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## Provider Opinion: Should We Screen and Counsel Parents of Teen Drivers Regarding Texting/Distracted Driving?

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Provider Opinion:  
Should we screen and counsel  
parents of teen drivers regarding  
texting/distracted driving?

Dan Lambert

R6 2017

Dr. Richard Baker MD

# Problem Identification and description of need

- ▶ In 2015, 2,333 teens in the United States ages 16-19 were killed and 221,313 were treated in emergency departments for injuries suffered in motor vehicle crashes in 2014.<sup>1</sup> That means that six teens ages 16-19 died every day from motor vehicle injuries.
- ▶ A recent study in 2013 showed that in the 15-19 age group, 10% of all fatal accidents were attributed to secondary distraction
  - ▶ Highest of all age groups
- ▶ Investigation into driving habits of 83 high school aged students revealed a 58% prevalence of distracted driving
  - ▶ These behaviors were increased by:
    - ▶ Friend's risky driving habits
    - ▶ Parental limitations on driving
    - ▶ Social norms
- ▶ In 2014, the CDC reported that 39.6% of all cause mortality in the 10-24 year old age group was unintentional accidents
- ▶ There is a clear need to reduce the amount of distracted driving in the adolescent age group

# Public Health Cost

- ▶ In 2013, adolescents between 15-19 year old represented only 7% of the U.S. population. However, they accounted for 11% (\$10 billion) of the total costs of motor vehicle injuries.
- ▶ In Vermont, 33% of high school aged children reported texting or emailing while driving
  - ▶ Significant decrease from 35% in 2013
- ▶ Rutland county high school students have comparable rates of distracted driving to other counties
  - ▶ Increasing rate as students move from junior to senior year (43 vs 58 %)
  - ▶ Suggests behavior modification could mitigate risk and decrease prevalence

# Community Opinion

- ▶ There was a unanimous opinion that texting and driving in adolescents is a problem but not necessarily something providers would screen parents for
- ▶ When asked which methods would be most effective:
  - ▶ “I think providing parents with mobile apps that control their children’s usage during driving would be an effective approach.” - Dr. Richard Baker MD
  - ▶ “I would like to see a pamphlet highlighting the risks and showing how many teens actually do engage in the behavior.” - Dr. Mark Messier MD

# Intervention and Methodology

- ▶ Initial measures will be created based on the results of surveying family medicine practitioners in the Rutland Community Health Center
- ▶ Further measures will be to employ their suggestions within the clinic
- ▶ Possible interventions on the survey include:
  - ▶ A pamphlet highlighting the risks and possible mobile apps to limit teenage texting and driving early on
  - ▶ Providing mobile app information and how they can limit texting
  - ▶ Other suggestions

# Results/Response Data/results may be qualitative or quantitative

- ▶ Survey results showed:
  - ▶ 100% of the family medicine practitioners interviewed agreed that distracted driving is a problem in adolescents
  - ▶ 66% of the family medicine practitioners interviewed believed it was worth screening parents with adolescent drivers
  - ▶ There was a split on what would be most helpful measure:
    - ▶ 33% voting for pamphlets that could be given to parents highlighting the risks
    - ▶ 66% believed that mobile app education would be more effective
- ▶ Considering that a pamphlet/poster could contain mobile app information and risks of distracted driving, it would be easy enough to combine the two interventions

# Evaluation of Effectiveness and Limitations

- ▶ Intervention effectiveness will be measured by:
  - ▶ Follow up clinic visits asking if parents found the information helpful
  - ▶ Implementing improvements and suggestion
  - ▶ Monitoring teenage distracted driving prevalence within Rutland county through the Vermont department of health statistics
- ▶ Limitations include:
  - ▶ Difficulty implementing new screening technique in a time constrained visit
    - ▶ Noted as one provider didn't believe they would screen parents
  - ▶ Effective mobile apps require monthly fees which would limit their use in lower socioeconomic groups
  - ▶ Hard to effectively measure whether intervention is the sole contributor to reduced distracted driving in teenagers

# Recommendations for Future Interventions

- ▶ Future directions will be discovered as follow up feedback is obtained
- ▶ Other potential interventions include:
  - ▶ Monetary motivation not to text and drive
    - ▶ This has been proven to be effective in prior behavioral modification studies
    - ▶ Some mobile apps create driving pledges that provide rewards during periods of distraction free driving
  - ▶ Screening adolescents themselves during visits and educating them on risks of texting while driving
  - ▶ Receiving government assistance to create a mobile app that is free making it more accessible to all parents

# References

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