

Executive Committee for Highway Safety (ECHS)

Virtual Meeting Minutes

October 13, 2020

Location:

Microsoft Team Meeting @ 1:30 p.m.

In Attendance: Isaac Avery, Angela Berry, Sharath Bhat, Suzanne Black, Ingrid Bou-Saada, Eric Boyette, Stacy Deans, Anne Dickerson, Mark Ezzell, Greg Ferrara, Arthur Goodwin, Gray Hancock, Tony Hayes, Brad Hibbs, Heather Hildebrandt, Jeff Jaeger, Torre Jessup, Miracle King, Matthew Kuliani, Kevin Lacy, Cheryl Leonard, Colleen Lippert, Brian Mayhew, Jon McCormick, Lydia McIntyre, Glenn McNeill, Michael Messer, Chris Oliver, Edward Parker, David Phipps, Randa Radwan, Tammy Richards, Lisa Riegel, Raghavan Srinivasan, John Sullivan, Shawn Troy, Aaron Williams, Jackie Wilson, Yuan Zhou

Call to Order and Introductions

Fatal and Serious Injury Trend Update

Mr. Brian Mayhew provided an update on our state's fatal and serious injury trends (*pdf attachment Fatal and Serious Injury Trend Update*). Mr. Mayhew noted that our 2019 fatalities were higher than the 2018 fatalities and even with the COVID-19 pandemic our 2020 fatalities are currently trending to be even higher. Mr. Mayhew provided additional statewide older driver (65+) crash facts. From 2014 to 2019, there was a 30% increase in our state's older driver crash fatalities with nearly 30% of these fatalities occurring in the Top 10 Counties (Mecklenburg, Guilford, Wake, Forsyth, Buncombe, Robeson, Cumberland, Brunswick, Johnston and Gaston Counties). An update on our statewide serious injury trends was also provided and the requested additional [Older Driver Crash Facts](#) have been generated.

Traffic Safety and COVID-19

Mr. Kevin Lacy presented information on traffic safety trends during the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of the pandemic, our statewide Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) numbers have gone down significantly and are about 16 billion below where they were projected to be. Although our state initially saw a reduction in crash fatalities due to the statewide stay-at-home orders, Mr. Lacy estimates that we are on schedule to see an 8% increase in fatalities and a 25% fatal rate increase while seeing a 20% decrease in VMTs. Although we can only guess why we are seeing these statewide/national trends, the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center has started the [NC COVID-19 Mobility and Health Impacts Study](#) which will explore how the pandemic is impacting how people travel in North Carolina and how those changes might interplay with health policies.

FY 2021 GHSP Grants

Mr. Mark Ezzell provided an overview of the Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Grants (*pdf attachment FY 2021 GHSP Grants*). With the mission of promoting traffic safety awareness and working to reduce crashes in our state, this is accomplished through grant funding and annual highway safety initiatives. Mr. Ezzell discussed the timeline that GHSP uses to review the applications and obtain approval for grants each FY. After reviewing over 150 grant applications, 100 grants totaling over \$17 million dollars were awarded for FY 2021. Some of the grant emphasis areas for FY 2021 include a renewed focus on pedestrian safety, a public survey to assess traffic safety attitudes, and expanding enforcement activities to underserved areas (Harnett County, Johnston County, Durham County, Brunswick County, etc.)

Impaired Driving and Occupant Protection Task Force Report/NGA Project

Mr. Mark Ezzell provided an update of the Impaired Driving and Occupant Protection Task Force recent activities. The North Carolina FY2021 Impaired Driving Plan has been updated and some of the recommendations include:

- Expand North Carolina's Ignition Interlock Program to include all convicted first time offenders, and remove the 45-day waiting period for cases involving ignition interlock
- Maintain North Carolina's existing Alcohol Beverage Control System
- Restore funding for North Carolina's DWI Courts
- Update impaired driving and occupant protection campaigns to reflect new communication methods & partnerships.

The 2020 North Carolina Occupant Protection Strategic Plan has been updated and some of the recommendations include:

- Strengthening North Carolina occupant protection laws including the allowance of primary enforcement for adult passengers in the rear seating position of all vehicles
- Require all children to be properly restrained at all times in passenger vehicles with no exception for available seated positions
- Explore feasibility and potential positive and negative benefits of dedicating a portion of court costs for violation of an occupant protection law to programs designed to increase occupant protection, including the purchase and distribution of car seats for children in need
- Conduct research to test the effectiveness of the seat belt messaging to ensure that they are likely to result in the desired behavior change.

Mr. Ezzell also noted that due to the pandemic, all National Governors Association (NGA) project team meetings are being held virtually.

NHTSA Demonstration Project Promoting Highway Safety Program Guidelines # 13 Update

Ms. Anne Dickerson provided an update on the NHTSA Demonstration Project Promoting Highway Safety Guideline # 13 cooperative agreement (*pdf attachment Demonstration Project Promoting Highway Safety Program Guideline 13 Update*). The work associated with the project has focused on five older driver safety areas: 1) Driver Licensing (Medical Review Unit), 2) Medical Providers, 3) Law Enforcement 4) Social and Aging Service Providers and 5) Communication Program. The North Carolina State Highway Patrol has revised their HP-640 medical driver evaluation form to include further information fields and the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department is now using a similar form. Ms. Dickerson also noted that the [Plan For the Road Ahead](#) website has been launched and it provides resources for public use. Additional [BOOMERS](#), [Generations](#), and [Law Enforcement Training](#) YouTube video links were provided.

Future Meeting Dates

- **January 8, 2021 @ 10:00 am (TENTATIVE)**
- **May 7, 2021 @ 10:00 am (TENTATIVE)** **Location (TBA)**
- **September 3, 2021 @ 10:00 am (TENTATIVE)**

If there is a need to reschedule any meeting, we will let you know well in advance of the scheduled date.

Meeting agendas, minutes and presentations are also available on the [ECHS website](#).