

use at night were substantially greater. Baseline seat belt use at night was 35%; this figure rose to 45% just after the start of the program. The use rate continued to rise to 59% in spring 1990 and then dropped to 49% in fall 1990.

There were significantly fewer injury-producing crashes, and significantly fewer late-night crashes, during months when checkpoints were held. The Binghamton officers found the passive alcohol sensor to be an effective screening device at checkpoints but were less enthusiastic about using it on routine patrols.

Surveys indicated that Binghamton drivers' awareness of changes in the enforcement of New York's alcohol-impaired driving law, and their estimates of the likelihood of being caught driving with illegal BACs, was highest soon after the program's implementation. The response to this program suggests that checkpoints may have to be both constant and visible features of enforcement for their benefits to be lasting.

#### **THE MASSACHUSETTS SAVING LIVES PROGRAM: SIX CITIES**

##### **Widening the Focus from Drunk Driving to Speeding, Reckless Driving, and Failure to Wear Seat Belts**

R.H. Hingson, J. Howland, T. Schiavone, M. Damiatia

[From *Journal of Traffic Medicine*, 18:3:123-132, 1990]

During the 1980's in the United States, highway safety attention focused on reducing drunk driving. Over 700 new laws were passed nationwide accompanied by considerable activity by local citizen groups, such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving, MADD [sic] and Remove Intoxicated Drivers, RID, intensified media coverage, and increased police enforcement. Single vehicle, night fatal crashes (those most likely to involve alcohol) declined 20% between 1980 and 1985.

However, since 1986, total fatal crashes in the U.S. have begun to increase. In Massachusetts, where similar attention has focused on drunk driving, single vehicle, night fatal crashes declined 32% from 1980 - 1984, but since then fatal crashes have risen 10%, and injury crashes increased 17%.

Six Massachusetts communities have initiated comprehensive traffic safety programs in their communities to reverse the increase in fatal and injury crashes. The programs include: education about traffic safety issues in the schools, public education targeting all age groups, increased police enforcement, and a business for safety program to reduce drunk driving and increase safety belt use. A coordinator in the Mayor's office and a set of community task forces with public officials and

private citizens oversee the programs. An evaluation program is assessing traffic safety problems in each city at the outset of the program and community progress in reducing those problems.

An initial evaluation indicated that speeding and related risky driving behaviors at intersections, such as accelerating at yellow lights and running red lights, were much more common behaviors than drunk driving, and that these behaviors were increasing in program cities and were disproportionately found in drivers who rarely wear safety belts. The program has expanded its initiatives beyond drunk driving reduction to include these other behaviors as well.

#### **COMMUNITY SYSTEMWIDE RESPONSE TO PREVENTING SUBSTANCE USE AND IMPAIRED DRIVING BY YOUTH**

James Wright, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

In 1985, a juvenile court judge from Lucas County, Ohio (Toledo) decided he had seen enough. Too many young people in his county were dying in crashes or drug overdoses or suffering the other drastic effects of drug use, including alcohol. He decided to take action, to become "pro-active." Becoming "pro-active" for a judge meant that he had to step away from the bench and talk about prevention with other key people in the community. Action such as this is not without risks for a judge who is comfortable with the power, and protection, of the court. But something had to be done for the young people in his community, and it had to be done before they became involved with his court.

One of the first steps the judge took, after he assembled the rudiments of a community action team, was to get the support of the local school boards. Support from a school board is not automatic, especially when the subject involves drug use of students from that school district. The judge addressed each school board and brought with him a pile of case folders which he laid next to him on the witness table. He never referred to the case files as he made his pitch for the active cooperation of the board members - and they never asked about them. Each and every school board he addressed in this manner gave him full endorsement to proceed with their blessing. He would then pick up his unopened files and go home.

The judge in this instance, Andy Devine, wanted to establish a community response, a systemwide response, to the substance use problem. He employed his power as a judge to convince the community of the extent of the problem and convene community leaders to develop