

**Media Contacts:** Dana Mortensen  
The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia  
(267) 426-6092  
[mortensen@email.chop.edu](mailto:mortensen@email.chop.edu)

Holly Anderson  
State Farm  
309-735-7745  
[holly.anderson.m3mj@statefarm.com](mailto:holly.anderson.m3mj@statefarm.com)

## **NATIONAL TEEN DRIVING REPORT FINDS SAFETY GAINS FOR TEEN PASSENGERS**

*Teen passenger fatalities declined 30 percent in crashes involving teen drivers, most teen passengers 'always' buckle up, and less than a quarter ride with drivers who were drinking*

**PHILADELPHIA**, April 4, 2013 -- A new [report on teen driver safety](#) released today by [The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia \(CHOP\)](#) and [State Farm®](#) shows encouraging trends among teen passengers. In 2011 more than half of teen passengers (54 percent) reported "always" buckling up. From 2008 to 2011, risky behaviors of teen passengers (ages 15 to 19 years) declined: the number of teen passengers killed in crashes not wearing seat belts decreased 23 percent; the number of teen passengers driven by a peer who had been drinking declined 14 percent; and 30 percent fewer teen passengers were killed in crashes involving a teen driver. Overall, the report measured a 47 percent decline in teen driver-related fatalities over the past six years. Still, as recent high-profile [multi-fatality crashes](#) with teen drivers illustrate, crashes remain the leading cause of death for U.S. teens.

"When most people think about those affected by teen driver crashes, they think of teens behind the wheel. This report includes encouraging news about teen passengers, who are often left out of the teen driver safety picture," says [Dennis Durbin](#), M.D., M.S.C.E., co-scientific director of the [Center for Injury Research and Prevention](#) at CHOP, and lead author of the report. "When you see the needle move, as we have in this report, it's time to apply the gas on programs that encourage safe teen passenger behaviors, as well as those that address what causes teens to crash."

Based on recent [research](#) which identified specific behaviors or factors associated with teen driver crashes, Dr. Durbin offers key areas he thinks have the greatest potential to further drive down the teen crash rate: reduce distraction from passengers and technology, increase skills in scanning, hazard detection, and speed management, and increase seat belt use to improve a teen's chance of survival in a crash.

Although the report indicates progress for teen driver safety efforts, risky behaviors -- such as texting or emailing while driving, driving after drinking, and low seat belt use -- remain serious problems. According to the report, called *Miles to go: Focusing on Risks for Teen Driver Crashes*, a third of teens say they have recently texted or emailed while driving -- a proven deadly distraction, especially for teen drivers. Speeding remained a factor in more than half of fatal teen driver crashes -- nearly the same percentage as in 2008, and the percentage of teens dying in crashes with a blood alcohol level  $\geq 0.01$  increased slightly -- from 38 percent to 41 percent.

"Texting or emailing while driving is especially dangerous for teen drivers. We are encouraged that abstaining from cell phone use while driving is currently the norm for teens -- most are not doing this dangerous behavior," says Dr. Durbin. "To reach the teens that still do text or email while driving, messages should focus on teens' positive safety beliefs about refraining from cell phone use while driving, rather than turning to scare tactics that always emphasize the negative consequences."

The report, third in an annual series, provides evidence to support stronger [Graduated Driver Licensing \(GDL\) programs](#), which allow teens to gain experience under lower-risk conditions. A comprehensive GDL program includes at least 50 hours of adult-supervised practice under varied conditions, limits teen passengers for the first year of independent driving, restricts unsupervised nighttime driving, requires seat belt use for the driver and all passengers, and prohibits cell phone use while driving.

“Since 2005, State Farm and CHOP have been working together to improve teen driver safety. While this report highlights the gains we are making, we still can do much more to reduce teen driver crash-related injuries and deaths,” says Chris Mullen, director of Technology Research, Strategic Resources at State Farm. “Promising strategies include programs that encourage parents to enforce GDL provisions limiting the number of friends their newly licensed teens may drive, as well as those that support safe passenger behavior and increased parental involvement in the learning to drive process.”

For the complete report and more information, including an [infographic](#) about the research, visit [www.teendriversource.org](http://www.teendriversource.org).

#### **About the research partnership between The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and State Farm®**

Motor vehicle crashes remain the No. 1 cause of death among teens in the United States. Teen drivers (ages 16 to 19) have fatal crashes at four times the rate of adult drivers (ages 25 to 69). To reduce injury and death from young driver-related crashes through scientific research and outreach, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and State Farm Insurance Companies® have been conducting research and providing evidence-based resources to stakeholders and families since 2006. The multidisciplinary research team at CHOP employs comprehensive, rigorous methods to understand the causes of teen driver crashes in order to prevent them. We continuously update and share the latest information and tools to help prevent teen driver crashes on our website [teendriversource.org](http://teendriversource.org).

#### **About The Center for Injury Research and Prevention at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia**

The Center for Injury Research and Prevention at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia was established in 1998 to advance the safety and health of children, adolescents, and young adults through comprehensive research that encompasses before-the-injury prevention to after-the-injury healing. The Center's multidisciplinary research team, with expertise in the Behavioral Sciences; Medicine; Engineering; Epidemiology and Biostatistics; Human Factors; Public Health; and Communications, translates rigorous scientific research into practical tools and guidelines for families, professionals, and policymakers to ensure research results extend to the real world. For more information on the Center and its research initiatives, visit [injury.research.chop.edu](http://injury.research.chop.edu).

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