

**Traffic Records Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes
February 18, 2004
At the Highway Safety Research Center 3rd Floor Conference Room in Chapel Hill**

Present: Kevin Lacy, Don Nail, Bill Stout, Bill Hunter, Max Tate, L C Smith, Susan Dyson, Carol Martell, Brad Hibbs, Dwayne Tharpe, Ed Maness, Raghavan Srinivasan, Doug Robertson, Zoe Gillenwater, and Eric Rodgman.

Began meeting at 9:25 AM.

Welcome:

Kevin Lacy welcomed everyone and thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. The group discussed the goal of each member of the committee bringing a copy of their data map to share with the entire group at the next meeting. If it is possible, the plan is to put each data map on the web for members to view.

Keynote Presentation from Susan Dyson (9:35 AM)

Susan Dyson from the UNC Sheps Health Services Research Center provided a Power Point presentation of the North Carolina Patient Discharge Data. Susan explained they have data from 1989-1994 and from 1996-2002. The omitted year was lost due to funding and responsibility changes at that time. She noted that the data provided is very sensitive and that the hospitals are not required to provide it, but they have a very high compliance rate.

The data are based on the data fields contained in the UB-92 reimbursement form. She noted that the Social Security Number is a data field, but that it is only available in about 20% of the data records. The data contain no patient names, medical ID numbers, or address information. There are keys in the data, but they can not generally be used as levels for summary statistics because, in some cases, they would be so unique as to identify the person and hospital in the summary. The e-code (cause of injury is there), race (self-reported), and hospital codes are in the data (cannot be used – it would identify the hospital which is part of the agreement with the hospitals).

Patients cannot directly be tracked because each entry in the database is assigned its own record identifier. These cannot be traced or connected from visit-to-visit or from hospital-to-hospital. There are caveats associated with the data concerning “medical misadventures (medical errors)”.

Web Data Query Introduction by Bill Hunter and Demonstration by Carol Martell (10:10 AM)

Bill Hunter introduced the NC GHSP sponsored project to develop a crash data query tool that could be used by anyone accessing it via the web. The first year project plans to use the most recent full year of crash data (2002), provide a way to query the data as crashes, driver/vehicle, or as persons involved in crashes. Complex queries would still have to be done by the analysts at DOT or HSRC.

Bill introduced Carol Martell who presented a Power Point presentation describing the basics of how the web query tool was designed and put together. After Carol had presented the overview slides, she demonstrated a test version of the web query tool using the NC 2002 crash data.

Kevin suggested that the tool, once refined, should be provided to the public. Again, he noted, that the web site would/should have **explicit** caveats for any users doing their own queries and using the results. Kevin also suggested that all crash report records in the system be made available, not just the Fatal, Injury, and PDO crashes as reported in the NC Traffic Crash Facts Reports.

There were questions about the missing values – how should they in displayed and indicated. Susan Dyson asked if the crash data variables data dictionary could be part of the web site along with a copy of the actual DMV 349 report form. Someone mentioned that having the report form on the web might be a problem. There have been examples of misuse of report forms supplied to insurance companies which were fraudulent.

For anyone interested, you can check out the live link:

See <http://buffy.hsrb.unc.edu/~martell/crash>

Executive Committee for Highway Safety Update (10:50 AM)

Kevin and Doug provided a quick update on the current efforts of the committee. The committee has selected the main areas of focus. The Committee is currently assembling the focus area sub-committees to evaluate each area for the overall committee. The alcohol component will be handled by the recently re-established Governor's Task Force on Alcohol. Doug mentioned that speed was going to be a new focus area. The entire problem needs to be addressed – defining what is a “serious speeding” problem is part of the challenge. This problem of speed is so pervasive that it requires considerable input from Law Enforcement, the court system, the traffic safety community, and the public. Without the support of the public, any strategy will be difficult to sell and to be effective.

Other Wrap-up Topics (11:05 AM)

The progress of the E-crash and E-citation efforts was briefly discussed. The NC SHP has already implemented an effective and useful E-citation system. Ed Maness of the NC SHP added that it has been very successful. Both he and Kevin noted that the E-crash effort had been slowed due to a contractor disagreement which may have to be resolved in court. In addition, there was an effort to get the E-crash system TRCS originally developed in Iowa implemented as the NC system of choice. This is extremely important so that the state can save money, catch up on entering the crash data, and improve accuracy.

LC Smith gave a short update on the GIS group. The Linear Referencing System (LRS) development was still ongoing. They were working on correcting the county lines coordinates in their database which were not accurate when compared to the US Geological Survey data. This was a high priority fix.

Bill Stout added that it might be time to recommend that the NC Traffic Crash Facts Report be modified and made shorter and simpler. It would also be nice if it was available on the web. This way, the public could be redirected to it and see if there questions could be answered.

Max Tate asked what the status of the various members bringing a copy of their data map to share with the entire group at the next meeting. If possible, the plan is to put each data map on the web for members to view.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Eric Rodgman.

Action Items:

- 1) The next meeting will take place in Chapel Hill at the Highway Safety Research Center in the 3rd floor conference room on Thursday May 20, 2004 from 9:30 till 11:30 AM.
- 2) Eric Rodgman will send out the minutes via email and update the TRCC web site.
- 3) Web site will again be demonstrated – thanks to Carol Martell.
- 4) If you plan to attend the May 20th meeting, **please plan to bring a copy of your data definitions** and any helpful documentation. If this is already available on the web, please send me an email with the url and I plan to make it available to the committee members.
- 5) Group discussion about recommendations for web crash data query tool:
 - Desire to output freqs only with option for row and col %s
 - needs to be downloadable – Excel or HTML
 - probably need a missing value column when nothing supplied, or some way to label the data when not there versus not "operating", for ex.- try to explain in HELP or ABOUT THE DATA
 - add Hwy Division - Dwayne probably has a list of the counties

- 15 minute times out seems ok
- link to a crash data dictionary - perhaps possible to retrieve from DMV, which used to have on their web site
- prefer all data to trying to match CRASH FACTS - again should say this in ABOUT THE DATA
- caveat that "user responsible for accuracy of data" or something along this line
- perhaps show below each table with a message like "This table reflects numbers of crashes" ...or vehicles ... or people, etc.