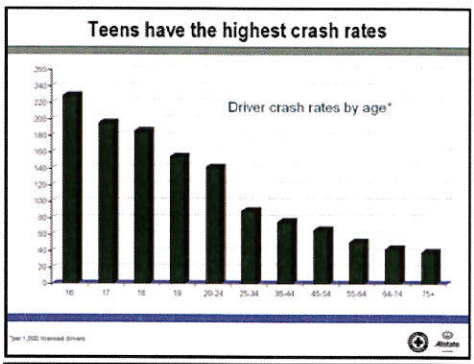
The Allstate Foundation
Why Graduated Driver Licensing?

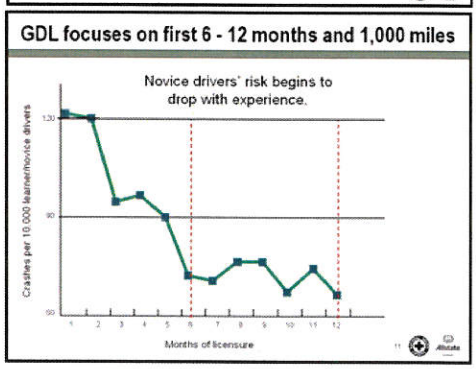
1. This is an Urgent National Issue
2. We Know the Causes
3. We Have the Vaccine
4. States are Not Using the Vaccine Fast Enough
5. Many More Lives Can be Saved
6. Billions of Dollars Can be Saved
7. Parents and Teens Support GDL

We Know the Causes

The main reasons novice drivers crash are driving inexperience and exposure to high-risk situations. The most significant high-risk situations affecting teens are driving at night, with passengers and with distractions, particularly those involving cell phones and other electronic devices. [13]

On average, 11 teens die every day in crashes. More teens die each year in crashes than the next three leading causes of death (homicide, suicide and disease) combined. [14] There are several contributing factors to teen crashes, but one of the most significant is driving inexperience. Any time people begin learning a complex task, they will make mistakes. Learning to drive a car is no different. Driving is a complex task requiring knowledge, skills, manual dexterity and coordination, visual acuity and perception, situational awareness and experience to do it well. [15]





Crashes involving teens drop dramatically during the first year of driving as they gain experience.[16] Decreased crash involvement demonstrates the value of behind-the-wheel experience for newly-licensed drivers. In addition, GDL enables newly-licensed teens to obtain the necessary driving experience in a manner that makes them less exposed to the high-risk situations of night driving and multiple passengers.

Driving at Night

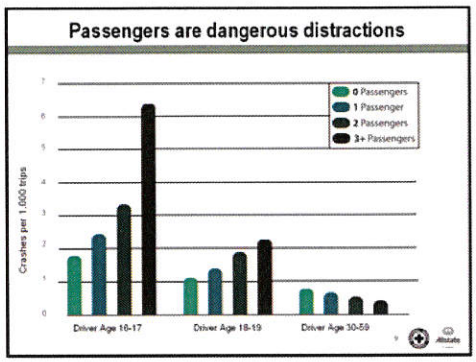
Approximately 15 percent of teens' miles are driven at night, but 40 percent of their crashes occur at night.[17] Driving at night is a skill that requires practice and experience. Fatal crashes involving young drivers are most prevalent between 9 p.m. and midnight. Factors contributing to nighttime crashes include: [18]

- Lower visibility, including the glare of oncoming headlights
- Being in a vehicle with teen passengers may cause distractions and influence risk-taking behaviors of young drivers,
- Fatigue, and
- Alcohol and/or drug use.

Passengers

In the decade of 2000-2009, 27 percent of the victims in crashes involving 15 to 20 year old drivers were riding as passengers with a young driver. [19] The chances a 16-year-old will die in a crash increase

- 39 percent with one teen passenger,
- 86 percent with two teen passengers, and
- 182 percent with three or more teen passengers.



This increase in crash risk with each additional passenger in a car driven by a 16- or 17-year old driver is quite different than the effect of passengers on older drivers. Drivers age 18 and 19 show much lower rates of increased risk with passengers. For adults age 30 and over, passengers are associated with reduced crash risk.[20]

A few factors seem likely to be the cause of increased passenger and driver injuries and deaths associated with peer passengers: [21]

- Passengers can cause distractions that can increase the number and severity of errors made by novice drivers.
- Passengers may influence risk-taking behaviors of young and inexperienced drivers, and teen drivers may overestimate their driving ability to safely take those risks.
- Alcohol and drug use may be more likely to occur when one or more passengers are present.

Other Distractions

Young drivers are particularly vulnerable to distractions posed by cell phones and information or entertainment systems. This high risk of distractions for teens stems from their driving inexperience and their willingness to engage in distracting activities like cell phone use and texting while driving. [22] The coming years are likely to bring increasingly complex distractions and vehicles. When paired with novice drivers, this combination has potential to undermine teen driving safety to a greater extent than any one trend alone.

There are other factors that likely contribute to some teen crashes, including age, immaturity, underdeveloped driving skills, lack of full brain development in teens and risk-taking behavior. These factors are addressed through GDL systems that require extended learning periods, restrict exposure to high-risk situations, and delay full licensing until age 18. [23]

Next: We Have the Vaccine

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