

**Occupant Protection Program
Assessment**

for the

STATE OF COLORADO



July 11-15, 2011

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The team would also like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of all the individuals who made time to share their knowledge and expertise with the team during the assessment. Thanks go to them and to everyone committed to saving lives on Colorado's roads and highways.

This assessment benefited from the guidance of NHTSA Regional and Headquarters staff: Mary Damon, Bob Weltzer, and Belinda Oh; and support from their supervisors, Regional Administrator Bill Watada and Occupant Protection Division Chief Phil Gulak.

Each member of the team appreciates the opportunity to have served and hopes that consideration and implementation of the proposed recommendations will enable Colorado to improve its occupant protection program.

ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND

The purpose of the Occupant Protection Program Assessment is to provide the Colorado Department of Transportation's Office of Transportation Safety (OTS) with a review of its occupant protection program through identification of the program's strengths and accomplishments, identification of challenging areas, and to offer recommendations for improvement. The assessment can be used as a tool for occupant protection program planning purposes and for deciding how to allocate existing and new resources and determining programmatic focus.

The assessment process provides an organized approach for measuring program progress by following the format of the Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs, Highway Safety Program Guideline No. 20, Occupant Protection (November 2006). The guideline that precedes each section of this report is taken from this document. The U.S. Department of Transportation developed the Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs in collaboration with the States.

The Occupant Protection Program Assessment examines significant components of the State's occupant protection program. All states, in cooperation with their political subdivisions, should have a comprehensive occupant protection program that educates and motivates its citizens to use available motor vehicle occupant protection systems. A combination of use requirements, aggressive enforcement, public information, education, and incentives is necessary to achieve significant, lasting increases in seat belt usage, which will prevent fatalities and decrease the number and severity of injuries.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Headquarters and Regional Office staff facilitated the Occupant Protection Program Assessment. Working with the OTS, NHTSA recommended a team of five individuals with demonstrated expertise in various aspects of occupant protection program development, implementation, and evaluation. Efforts were made to select a team that reflected the needs and interests expressed by the OTS during a pre-assessment conference call.

The assessment consisted of a thorough review of a State-provided occupant protection program briefing book and interviews with state and community level program directors, coordinators, advocates, law enforcement personnel, and OTS staff. The conclusions drawn by the assessment team are based upon, and limited by, the facts and information provided to them in the briefing book and by the various experts who made presentations to the team.

Following the completion of the presentations, the team convened to review and analyze the information presented. The team noted the occupant protection program's strengths and challenges as well as recommendations for improvement. On the final day of the on-site assessment, the team briefed the Office of Transportation Safety on the results of the assessment and discussed major points and recommendations.

The assessment team noted that many fine programs and activities are conducted throughout the state of Colorado in the area of occupant protection and traffic safety in general. It is not the

intent of this report to thoroughly document all of these successes, nor to credit the large number of individuals at all levels who are dedicated to traffic safety. By its very nature, the report tends to focus on areas that need improvement. This should not be viewed as criticism. Instead, it is an attempt to provide assistance to all levels for improvement, which is consistent with the overall goals of these types of assessments.

This report is a consensus report. The recommendations provided within are based on the unique characteristics of the State and what the assessment team members believe the State and its political subdivisions and partners could do to improve the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of its occupant protection program.

This report belongs to the Office of Transportation Safety. It is not a NHTSA document. The State may use the assessment report as the basis for planning occupant protection program improvements, assessing legislative priorities, providing for additional training, and evaluating funding priorities. The final report was provided to the Office of Transportation Safety and NHTSA.

Notes:

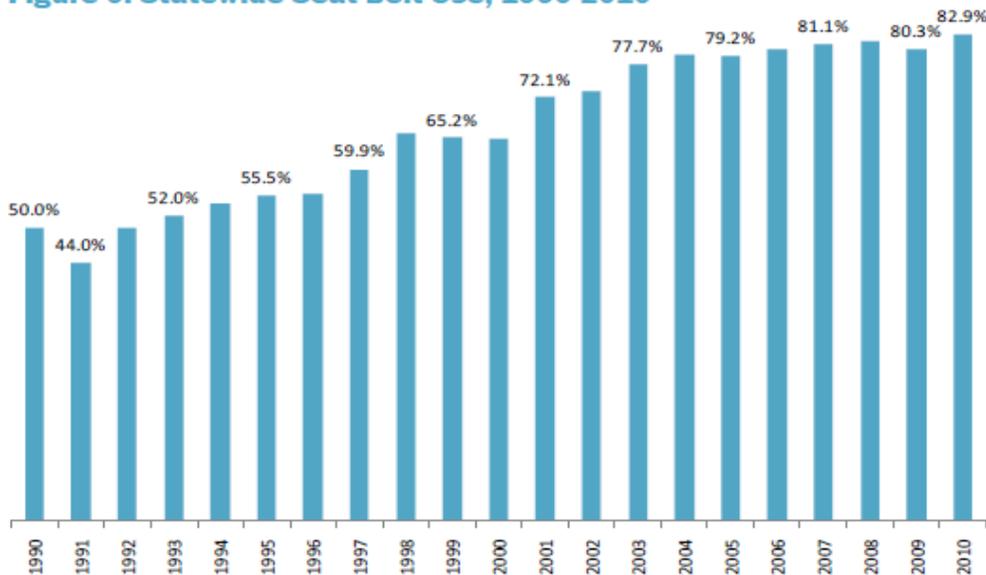
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The state of Colorado, in cooperation with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), has initiated a comprehensive assessment of the occupant protection component of its highway safety program. Colorado underwent an Occupant Protection Program Assessment in 2006, and implemented many of the proposed recommendations. As a result, the State appears to have seen moderate improvements in several areas, but due to the natural evolution of changing times and priorities, the State is undergoing a second assessment. This Occupant Protection Program Assessment is intended to guide the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Office of Transportation Safety (OTS), toward additional program improvements that can lead to increased occupant restraint use across the State. It is possible that this report may bear a few similarities to the 2006 assessment; however, this report is by no means an update of the previous assessment report. The Assessment Team conducted a new in-depth assessment of the State's Occupant Protection Program as it stands today.

In 1987, Colorado passed an adult seat belt law with secondary enforcement provisions. Since then, seat belt use in the state has steadily increased, reaching a high of 82.9 percent in 2010 and narrowing the gap between it and the national average rate (85 percent).

Figure 9. Statewide Seat Belt Use, 1990-2010



Source: BBC Research & Consulting from historical data and the 2010 Statewide Seat Belt Survey conducted by the Institute for Transportation Management.

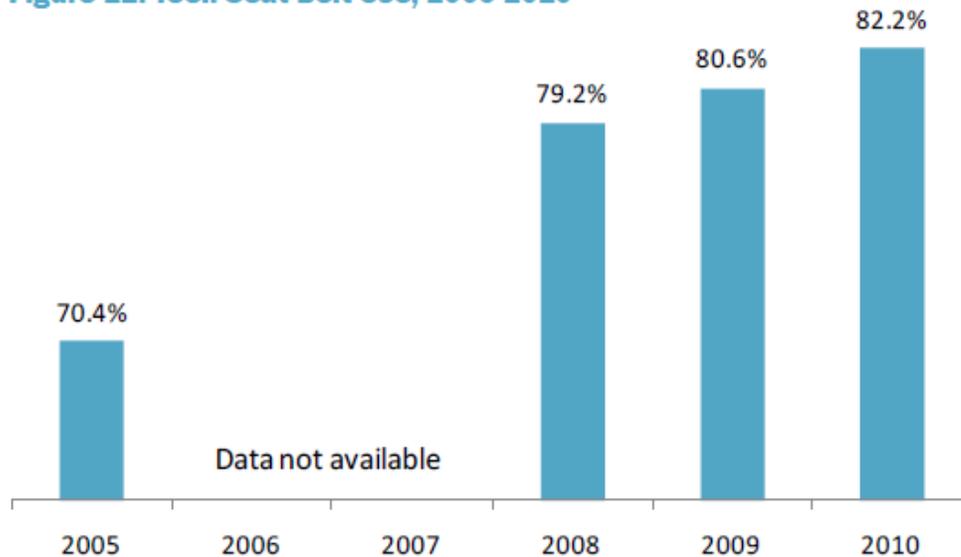
Concurrently, the number of unrestrained fatalities has declined, 168 in 2010 compared to an average of 223 for 2005 – 2007. Fatalities and fatal crashes have dropped precipitously from 2001 to 2010¹ with fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) at an all time low of 0.96.²

¹ *Problem Identification 2011*, BBC Research & Consulting, Denver, Colorado, p. I – 2.

² *Ibid.*, p. I – 3.

Teen belt use has risen dramatically since 2005. (See graph below.)

Figure 11. Teen Seat Belt Use, 2005-2010



Source: BBC Research & Consulting from historical data and the 2010 Statewide Seat Belt Survey conducted by the Institute for Transportation Management.

In spite of these encouraging statistics, at least 17 percent of Colorado’s population is still at risk of injury and death in traffic crashes due to their non-use of seat belts. It is estimated that seat belts saved 163 lives in Colorado in 2009, and if seat belt use had been at 100 percent, an additional 68 lives could have been saved. Colorado could see fewer crash fatalities and continued reductions in injuries on its roadways if more Coloradans properly and consistently wore their seat belts.

Colorado’s public health, law enforcement, health care, and local community advocates have a successful history of collaboration and progress in child passenger safety. Those efforts have produced a well-coordinated statewide network of child passenger safety technicians, child passenger safety instructors, child safety seat fitting stations, educational programs, and programs for diverse and other special populations at increased risk for injury. A number of programs designed to increase teen and pre-teen seat belt use have produced strong results as well.

Rural residents are among the state’s highest-risk groups with 56 percent of Colorado traffic deaths occurring in rural areas in 2009 (FARS). In rural Colorado, the fatality rate is about three times that in urban locations. In addition, seat belt use among those killed while traveling in pickup trucks in Colorado is much lower than among those killed in passenger cars (2009 FARS). Forty-five percent of people killed in passenger cars were unrestrained compared to 82 percent of pickup truck occupants.

Hispanics/Latinos now comprise 20 percent of Colorado’s overall population. The State is producing culturally appropriate programs and services and should continue to develop and

provide them to increase the use of seat belts and child restraint systems in these populations. Colorado's existing efforts in this area, in addition to its efforts to help increase restraint use among members of Native American tribes in southwestern Colorado deserve special recognition.

NHTSA estimates that if Colorado were to pass a primary seat belt law, usage could rise by almost seven percentage points. This could prevent 21 fatalities, 257 serious injuries, and save \$73 million in economic costs. However, given the challenges that Colorado has already encountered in its efforts to upgrade its seat belt law to primary enforcement, Colorado should continue to develop innovative approaches designed to convince Colorado motorists to buckle up on every trip, while efforts continue to upgrade and strengthen the State seat belt law.

Based on the fundamental elements of the Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs for Occupant Protection, this assessment report identifies Colorado's strengths and challenges and provides recommendations for each of the following areas: program management; legislation, regulation, and policy; law enforcement; outreach; communication; and data and evaluation.

The key recommendations presented in the following section are the recommendations the assessment team found to be the most critical for improvement in the occupant protection program. Colorado currently has numerous initiatives in place to increase occupant protection; however, there is still room for growth. All recommendations presented in this report could help the State increase seat belt use and save lives in the State.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

(Note: Key Recommendations are **BOLDED** in their respective sections of the report)

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

- Provide leadership, focus, and direction to Office of Transportation Safety staff, coalitions, partners, and grantees to align the goals and objectives of the Governor, Colorado Department of Transportation, and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to increase occupant protection among all populations in Colorado.
- Establish a Governor or Governor's Representative Occupant Protection Task Force to provide oversight, establish links, and share information and resources among the various coalitions and committees.
- Develop and implement, through a participatory process, a strategic plan for occupant protection that:
 - establishes specific and ambitious goals;
 - projects future needs;
 - targets priority populations; and
 - emphasizes proven strategies and evidence-based best practices.

LEGISLATION, REGULATION, AND POLICY

- Pass a primary seat belt law in Colorado for all drivers and passengers who are not covered by the child passenger safety law and graduated driver licensing law.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Develop an effective regional Law Enforcement Liaison (LEL) program, managed by a full time Law Enforcement Coordinator (LEC) within the Office of Transportation Safety. The LEC and LELs need to be experienced law enforcement officers.
- Partner with the Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police to support and promote the Colorado Law Enforcement Challenge. Market the Colorado Law Enforcement Challenge Program to law enforcement grantees and agencies throughout the state in an effort to provide law enforcement recognition and excitement for traffic safety initiatives.
- Develop working relationships with the Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police and the County Sheriffs of Colorado. Attend the state conferences of these associations as exhibitors and/or presenters.

OCCUPANT PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN

- Review guidelines for the Child Passenger Safety Advisory Council and update them as needed. Consider adding new partners to the group to ensure that the Council is viewed as open and progressive.

- Implement a comprehensive occupant protection program for children ages 8-15 that addresses the need for seat belts for all occupants, ways for passengers to avoid distracting the driver, and consequences of driving impaired and riding with an impaired driver.

OUTREACH

- Continue and/or expand efforts to engage the Colorado Department of Education in promoting traffic safety throughout the state. This needs to be implemented at the highest level of administration possible to ensure that the goals and needs of the Colorado Department of Transportation and the Colorado Department of Education are met.
- Implement statewide programs that are based on “best practice” models designed to increase seat belt use among the adult populations.
- Convene a statewide occupant protection conference that creates an opportunity for safety officials and advocates to share experiences, opportunities, and successes in improving occupant protection safety in Colorado’s communities. Provide attendees with opportunities to learn about existing state-sponsored programs; rural and urban issues; grant writing tools; Colorado Department of Transportation goals and grant expectations; strategize advancement of adult occupant protection and child passenger safety goals; brainstorm raising the seat belt, child restraint, and juvenile Child Passenger Safety use rates; and foster cooperation among traffic safety advocates and professionals. Ensure representatives from diverse communities are involved in conference planning and promotion.

COMMUNICATION

- Develop and implement a statewide media plan that incorporates a year-round public awareness campaign that is designed to increase seat belt use among the adult population.
- Develop the state’s occupant protection website, www.seatbeltscolorado.com, and promote it as a clearinghouse for data, information, legislation, campaigns, programs, and resources.

DATA AND EVALUATION

- Compute and use fatality and injury rates based on the proportion of occupants involved in crashes for problem identification and evaluation as well as rates based on vehicle miles traveled and population since these are a more direct indicator of injuries among the population that occupant restraints can help.
- Expand the occupant-related data elements being collected with the seat belt observational surveys to include age, gender, and race/ethnicity data to provide for more refined and useful data for problem identification and evaluation efforts.

- Replace current child restraint and juvenile observational surveys conducted at controlled intersections with convenience samples using revised forms and protocols. Sites should be chosen to roughly correspond to the geographic and socioeconomic distribution of the State's population. Collect data in parking lots where more detailed and accurate observations can be conducted.

1. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

GUIDELINE:

Each state should have centralized program planning, implementation and coordination to achieve and sustain high rates of seat belt use. Evaluation is also important for determining progress and ultimate success of occupant protection programs.

1A. STRENGTHS

The commitment of the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Office of Transportation Safety (OTS), to increasing occupant protection (OP) is evident in the dedication of staff and financial resources; the comprehensiveness of its approach to OP programs including extensive outreach, media, and enforcement; and support of this Occupant Protection Program Assessment.

Because of the 2006 organizational changes in CDOT, the director of OTS reports directly to the executive director of CDOT. CDOT's executive director is appointed by the Governor and also serves as the governor's highway safety representative (GR). This organizational structure allows the OTS director relatively easy access to the GR.

The Occupant Protection Program Manager in OTS provides management and leadership for the OP Program with the assistance of three project managers. This is a staff that is highly committed to occupant protection. All are certified child passenger safety technicians.

The FY2012 grant application for federal traffic safety funds specifically calls for problem identification, identifying the problem to be addressed with current and relevant local data.

Public awareness programs are successful with awareness of seat belt enforcement having increased from 13 percent to 29 percent between March and June 2010.³

Perception of the likelihood of getting a seat belt ticket increased from March to June 2010. In March 2010, 19 percent of respondents considered getting a seat belt ticket as "very likely" if they were not wearing a seat belt. This increased to 24 percent in June 2010.⁴

OTS invests in observation and attitudinal surveys significantly beyond what is federally required. Approximately 12.5 percent of the OP budget in 2010 was committed to the State's seat belt survey, including adults, teens, and child observations.⁵

Colorado has 11 emergency medical and trauma regions consisting of five or more counties that participate in Regional Emergency Medical and Trauma Advisory Councils (RETAC). Each RETAC has a coordinator that provides support and services to the member counties.

³ *Annual Report 2010*, Action Staffing Solutions for the Colorado Department of Transportation, p. 13.

⁴ *Annual Report 2010*, *ibid.*, p. 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

The RETACs are part of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE).⁶ Each RETAC has received highway safety funds to:

- form occupant protection advisory councils;
- conduct community assessments;
- expand resources and partnerships;
- increase program visibility; and
- establish community ownership and support for injury prevention programs, including occupant protection.

OTS continues to transition into a more proactive approach to project selection and a stronger emphasis on data driven local programs. OTS is moving to a stronger regional approach to generate more local involvement and participation. OTS project managers will go out to their regional transportation directors and traffic engineers to present safety data and generate more interest in the highway safety program.

CDOT provides a broad spectrum of support and resources to OTS. These include, but are not limited to, public relations office staff and expertise, access to CDOT's employee safety program that allows presentations to be conducted for employees, buckle-up signs posted around CDOT parking lots and use of variable message signs, partnering with the traffic engineering branch that provides data support, and financial management and accounting provided by CDOT's business office.

1B. CHALLENGES

Seat belt use has largely stagnated since 2005. Seat belt use in light trucks rose from 2009 to 2010 but has not seen a major increase since 2004. (See chart below.)

Figure 10. Statewide Light Truck Seat Belt Use, 1995-2010

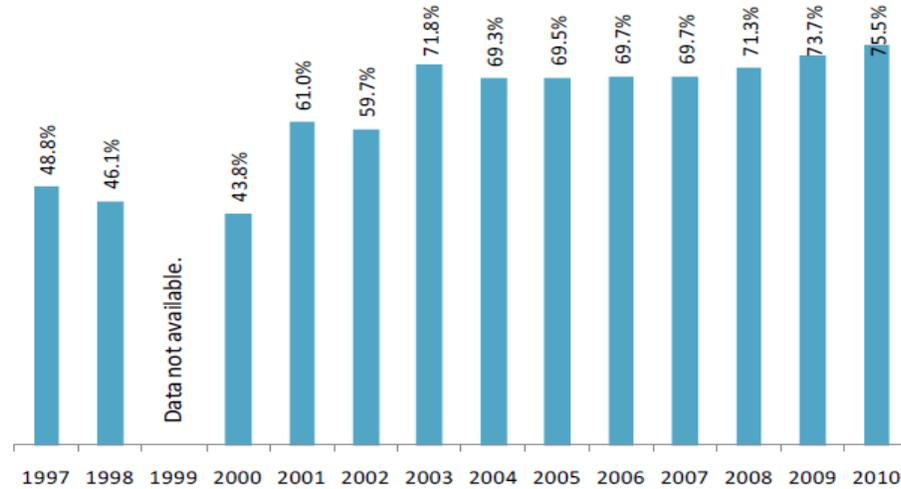


Source: BBC Research & Consulting from historical data and the 2010 Statewide Seat Belt Survey conducted by the Institute for Transportation Management.

⁶ <http://www.coloradohealthinstitute.org/Geo-Regions/Regional-Emergency-Medical-and-Trauma-Advisory-Councils-RETAC.aspx>

Use of occupant protection among juveniles has largely stagnated since 2003. (See graph below.)

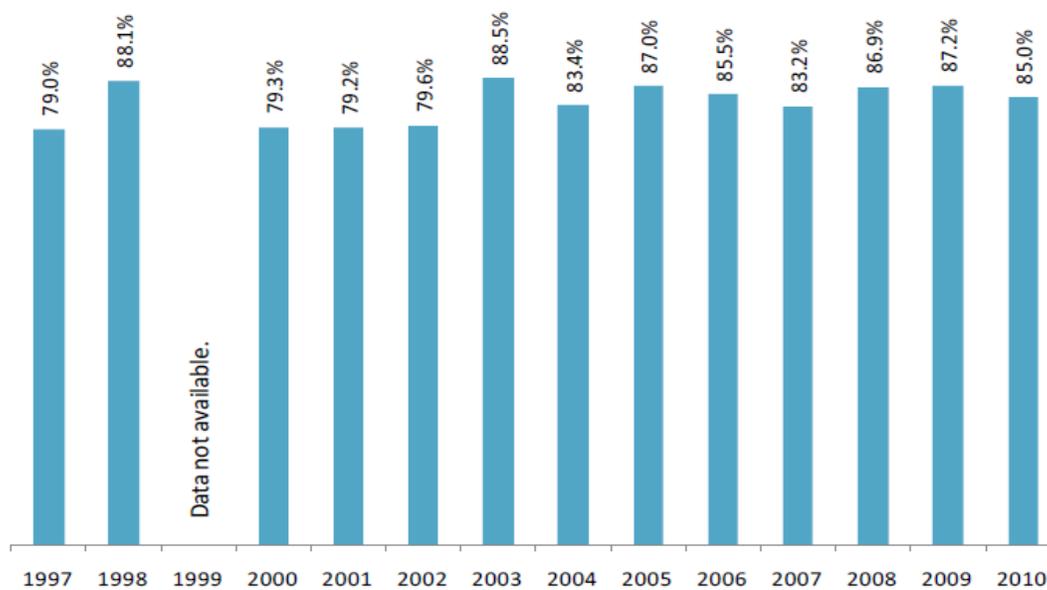
Figure 12. Juvenile (Age 5 to 15) Seat Belt Use, 1997-2010



Source: BBC Research & Consulting from historical data and the 2010 Statewide Seat Belt Survey conducted by the Institute for Transportation Management.

Occupant protection for children (ages 0 – 4) has stagnated since 2003; in addition, there was a decline in usage from 2009 to 2010. (See graph below.)

Figure 13. Children's (Birth to Age 4) Car Seat and Booster Seat Belt Use, 1997-2010



Source: BBC Research & Consulting from historical data and the 2010 Statewide Seat Belt Survey conducted by the Institute for Transportation Management.

In the *OTS Annual Report 2010*, goals per project are data-based, but project results are primarily activity-based. Some goals are very general and non-specific, e.g., “increase seat belt use”. Goals are established by an internal review of data trends; partners do not participate in the establishment of the State’s occupant protection goals.

Completed tasks are described, but no budget analyses are included in the *Annual Report*.

There has been a significant increase in population in Colorado from the 2000 to the 2010 census: Denver grew by 8.2 percent, Colorado Springs grew by 15.4 percent, Aurora grew by 17.6 percent, and Fort Collins grew by 21.4 percent.⁷ The Hispanic or Latino population has experienced a major increase (41.2 percent) from the 2000 census and now represents 20.7 percent of the total population.⁸ These increases will put major demands on already limited resources.

There is little evidence that projects and activities are moving toward self-sufficiency. There is a high degree of personal commitment to occupant protection activities, particularly occupant protection for children. However, other than a few notable exceptions, there is an absence of significant financial support from the business community, major donors, or others beside the state and federal government.

There are numerous coalitions at both the state and local levels that include occupant protection as an element in their priorities. However, there is no one task force or umbrella coalition that is solely dedicated to and focused on the whole of occupant protection. There is also no entity or individual with the responsibility for coordinating all the various coalitions.

Colorado’s Governor was newly elected in November 2010. The executive director of CDOT was recently appointed in March 2011 and appointed as the governor’s highway safety representative in June 2011. The director of OTS has been in his position since 2008. This is not an appointed position. These leaders have not yet communicated strong policy positions on occupant protection.

OTS OP staff members are responsible for a variety of responsibilities, including many non-OP tasks. One estimate of the allocation of responsibilities indicates that approximately 50 percent of these staff resources are dedicated to occupant protection with the other 50 percent allocated to planning and other program activities.

According to hospital discharge data, hospitalizations involving the occupants of moving vehicles peak at the ages of 15-24 and again at 65 and over. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, there are over half a million people in Colorado over the age of 65, accounting for 10.9 percent of the population.⁹ While there is ample evidence of efforts to reach the young driver and passengers, there appear to be few projects specifically targeting older drivers and passengers.

⁷ <http://2010.census.gov/news/releases/operations/cb11-cn39.html>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ <http://dola.colorado.gov/dlg/demog/2010censusdata.html>

1C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Meet with the Governor to establish traffic safety priorities for the State to include occupant protection as top emphasis areas.
- **Provide leadership, focus, and direction to Office of Transportation Safety staff, coalitions, partners, and grantees to align the goals and objectives of the Governor, Colorado Department of Transportation, and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to increase occupant protection among all populations in Colorado.**
- **Establish a Governor or Governor’s Representative Occupant Protection Task Force to provide oversight, establish links, and share information and resources among the various coalitions and committees.**
- Dedicate a single individual to provide full-time leadership and management to the State’s Occupant Protection (OP) Program for all OP issues.
- **Develop and implement, through a participatory process, a strategic plan for occupant protection that:**
 - **establishes specific and ambitious goals;**
 - **projects future needs;**
 - **targets priority populations; and**
 - **emphasizes proven strategies and evidence-based best practices.**
- Conduct project evaluations that are less activity-oriented and more results-oriented, including various types of cost-benefit analyses to determine which projects are more effective in increasing occupant protection use.
- Proactively approach potential private and public partners who have the resources to invest in occupant protection efforts at the state and local level.
- Include older drivers and passengers as a target population in the problem identification and planning process for the selection of project activities.

2. LEGISLATION, REGULATION, AND POLICY

GUIDELINE:

Each state should enact and vigorously enforce primary enforcement occupant protection use laws. Each state should develop public information programs to provide clear guidance to the motoring public concerning motor vehicle occupant protection systems.

2A. STRENGTHS

In 2010, SB10-110 revised the state booster seat law to include children up to age eight and remove secondary enforcement provisions. After a one-year warning period, booster seats became a primary violation to be enforced starting August 1, 2011.

Fact sheets in support of a primary belt law (PBL) include data on the economic cost of crashes in Colorado, plus the reduction in the number of serious injuries and the number of lives that could be saved by passage of a primary bill.

Highly credible reports have called for passage of a primary belt law. Recommendation No. 3 of a state performance audit states that:

The Colorado Department of Transportation and the Colorado State Patrol should work together to seek the adoption of safety legislation requiring the use of seatbelts and motorcycle helmets. Specifically, the laws should require:

- All motor vehicle occupants to wear a seat belt. In addition, law enforcement officers should have the ability to stop a driver and issue a citation based solely on the failure of the driver or of one or more of the passengers to comply with the requirement.
- All motorcycle operators and passengers to wear motorcycle helmets when riding on a motorcycle.¹⁰

Two of the motor vehicle safety strategies in the *Colorado Injury Prevention Strategic Plan* are:

- Advocate for strengthening Colorado's traffic safety laws including passing a primary seat belt law, mandatory motorcycle helmet use for all ages, an improved Graduated Driver Licensing law, and stronger state and local penalties for non-compliance with traffic laws.
- Advocate for local traffic safety policies or ordinances including a complete streets policy, or organizational policies such as mandatory seat belt use.¹¹

One goal of the Motor Vehicle Policy Component of the State's Center for Disease Control (CDC) funded Core Violence and Injury Prevention Program is establishment of a statutory requirement that allows for primary enforcement of Colorado's seat belt law.

¹⁰ *Problem Drivers and Traffic Fatalities, Performance Audit*, Office of the State Auditor, October 2008, p. 41.

¹¹ *Colorado Injury Prevention Strategic Plan 2010 – 2015: Bold Steps toward Preventing Injuries*, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, pp. 17-18.

All law enforcement agencies, including the Colorado State Patrol, that participate in *Click It or Ticket* have a policy requiring seat belt use. This policy is an Office of Transportation Safety (OTS) requirement for law enforcement agencies to receive grant funds for occupant protection (OP) enforcement. Law enforcement agencies that do not have a policy in place have had their requests for grant funds declined.

In the State personnel system, the risk management protocol is that failure to wear a seat belt could result in a 50 percent reduction in the worker's compensation claim or death benefit.

Failure to wear a seat belt while driving as defined in Colorado Revised Statute (CRS) 42-4-237 is considered a moving violation in Colorado. The minimum fine is \$65 per violation.¹² Fees are decided by individual municipalities and counties and range from \$20 to \$500.¹³

The legislature just passed and the Governor signed SB11-227 which should allow the State to be eligible for Section 405 funds (23 CFR Part 1345). As a result, Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) will reapply for Section 405 funds for FY 2012. These funds provide incentive grants to States that adopt and implement effective programs to reduce highway deaths and injuries resulting from individuals riding unrestrained or improperly restrained in motor vehicles. Grant funds are available for the implementation and enforcement of occupant protection programs.¹⁴

CDOT has also submitted a certification to qualify for Section 2011 of SAFETEA-LU which establishes a program for Child Safety and Child Booster Seat Incentive Grants. Section 2011 funds are available for purchasing and distributing child safety seats and child restraints to low-income families and to carry out child safety seat and child restraint programs, including:

- (A) A program to support enforcement of child restraint laws.
- (B) A program to train child passenger safety professionals, police officers, fire and emergency medical personnel, educators, and parents concerning all aspects of the use of child safety seats and child restraints.
- (C) A program to educate the public concerning the proper use and installation of child safety seats and child restraints.¹⁵

The occupant protection law for children covers all children less than age 16. Under CRS 42-4-236:

- (2)(a) (II) If the child is less than one year of age and weighs less than twenty pounds, the child shall be properly restrained in a rear-facing child restraint system in a rear seat of the vehicle.
- (III) If the child is one year of age or older, but less than four years of age, and weighs less than forty pounds, but at least twenty pounds, the child shall be properly restrained in a rear-facing or forward-facing child restraint system.

¹² <http://www.coloradodot.info/programs/seatbelts-carseats>

¹³ <http://www.dmv.com/co/colorado/traffic-tickets>

¹⁴ http://www.nhtsa.gov/nhtsa/whatsup/tea21/grantman/html/22b_Sec405Reg23CFR1345_2-02.html

¹⁵ Federal Register, Vol. 71, No. 20, pp. 5110 – 5112.

- (2)(b) Unless excepted pursuant to subsection (3) of this section, every child who is at least eight years of age but less than sixteen years of age who is being transported in this state in a motor vehicle or in a vehicle operated by a child care center, shall be properly restrained in a safety belt or child restraint system according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- (2)(c) If a parent is in the motor vehicle, it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that his or her child or children are provided with and that they properly use a child restraint system or safety belt system. If a parent is not in the motor vehicle, it is the responsibility of the driver transporting a child or children, subject to the requirements of this section, to ensure that such children are provided with and that they properly use a child restraint system or safety belt system.¹⁶

Colorado graduated driver licensing law requires seat belt use for drivers under the age of 18.

Lack of seat belt use is admissible evidence at trial but only to reduce an award of damages for pain and suffering. *Wark v. McClellan*, 68 P.3d 574 (Colo. App. 2003).¹⁷

There is a partnership approach, particularly among the three major state agencies (Colorado Department of Transportation, Colorado State Patrol, and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment) to cooperatively develop legislative priorities. The Injury Prevention Policy Subgroup of the Injury Community Planning Group coordinates efforts in advocating stronger occupant protection laws and policies.

2B. CHALLENGES

The state of Colorado does not benefit from a primary seat belt law except for drivers under 18 under the graduated driver licensing law. In two of the last five years, no primary belt law has been introduced for consideration. In other years, the law has died at various stages. There is a prevailing opinion, as expressed by assessment presenters, that significant increases in seat belt use will be unlikely or extremely difficult to achieve without a primary seat belt law.

Even though Colorado law (CRS 24-31-309) prohibits racial profiling, concern over racial profiling by law enforcement has been a barrier to passing primary seat belt legislation.

Opposition to what is perceived as the “nanny state” (uninvited and damaging governmental intervention) has been a barrier to passing primary seat belt legislation.

Except for a minor driver under the age of eighteen, any person who operates a motor vehicle while such person or any passenger is in violation of the requirement of subsection (2) of this section [CRS 42-4-237] commits a class B traffic infraction.¹⁸ This level of infraction does

¹⁶ <http://www.michie.com/colorado/lpext.dll?f=templates&fn=main-h.htm>

¹⁷ <http://www.michie.com/colorado/lpExt.dll?f=templates&eMail=Y&fn=main-h.htm&cp=cocode/1/6c3c1/6d686/6d688/6d95f/6dc0d>

¹⁸ <http://www.michie.com/colorado/lpExt.dll?f=templates&eMail=Y&fn=main-h.htm&cp=cocode/1/6c3c1/6d686/6d688/6d95f/6dc0d>

not provide for “points” being assessed against the driver’s license. Two points are assessed for a driver under 18.

Police officers are exempt from the State’s seat belt law during the performance of official duties, though individual law enforcement agency policy may require officers to wear seat belts. The majority of law enforcement officer deaths across the nation are due to motor vehicle crashes and a majority of those are due to an unbuckled officer.

The seat belt law exempts a person operating a motor vehicle which does not meet the definition of "commercial vehicle" as that term is defined in section 42-4-235 (1) (a) for commercial or residential delivery or pickup service; except that such person shall be required to wear a fastened safety belt during the time period prior to the first delivery or pickup of the day and during the time period following the last delivery or pickup of the day.

There is no policy for state employees requiring employees and any passengers to wear a seat belt while travelling on state business. As a result, failure to wear a seat belt cannot be an infraction addressed through the state personnel disciplinary system.

While there are some businesses that require employees to wear seat belts, the extent of these policies and their impact on the employees covered are unknown.

Entities receiving grants other than OP enforcement are not required to implement a seat belt policy as a condition of receiving traffic safety grant funds.

State regulations for the transportation of children by child care centers are not completely compliant with state law, are not well-defined, and are inconsistent with best practices.

According to these regulations (Section 7.702.69 Transportation) --

2. In passenger vehicles, which include automobiles, station wagons, and vans with a manufacturer’s established capacity of 16 or fewer passengers and less than 10,000 pounds, the following is required:
 - a. Each child must be restrained in an individual seat belt.
 - b. Two or more children must never be restrained in 1 seat belt.
 - c. Lap belts must be secured low and tight across the upper thighs and under the belly.
 - d. Children must be instructed and encouraged to keep the seat belt properly fastened and adjusted. ...
3. In vehicles with a manufacturer’s established capacity of 16 or more passengers, seat belts for passengers are not required.

Transporting Infants and Toddlers

1. Children must be properly fastened into a child restraint system that conforms to all applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards pursuant to Colorado law.
2. There must be at least 1 adult, in addition to the driver, for each 5 or fewer infants/toddlers being transported. Each adult must have a current department-approved first aid and safety certificate that includes CPR for all ages of children.
3. An adult must accompany each child to and from the vehicle.

4. Infants and toddlers must not be transported in the front seat of a vehicle.¹⁹

Local ordinances: There is one local ordinance in Eagle County that provides for primary enforcement but the ordinance only applies to driving on roads in unincorporated areas.

Not all hospitals have a discharge policy that requires children to be safely transported upon being discharged. Those hospitals with a discharge policy may not have a program that sufficiently supports that policy. Policies are dependent on several factors, including the services provided and the opinion of the legal staff.

State occupant protection law is complex. Though information is provided to the public and law enforcement about various elements of the law, the complexity can create barriers to compliance and consistent enforcement.

There is no consistency among Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute tribal and State laws for occupant protection. Ute Mountain Ute has a Federal Code of Federal Regulations Court, Bureau of Indian Affairs law enforcement, and federal services.²⁰ The Southern Ute tribe is a separate sovereign, which means it functions separately from Colorado government, but is part of U.S. government. Southern Ute has its own tribal court, tribal code, separate requirements for admission to the bar association, Social Services, and Tribal resources.²¹ The incompatibility among tribal, state, and federal Code tends to result in reduced enforcement, jurisdictional confusion, and an understanding by the public that the law will not be enforced.

The recently-elected Governor and the recently-appointed Governor's Highway Safety Representative have not yet advocated for strengthening the State's occupant protection laws.

2C. RECOMMENDATIONS

Note: A National Highway Traffic Safety Administration study has confirmed that states that upgrade from a secondary to primary seat belt law show belt use gains of 10 to 12 percentage points. It also shows that states that increase the fine for not wearing a seat belt from \$25 (the national median) to \$60 show gains of 3 to 4 percentage points in belt use. Those that raise the penalty to \$100 show 6 to 7 percentage point gains.²²

- **Pass a primary seat belt law in Colorado for all drivers and passengers who are not covered by the child passenger safety law and graduated driver licensing law.**
- Support local ordinances where the political will in the community allows.

¹⁹ Rules Regulating Child Care Centers (less than 24-hour care), [revised 5-01-2010], Division of Child Care, Colorado Department of Human Services, pages 24 – 25.

²⁰ <http://www.coloradolegalservices.org/program/519/rtf1.cfm?pagename=ute%20mountain%20ute%20tribe>

²¹ <http://www.coloradolegalservices.org/program/519/RTF1.cfm?pagename=Souther%20Ute>

²² "NHTSA Study Shows Dramatic Gains in Seatbelt Use from Tougher Laws & Stiffer Fines," *AASHTO Journal*, December 3, 2010.

- Call on the Governor and the Governor’s Highway Safety Representative to publicly advocate for increased occupant protection use and passage of a primary seat belt law.
- Continue to address concerns over a primary seat belt law, such as racial profiling by law enforcement and the “nanny state”, by emphasizing overall fatality, injury and cost savings; impacts on the family and the community; and the legal prohibition on racial profiling.
- Eliminate law enforcement and delivery driver exemptions from the seat belt law.
- Increase the basic fine for an occupant protection violation.
- Allow points to be assessed on a driver’s license for an occupant protection violation.
- Implement a belt use policy for Colorado Department of Transportation employees and all other state employees that allows progressive employee disciplinary measures for failing to use any safety equipment available to employees including seat belts.
- Support the establishment and implementation of work place policies for seat belt use.
- Require all Colorado Department of Transportation traffic safety grantees to have a seat belt policy as a condition of receiving grant funds.
- Upgrade state regulations for all child care facilities to equal or exceed state law requirements for the safe transportation of children.
- Support the establishment and implementation of hospital policies that would ensure children of all ages discharged from all hospitals in Colorado are safely transported according to state law.
- Establish mutual goals and a mutual understanding among state, local, federal, and tribal government in support of implementation and enforcement of the State’s occupant protection laws.

3. LAW ENFORCEMENT

GUIDELINE:

Each state should have a strong law enforcement program, coupled with public information and education, to increase seat belt and child safety seat use.

3A. STRENGTHS

Pro-active efforts by Colorado State Patrol (CSP) and local law enforcement agencies have significantly contributed to achieving an 82.9 percent seat belt usage rate in 2010 and a continuous decline in Colorado traffic fatalities.

In addition to the May *Click It or Ticket* mobilization, the Office of Transportation Safety (OTS) coordinates data driven rural and nighttime seat belt enforcement initiatives.

There is support for child passenger safety (CPS) programs, and many law enforcement officers are trained as CPS technicians.

CPS training and services are administered by the Colorado State Patrol. There are over 900 certified technicians and 39 instructors statewide.

Colorado State Patrol is extensively involved with CPS initiatives and conducts numerous checkpoints and child safety seat distribution programs.

OTS requires law enforcement agencies receiving *Click It or Ticket* grant funding to have policies that require the use of seat belts while operating agency vehicles.

OTS *Click It or Ticket* grants require zero tolerance enforcement for occupant restraint violations and will not reimburse grantees who write just warnings during occupant protection mobilizations.

Eagle County has adopted a primary seat belt ordinance and currently has an 89 percent seat belt usage rate.

Cultural diversity training is provided for Colorado law enforcement.

CSP partners with local law enforcement agencies to increase occupant restraint usage rates on county roads.

CSP is working with numerous local law enforcement agencies on high visibility occupant protection enforcement initiatives.

CSP Troop 5B (San Luis Valley) did a pilot project for sustained occupant protection enforcement. It was a very effective initiative and there are now plans to develop the initiative statewide.

The Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police coordinates the *Colorado Law Enforcement Challenge* to showcase and recognize law enforcement agencies that have exceptional highway safety programs. All applications are also entered in the *International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Law Enforcement Challenge* for national recognition of Colorado highway safety programs. The *Law Enforcement Challenge* encourages support and enforcement of the State's occupant restraint laws.

Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office has a very aggressive, zero tolerance approach to occupant safety and implements innovative enforcement techniques to enforce occupant protection laws. This proactive high visibility enforcement has resulted in a 95 percent seat belt usage rate in the City of Centennial, with a population of 106,000.

Local and state law enforcement agencies are active participants with Regional Emergency Medical and Trauma Advisory Councils (RETAC).

3B. CHALLENGES

Due to heavy workloads, and the lack of regional Law Enforcement Liaisons (LEL) or a traffic enforcement network structure, the ability to effectively recruit the majority of Colorado's law enforcement agencies is extremely impeded.

OTS previously hosted a Traffic Safety Heroes recognition event for outstanding work in the fields of impaired driving and occupant protection enforcement. However, due to budgetary cutbacks this event was discontinued in 2009. There is currently no law enforcement recognition program coordinated by OTS.

OTS Law Enforcement Coordinator's interaction with Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police and the County Sheriffs of Colorado is limited. There are no statements of support for primary enforcement legislation from these or other law enforcement associations.

Other than overtime grants, there appears to be no active incentive program for encouraging law enforcement agencies to participate in occupant protection enforcement programs.

Most occupant protection enforcement by local law enforcement agencies occur only during OTS coordinated mobilization periods.

OTS only requires law enforcement agencies receiving *Click It or Ticket* grant funding to have policies that require the use of seat belts while operating agency vehicles.

3C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Develop an effective regional Law Enforcement Liaison (LEL) program, managed by a full time Law Enforcement Coordinator (LEC) within the Office of Transportation Safety. The LEC and LELs need to be experienced law enforcement officers.**

- Train LEC and regional LELs using the NHTSA *LEL Training and Guidelines* (TAG) course.
- **Partner with the Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police to support and promote the Colorado Law Enforcement Challenge. Market the Colorado Law Enforcement Challenge Program to law enforcement grantees and agencies throughout the state in an effort to provide law enforcement recognition and excitement for traffic safety initiatives.**
- **Continue developing working relationships with the Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police and the County Sheriffs of Colorado. Attend the state conferences of these associations as exhibitors and/or presenters.**
- Collaborate with the Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police, the County Sheriffs of Colorado, and other associations to adopt resolutions supporting primary enforcement legislation.
- Develop and implement an effective law enforcement incentive program for occupant protection enforcement efforts.
- Expand sustained occupant protection enforcement initiatives beyond CSP and engage local law enforcement agencies.

4. OCCUPANT PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN

GUIDELINE:

Each state should vigorously promote the use of child safety seats. States should recommend every child to ride safely secured in an age/weight appropriate child restraint until a seat belt fits at about 80 pounds and five (5) feet in height.

4A. STRENGTHS

There is a positive working relationship among the Colorado State Patrol, Children's Hospital Colorado, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Office of Transportation Safety (OTS).

There is a very apparent commitment by OTS to support rural and outlying counties in their child passenger safety (CPS) efforts where there are high mortality rates and low resources.

There are 140 fitting stations located throughout Colorado. Fitting stations file quarterly reports. There are sufficient replacement seats available throughout the state. Many fitting stations are able to accept donations for replacement products.

The primary child passenger safety law protects children up through age 15. There is a new provision of the law that makes it a primary offense to transport children under age eight without an appropriate child restraint or booster seat.

Colorado hosted a "Transporting Children with Special Health Care Needs" training class in 2008, and Children's Hospital Colorado hosted the "Safe Transport for All Children – Transporting Children with Special Needs" class in June 2010 and April 2011. This class was sponsored by Emergency Medical Services grant funds. Currently, there is one special needs instructor in the state.

In addition to in-state recognition, Children's Hospital Colorado is recognized outside of the state for their work in the transportation of children with special health care needs.

There are 986 nationally certified CPS technicians and 39 instructors in the state. Colorado has a 60.3 percent recertification rate while the national average is 53.1 percent

A CPS instructor conference is planned for July 2011.

The OTS provides funds for CPS instructors to travel to teach classes and, when necessary, pays instructors to teach. OTS funds are available to support certification costs (course fee and travel costs) of volunteers from areas of high need.

OTS supports the traffic safety efforts of the Regional Emergency Medical and Trauma Advisory Councils (RETAC). Each RETAC is required to work with Colorado State Patrol, media, local law enforcement, local organizations, and other coalitions involved in traffic

safety. Each is independent and managed by a local board. All RETACs appear to have a functioning CPS element to their programs.

There is a CPS Advisory Council that oversees the quality and integrity of the Colorado Child Passenger Safety program, also known as CPS Team Colorado. CPS Team Colorado is used to train, certify, and verify CPS technicians, instructors, and advocates.

There is an active Safe Kids network in the state with Children's Hospital Colorado serving as the state office and lead agency. There are three other established local coalitions, one established chapter, and one other coalition in the formative stage.

Children's Hospital Colorado will conduct focus groups with English and Spanish speaking attendees in July 2011 to identify community groups, organizations, and leaders as potential partners and future technicians/instructors. The State CPS Training Coordinator is also investigating having a traveling bi-lingual technician and setting up times and places to provide this resource where there is a need.

There is a strong CPS program in southern Colorado that has seven FTEs, serves 15 counties, and operates out of a substance prevention and abuse organization. They have a CDOT grant to do monthly check up events and weekly fitting stations by appointment. They do community training and education and support *Click It or Ticket*. There are 19 bilingual men who are technicians in the program. They also have two special needs trained technicians and special needs equipment (car seats and car beds) for community distribution.

There is a dedicated CPS website that is in the process of being updated in Summer 2011. There will also be a new "800" number for technical and consumer assistance that includes a Spanish language prompt.

CDOT, CPS Team Colorado, Children's Hospital Colorado Safe Kids Colorado, and other safety advocates across the state have conducted a number of "Booster Seat Blitz" special events to provide more information about booster seats and the expanded law over the past year.

Materials to promote child passenger safety laws have been professionally developed. These include materials to reach diverse populations.

Until 2008, Children's Hospital Colorado supported the Injury Free Coalition for Kids, a hospital-based, community-oriented program, whose efforts are anchored in research, advocacy, and education. This community-based coalition focused on migrant seasonal farmers and their families and increasing safety behaviors, including car seat and belt use.

The State recognizes the need for and has programs to serve children beyond booster seat ages including pre-teens and young teens.

4B. CHALLENGES

There is not a consistent understanding of what constitutes the ages covered under occupant protection for children.

Observed restraint use rates for young children and juveniles have stagnated for the last several years.

Retention of CPS technicians in rural areas where technicians are most needed is a continuing challenge and concern.

There is a need for training for EMS personnel in the *Safe Transportation of Children in Emergency Ground Ambulance* curriculum.

The CPS Advisory Council is working under outdated guidelines that need to be reviewed and may need to be updated.

There does not appear to be an organized statewide initiative to provide health and medical personnel with CPS messaging and training.

Not all hospitals have discharge policies for children of any age.

There does not appear to be any organized statewide initiative with the State Department of Education that serves children K-12 in urban, rural or outlying areas to educate about occupant protection on a standardized basis. Traffic safety education is currently done on a classroom-by-classroom basis and is in general up to the good will and cooperation of any one individual in the school itself.

There is no statewide conference to provide opportunities for grantees and other partners from various disciplines (law enforcement, health/medical, diverse populations, school-based programs) to meet, be recognized for creative or outstanding work, share ideas and successful programs, brainstorm problems, and identify solutions.

There are widespread child passenger safety programs that serve babies and young children through the booster age. There are numerous programs to address teen drivers. There are few programs to address the needs of pre-teens (8-12) and young teens (13-15).

4C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Define the term “child” for stakeholders. Develop a tool that illustrates the continuum of child occupant protection programs provided by grantees. Make the tool available on the Office of Transportation Safety websites and to grantees so there is knowledge about what services are available at every stage of childhood (e.g., infant, toddler, pre-school, school-age, pre-teen, teen).

- **Review guidelines for the Child Passenger Safety Advisory Council and update them as needed. Consider adding new partners to the group to ensure that the Council is viewed as open and progressive.**
- Develop a “roadmap” to engage the Department of Education in promoting traffic safety throughout the state using the current health and safety statute to reach all children K-12.
- Establish at a high administrative level a relationship (perhaps with the association of principals, superintendents, school nurses or another group) to open doors for local advocates seeking to provide community safety education to children K-12 on a statewide basis.
- Institutionalize the school-based messaging so all children hear at least once in a school year about the need to use appropriate restraints in a passenger vehicle.
- Provide a generic hospital discharge policy for newborns and children up through booster seat age. Make the template available to hospital risk managers throughout the state for their review and use.
- Conduct the *Safe Transportation of Children in Emergency Ground Ambulances* training.
- **Implement a comprehensive occupant protection program for children ages 8-15 that addresses the need for seat belts for all occupants, ways for passengers to avoid distracting the driver, and consequences of driving impaired and riding with an impaired driver.**
- Continue to recruit and retain child passenger safety technicians in rural areas where they are most needed.

5. OUTREACH PROGRAM

GUIDELINE:

Each state should encourage extensive statewide and community involvement in occupant protection education by involving individuals and organizations outside the traditional highway safety community. Representation from health, business, education, and diverse cultures of the community are encouraged, among others. Community involvement broadens public support for the state's programs and can increase a state's ability to deliver highway safety education programs.

5A. STRENGTHS

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) has an extensive network of state and local governmental agencies and private organizations that partner on a wide variety of occupant protection activities and programs that target the general public.

A representative of CDOT's Office of Transportation Safety (OTS) participates in the Colorado Prevention Leadership Council, which is a collaborative group charged with coordinating programs within and across state departments to ensure programs are responsive to the needs of the state's families.

A representative of OTS serves on the Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Advisory Council, which advises the Colorado State Patrol (CSP) in establishing, maintaining, and enhancing public education, technical training, advocacy, and providing necessary resources aimed at improving child passenger safety across the state.

CDOT's various traffic safety partners work directly with CDOT's Public Relations Office (PRO) to relate community needs, assist in the development of educational materials, and obtain program and campaign resources for dissemination and use at the local level.

PRO contracts with advertising agencies to create educational and campaign materials with consistent messaging that are available to all traffic safety partners.

PRO maintains a distribution list that contains the state's major traffic safety partners and utilizes it to distribute newly created materials and update partners on current campaigns.

There are many programs being conducted across the state that are designed to increase occupant protection use among young children, pre-teens, teen drivers, rural motorists, diverse groups, and the general population.

CDOT supports projects that create programs, campaigns, and educational materials directed towards Colorado's unique culture, which includes rural, frontier, and other diverse communities.

CDOT is working with the state's 11 Regional Emergency Medical and Trauma Advisory Councils (RETAC) to conduct grassroots outreach activities.

The state's traffic safety partners are very passionate about improving occupant protection use within their communities. They work to establish strong relationships with a variety of individuals and organizations, striving to create effective programs that have a positive impact on the communities they serve.

Through the Safe Kids network, traffic safety organizations have successfully partnered with medical professionals to act as spokespeople for occupant protection initiatives and educational campaigns.

CDOT participates in Rural Philanthropy Days to share grant opportunities and other resources that are available to the state's rural communities.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) supports child passenger safety and teen motor vehicle safety as an injury prevention priority area.

Seat belt use is included in the Colorado Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Child Health Risk Behavior Survey and Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted by the CDPHE.

Colorado has highly developed outreach programs targeting the Hispanic population. Materials and training recognize that education is not just about the language but also needs to be sensitive to the culture.

There is a successful bilingual CPS technician recruitment program that recruits participants from the older adult and college student populations.

There is a successful program targeting the African American communities in Pueblo, Denver Metro, and Colorado Springs with the goal to increase seat belt use. This program includes:

- six Head Start programs
- school programs for preschool, elementary, secondary, and college age students
- faith-based programs
- teen parents programs
- youth sports outreach programs

The Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute Indian Tribes, with OTS support, have an impressive number of technicians, car seat fitting stations, car seat check up events, and child restraint distribution programs. Culturally relevant print materials have been developed for use on the reservations.

The Injury, Suicide and Violence Prevention (ISVP) Unit at the CDPHE has created a Rural Traffic Safety Alliance to address traffic safety issues unique to rural populations and to push for increased use of seat belts in rural areas.

There is a Rural Communities Resource Center Occupant Protection (OP) Program that operates in northeast Colorado through an OTS grant and:

- uses the Buckle Up for Love program;
- has an OP and distracted driving program for kids in the 3rd through 8th grades;
- conducts a high school seat belt challenge; and
- provides *Alive at 25* courses.

OTS-funded community programs and RETACs use creative ways to access schools and provide education opportunities in their designated counties. On a case-by-case basis, teachers may approach grantees to provide assemblies or classroom-based occupant protection programs to students from pre-school through high school.

The Denver Osteopathic Foundation implements a model comprehensive program in the schools which consists of the following:

- *Buckle Up for Love* program for children from pre-school to Grade 2;
- *Save A Friend Save Yourself* program, for students age eight to 13;
- *Families in Need* booster seat program; and
- *Teen Motor Safety Grant* program, a seven week peer-organized campaign for high school students.

Think First provides programs to all students in grade two, grade six, and high school in Eagle County. The observed seat belt use rate for one high school in the county was 94 percent.

5B. CHALLENGES

The State does not have a formally organized and recognizable task force or advisory committee that advises the OTS on all occupant protection issues.

The emphasis by most coalitions and projects appears to be on child passenger safety and teen driving issues with limited efforts on improving overall seat belt use among the adult population across the state.

In the rural communities, it can be difficult to garner support for conducting adult seat belt programs.

There is limited availability and use of educational videos that are culturally relevant and target specific populations, older drivers, parents, children with special health care needs, and illiterate individuals.

Statewide campaigns and programs designed to increase seat belt use among the general population is primarily limited to the *Click It or Ticket's* May and nighttime mobilizations.

There is no mechanism in place to evaluate the use of or effectiveness of the educational materials and toolkits disseminated to schools and other organizations.

The safety of older drivers is an emerging traffic safety issue that has not been addressed on a statewide or consistent level.

Information sharing among all occupant protection partners appears to be limited and results in some agencies being unaware of current programs and resources that are available.

Outreach to employers and other non-traditional partners is limited.

There are mixed safety and enforcement messages associated with being on a Native American reservation and on state roads subject to Colorado laws.

Seat belt use rates on the reservation are far below Colorado state rates. Observational surveys found a rate of less than 20 percent for drivers.

Communication and coordination with the Bureau of Indian Affairs appears not to be as developed as needed to increase chances of coordinating successful programs.

Ethnic groups are geographically homogeneous with large clusters of Hispanics, Native Americans, and African Americans. The state is largely rural. Each group has very diverse cultures.

With over 800,000 school-age children in the State, it is not possible for OTS to have enough grantees to provide a uniform and comprehensive education program.

RETAC members and other community advocates are not typically invited into schools through the school administration but rather they come in through a back door at the invitation of a teacher or school nurse to reach a segment of the school population.

There is little confidence that OP would be taught in the schools if community advocates stopped providing OP information to students.

5C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish an occupant protection program advisory board to provide guidance to the Colorado Department of Transportation Office of Transportation Safety.
- Encourage all child passenger safety and teen driving coalitions and programs to incorporate adult seat belt education into planned activities.
- Conduct focus groups or other similar research in rural communities to obtain insight as to why seat belt education programs for adults are not well received and what innovative approaches traffic safety leaders can do to create an environment where seat belt use is recognized as a priority.
- **Continue and/or expand efforts to engage the Colorado Department of Education in promoting traffic safety throughout the state. This needs to be implemented at the**

highest level of administration possible to ensure that the goals and needs of the Colorado Department of Transportation and the Colorado Department of Education are met.

- Incorporate occupant protection into the standard curriculum in grades K-12 through collaboration with the Colorado Department of Education.
- Expand the development of educational materials to include videos that are specific to the needs of the occupant protection program, such as children with special health care needs, child passengers, teen driver, and individuals with low literacy.
- **Implement statewide programs that are based on “best practice” models designed to increase seat belt use among the adult populations.**
- Include a mechanism to measure educational toolkits and materials that are distributed to partnering agencies for use in their communities.
- Reach out to potential partners, such as AAA Colorado and AARP, to create and/or promote programs aimed at increasing seat belt use and promoting safe driving behaviors among older drivers.
- **Convene a statewide occupant protection conference that creates an opportunity for safety officials and advocates to share experiences, opportunities, and successes in improving occupant protection safety in Colorado’s communities. Provide attendees with opportunities to learn about existing state-sponsored programs; rural and urban issues; grant writing tools; Colorado Department of Transportation goals and grant expectations; strategize advancement of adult occupant protection and child passenger safety goals; brainstorm raising the seat belt, child restraint, and juvenile Child Passenger Safety use rates; and foster cooperation among traffic safety advocates and professionals. Ensure representatives from diverse communities are involved in conference planning and promotion.**
- Develop or support an effective employer safety program that promotes seat belt use and other traffic safety initiatives, provides resources, and encourages businesses to establish effective seat belt policies.
- Continue to offer resources to the Native American population as they seek to build occupant protection and child passenger safety programs.
- Foster relationships with the Bureau of Indian Affairs at every juncture to assist local efforts and offer needed resources.
- Continue to develop culturally sensitive messaging for the African American, Hispanic, rural, and Native American communities. Include their representatives at the very beginning of any program planning.

6. COMMUNICATION

GUIDELINE:

As part of each state's communication program, the state should enlist the support of a variety of media, to improve public awareness and knowledge about seat belt use and Child Passenger Safety laws and enforcement. The program also should include timely information on air bags, child safety seats, booster seats, and occupant protection systems for children with special healthcare needs.

6A. STRENGTHS

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Office of Transportation Safety (OTS) supports the National *Click It or Ticket* campaign and uses a variety of marketing techniques for statewide distribution including television, radio, variable message signs, outdoor advertisements, print material, and guerrilla marketing.

The OTS has a memorandum of understanding in place with the Public Relations Office (PRO) to conduct media and outreach campaigns using contractors to help create and place paid advertisements and gain added value.

CDOT's PRO has a strong relationship with the Colorado Department of Public Safety and collaborates on campaigns and initiatives.

PRO tracks earned media, which is used to strengthen outreach and includes media advisories, press releases, news conferences, and drop-in articles designed to encourage motorists to use safety restraints, especially during mobilization periods.

OTS has established a method of sharing campaign resources with grantees, the media, and other partnering agencies, which includes a GovDelivery email system, website updates, and mass mailing.

PRO encourages and is responsive to requests by OTS grantees for campaign materials and resources.

Results from seat belt observational surveys and other relevant data are routinely provided to news media and traffic safety partners.

Culturally relevant campaigns and supporting materials have been developed to reach young children, pre-teens, teen drivers, rural motorists, diverse groups, and the general population.

Educational and media campaign materials designed to target Hispanic/Latino populations are created in both the English and Spanish languages and are strategically placed in appropriate communities throughout the state.

Efforts to increase the use of booster seats among older children incorporate both community education and statewide media outreach.

The State supports nationally recognized efforts and campaigns by providing NHTSA-created and local campaign materials to partnering agencies and encouraging them to conduct activities that promote the use of seat belts and child safety seats.

PRO has a good working relationship with the state's media partners and works to encourage the reporting of seat belt use and non-use in motor vehicle crashes.

OTS conducts an annual public awareness telephone survey that includes pre- and post-campaign data surrounding the May *Click It or Ticket* mobilization. The study reports an increase in awareness of the campaign and its related enforcement efforts.

6B. CHALLENGES

Social norming messages aimed at increasing seat belt use among the adult population surround only the *Click It or Ticket* mobilizations and consist primarily of standard outreach methods and localized efforts.

OTS's *Click It or Ticket* campaign creative incorporates a soft enforcement message, which may contribute to the belief that seat belt use is not a priority among law enforcement officers in Colorado.

Even though PRO continues to work with the media buyer to improve the amount of added value placement during all media campaigns, the Denver media market is particularly competitive and a one-for-one match on media buys has not been achievable.

The State does not have one centralized website used to support and promote the state's occupant protection program.

PRO has two dedicated staff members who are responsible for developing and promoting campaigns and initiatives covering all areas of transportation safety and have limited time to ensure materials are being distributed and effectively used at the state and local level.

Private sector groups are not consistently encouraged to incorporate seat belt use messages into their programs.

The primary target population for the *Click It or Ticket* mobilization is men ages 18 to 34 years and the secondary target is teens ages 15 to 17 years. However, according to the most recent public awareness survey conducted, the largest increase in awareness of the campaign was seen in the female segment and the smallest increase in the male segment.

6C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Develop and implement a statewide media plan that incorporates a year-round public awareness campaign that is designed to increase seat belt use among the adult population.**
- Incorporate a strong enforcement message into all aspects of the *Click It or Ticket* campaign.
- Obtain at least “one-for-one” added value when purchasing advertising space using mass media.
- Work with local media outlets to determine other potential earned media opportunities that can be offered more readily (e.g., on-air interviews, online banner advertisements, website take-overs, etc.).
- **Develop the state’s occupant protection website, www.seatbeltscolorado.com, and promote it as a clearinghouse for data, information, legislation, campaigns, programs, and resources.**
- Oversee grassroots and community-based activities and work directly with traffic safety grantees and partners to incorporate effective statewide programs that promote seat belt use.
- Actively recruit private partners to incorporate occupant protection messaging into their programs.
- Use non-traditional media outlets to publicize the *Click It or Ticket* campaign and other occupant protection programs that target men ages 18 to 34 years, which may include online media placement such as social media and video content sites, and mobile advertising networks.

7. DATA AND EVALUATION

GUIDELINE:

Each state should conduct program evaluations that include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ *Statewide observational surveys of seat belt and child safety seat use.*
- ✓ *Enforcement data.*
- ✓ *Data on fatalities and injuries in relation to seat belt usage and non-usage.*
- ✓ *Data on crash costs.*

7A. STRENGTHS

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Office of Transportation Safety (OTS) has demonstrated their commitment to improving the quality of their occupant protection program by coordinating and supporting this assessment.

Colorado has many sources of data available for their problem identification and evaluation efforts including: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) hospital discharge and trauma registry data, Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) data, Electronic Accident Reporting System (EARS) crash data from the Department of Revenue Division of Motor Vehicles (DOR/DMV), observational seat belt and child restraint use data, and behavioral risk survey data.

Colorado uses most of these data sources for their problem identification efforts. Data actually used for these efforts include the EARS crash data, DOR/DMV's database of Colorado licensed drivers, observational seat belt surveys, FARS data, and economic costs of crashes from the National Safety Council.

Problem identification and project evaluation make up 55 percent of the scoring criteria used for the OTS's FY2012 grant application.

OTS uses information on fatality rates (fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled [VMT]), as well as raw numbers, in *Annual Reports* to measure performance.

Statewide and county level motor vehicle crash data is made available to the public and to program planners and evaluators through the OTS website. Much of this local data is generated through OTS problem identification efforts.

OTS makes a significant investment in tracking occupant protection use levels by using the following observational surveys:

- A survey specifically for high school students/teenagers, conducted near schools in April;
- A pre- *Click It or Ticket* survey conducted in May, immediately prior to the enforcement mobilization;
- Statewide seat belt use surveys (drivers and front seat outboard passengers) conducted in June, immediately after the *Click It or Ticket* enforcement mobilization;

- Surveys of child restraint and seat belt use to measure restraint use for young children ages newborn - four years old and for juveniles ages five - 15 years.

Colorado has a variety of health and hospitalization data available through the CDPHE EMS and Trauma Data Program for problem identification and occupant protection program efforts, including death certificates, child fatality review, hospital discharge data, the Colorado Trauma Registry, behavior risk factor surveillance system, and risk behavior surveys.

A particularly valuable dataset developed and maintained by CDPHE is the linked hospital discharge and motor vehicle crash data. CDPHE has been funded by CDOT to link this health data to motor vehicle crash reports. Though not a NHTSA Crash Outcome Data Evaluation System (CODES)-funded State, this linking is accomplished by using CODES software and CODES protocols.

Good citation data is provided to OTS through mobilization reporting.

Protocols and forms for seat belt surveys are made available to local programs from Colorado State University, the State's contractor for the statewide observational surveys.

7B. CHALLENGES

The apparent reliance on the overall number of motor vehicle crash fatalities, without also providing injury rates, in OTS problem identification and evaluation efforts may be a misleading indicator of problems and of the performance of occupant protection programs since restraints cannot help all types of crash victims (e.g., pedestrians and motorcyclists). In a similar manner, fatality and injury rates based on vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and population may not be the best indicators of injury trends related to restraint use since these are also affected by factors that cannot be influenced by restraint use.

Motor vehicle crash data is not readily available to the public and to program planners and evaluators. Assistance to help potential users understand the types of data available and how it should be used for problem identification or evaluation is not readily available via either website or over-the-phone.

Statewide observational surveys and surveys of target populations include data for a very limited number of occupant-related variables. There is no age, gender or race information collected for drivers and occupants. The Colorado Occupant Protection (OP) program needs more detailed occupant information from the standard observational surveys to better identify target populations.

Protocols for child restraint and juvenile observational surveys are the same as those used for the seat belt surveys. These surveys at controlled intersections limit details of data available for planning and evaluation, such as actual age of children, type of restraint used, and measures of gross misuse.

It is not apparent that any nighttime seat belt observational surveys or attitudinal/knowledge surveys related to nighttime seat belt use or enforcement have been conducted in Colorado.

There is limited localized observational use data collected at the city, county, or program level that can be used for problem identification or program evaluation.

It is not clear that all OTS grantees are required to include outcome evaluations, not just process evaluations, for their programs.

It is not clear that CDPHE would be able to continue linking hospital discharge and motor vehicle crash data without funding by CDOT.

It appears that year-round citation data is not available through either DMV or the courts. Citation data collected during mobilizations seems to be the only enforcement data available.

The fatality data on the CDOT website is not identified as to source, i.e., is it from FARS or from DOR/DMV's motor vehicle crash data.

7C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Compute and use fatality and injury rates based on the proportion of occupants involved in crashes for problem identification and evaluation as well as rates based on vehicle miles traveled and population since these are a more direct indicator of injuries among the population that occupant restraints can help.**
- Make local motor vehicle crash and injury data readily available to the public and to program planners and evaluators with quick turnaround via a website and “over-the-phone.” The assistance provided needs to help potential users understand the types of data available and how it should be used for problem identification and evaluation in addition to providing the data itself. Data available through this resource should include hospital discharge and trauma registry data as well as Fatality Analysis Reporting System and Electronic Accident Reporting System crash data.
- **Expand the occupant-related data elements being collected with the seat belt observational surveys to include age, gender, and race/ethnicity data to provide for more refined and useful data for problem identification and evaluation efforts.**
- **Replace current child restraint and juvenile observational surveys conducted at controlled intersections with convenience samples using revised forms and protocols. Sites should be chosen to roughly correspond to the geographic and socioeconomic distribution of the State's population. Collect data in parking lots where more detailed and accurate observations can be conducted.**
- Conduct nighttime seat belt observational surveys to determine if nighttime restraint use is low enough to warrant increased nighttime enforcement efforts.

- Develop and make available simplified and standardized seat belt and child restraint observational survey protocols and forms that can be used by local program planners and evaluators.
- Ensure that all Office of Transportation Safety grantees include not just a process evaluation for their programs but an outcome evaluation, such as pre- and post-program observational surveys of child restraint/booster seat and seat belt use or pre- and post-program knowledge tests, whenever possible.
- Obtain year-round citation data in addition to citation data obtained during mobilizations.
- Continue funding Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to link hospital discharge and motor vehicle crash data. This data is too valuable to the State Occupant Protection Program not to do so.
- Ensure that the source of all fatality and injury data on the CDOT website is clearly identified as to source.

ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE
Agenda
Colorado Occupant Protection Program Assessment
July 11-15, 2011

Monday, July 11	
8:30am-8:45am	Welcome and Introductions
8:45am-9:30am	Program Management Occupant Protection Program Overview, <i>Carol Gould, CDOT Occupant Protection Program Manager</i>
9:30am-9:45am	Break
9:45am-11:15am	Legislation Regulation and Policy Legislation, <i>Melissa Nelson</i> Colorado State Patrol, <i>Chief Wolfinbarger</i> Injury Prevention Overview, <i>Lindsey Myers</i>
11:15am-12:30pm	Enforcement CDOT Funded Safety Belt Enforcement, <i>OTS LEC Bruce Sheetz</i> CSP Statewide Enforcement, <i>Lt. Col. Doyle Eicher</i> CSP Troop 5B – <i>Captain Dingfelder</i> Arapahoe County – <i>Sgt. Scott Lillie</i>
12:30pm-1:30pm	Lunch
1:30pm-2:30pm	Communication Communication of Occupant Protection Programs, <i>Heather Halpape</i>
2:30pm-2:45pm	Break
2:45pm-4:00pm	Occupant Protection for Children Statewide Child Passenger Safety Program, CSP Team Colorado, <i>Eric Wynn and Susan Yates</i> CPS in Southern Colorado, <i>Cheryl Reid, Crossroads Turning Points, Inc.</i>

Tuesday, July 12	
8:30am-10:15am	Diverse Populations Hispanic Outreach, Heinrich Marketing, <i>Laura Sonderup, Jennifer Lucero-Alvarez</i> African American Outreach, BurksComm, Inc., <i>Susan Burks</i> Southern Ute Tribe Community Action Group/Southern Ute Tribe and Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, <i>Diane Downing and Julia Roanhorse</i>
10:15am-10:30am	Break
10:30am-12:00pm	Health/Medical Memorial Health Systems, <i>Sally Duncan</i> Children's Hospital Colorado, <i>Mae Hsu, Selena Silva</i> Swedish Hospital, <i>Tracy Holmberg</i>
12:00pm-1:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm-3:00pm	Schools Denver Osteopathic Foundation, <i>Phyllis Ring</i> DriveSmart Colorado Springs, <i>Maile Gray</i> Rural Community Research Center, <i>Becky Meyer, Kerri Hansen</i> ThinkFirst Vail Valley, <i>Kim Greene</i>
3:00pm-3:15pm	Break
3:15pm-4:00pm	Employers Mandatory seat belt usage policies and procedures CH2M Hill, <i>David Hancock</i> CDOT, <i>Scott Bowers</i>

Wednesday, July 13	
8:30am-10:00am	Data and Evaluation Health Data, CDPHE, <i>Holly Hedegaard, MD</i> Colorado Seat Belt Surveys, CSU, <i>Dr. Jim Francis</i> Problem Identification Report, <i>Jen Garner</i>
10:00am-10:15am	Break
10:15am-12:00pm	Outreach San Luis Valley RETAC, <i>Renee Gallegos</i> Western RETAC, <i>Alan Hughes</i> Mile High RETAC, <i>Marcus Houston</i> Plains to Peaks RETAC, <i>Maile Gray</i> Southwest RETAC, <i>Ron Beckman</i>
12:00pm	Adjourn
1:00pm-4:30pm	Panel Report Development
Thursday, July 14	
8:30am-4:30pm	Panel Report Development
Friday, July 15	
8:30am-10:30am	Panel Report Presentation

ASSESSMENT TEAM CREDENTIALS

SUSAN N. BRYANT, M.A., M.B.A.

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Susan (Sue) Bryant is currently a consultant for a small firm based in Austin, Texas. After almost thirty years of state employment, she retired as the director of the public transportation division of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). The public transportation division had 180 employees and an approximately \$150 million budget of federal and state grant programs for rural and small urban transportation systems, the state's medical transportation program, and public transportation planning. Prior to becoming division director, she served for over ten years as the director of the Texas traffic safety program.

During her career with TxDOT, she held the position of state traffic safety director, assistant to the deputy director for field operations, and highway safety planner and traffic safety program manager. She served as secretary and member of the board of the National Association of Governors' Highway Safety Representatives (now Governors Highway Safety Association) and member of the law enforcement committee for the Transportation Research Board.

She facilitated the strategic planning process for the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) and completed a "How To Manual" for occupant protection for children for GHSA. Most recently, she headed a project in Texas to conduct community assessments and develop local strategic plans for underage drinking prevention. In addition, she has served as community liaison for the Travis County Alliance for a Safe Community, an underage drinking prevention coalition based in Austin. She has served on highway safety program assessment teams for Alaska, Colorado (2), Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine (2), Maryland, Massachusetts, Maine, Montana (2), Missouri (2), North Dakota, South Carolina, and Wyoming. She served on the team to update the impaired driving assessment tool and on the team to develop assessment team training.

For seven years, she served as a member and then chair of the City of Rollingwood's Planning and Zoning Commission. She recently served as chair of the City's Utility Commission and is a director with the Rollingwood Community Development Corporation.

She has taught high school and adults, consulted for the media in major television markets, and also teaches management to state and local officials. She has been named to "Who's Who of American Women," has received the national Award for Public Service from the U.S. Department of Transportation, and is a two-time recipient of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) President's Modal Award for highway safety. She is also a graduate of Leadership Texas.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate with Highest Honors in English from the University of Iowa, she holds a master's degree in communications from the University of Iowa and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Texas at Austin.

WILLIAM L. HALL, BA., MA.

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William L. (Bill) Hall began his career with the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center (HSRC) in 1977 and is currently the Manager of HSRC's Occupant Restraint Program. During this time, Bill helped to spearhead the Center's efforts to implement and evaluate programs to increase seat belt and child restraint use in North Carolina. These efforts have included educating and training parents, care-givers, health educators, police officers, the general public, and targeted populations about how to safely transport children and adults. In addition, Bill has worked with HSRC colleagues as well as other local, state, and national organizations to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs through observational surveys and analyses of motor vehicle crash injury data. Bill was a key member of the team that developed, implemented, and evaluated the pilot *Click It or Ticket* (CIOT) programs conducted in three North Carolina communities in 1993 – programs that served as models for the subsequent CIOT campaign in NC as well as the rest of the country.

Bill served on the National Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Board from 1999 through 2001 and continues to stay involved with the national CPS Certification curriculum in a variety of roles. Bill currently directs and manages the NC Child Passenger Safety Resource Center which was established to serve as a central source of consumer information on child restraints, seat belts, and airbags for the general public of North Carolina, provide program and technical assistance to occupant restraint advocates and program administrators, and coordinate and monitor State-of-NC-sponsored CPS training activities and programs and is one of the State CPS Training Contacts for North Carolina.

RICKY H. RICH

Special Operations Division Director
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Ricky Rich retired from the Gainesville, Ga. Police Department with 20 years of service. He has been employed by the Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety since April, 1997. He began his career with GOHS as the Law Enforcement Coordinator and is currently the Director of Special Operations. Among his duties as Special Operations Director, Ricky is in charge of law enforcement services for GOHS, including creating and managing highway safety initiatives and innovative traffic enforcement programs for law enforcement agencies, statewide coordinator of the traffic enforcement networks and coordinating statewide law enforcement mobilizations for high visibility traffic enforcement campaigns such as Operation Zero Tolerance and *Click It or Ticket*.

Ricky is a past state president of the Georgia Fraternal Order of Police, member of the Peace Officers Association of Georgia, a member of the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police, serves as a special consultant to the International Association of Chief's of Police's Highway Safety Committee, a member of the IACP National Law Enforcement Challenge subcommittee, and is a member of the National Sheriff's Association Traffic Safety Committee.

KRISTY K. RIGBY

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Kristy Rigby joined the Utah Department of Public Safety's Highway Safety Office (HSO) in 1994 while earning a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Utah in Community Health Education. She began her career as Child Passenger Safety Program Coordinator and worked to bring the first child safety seat trainings into the state. For the past fourteen years she has managed the state's Occupant Protection and Drowsy Driving programs, and has been an integral part of the Teen Driving and Distracted Driving programs. As a senior staff member of the HSO, Kristy actively participates in developing the state's Highway Safety Plan and manages various federal funding sources.

During her career, she has played an instrumental role in the development of state and local programs and campaigns that include *Buckled or Busted*, *Click It or Ticket*, *Click It Club*, the *Don't be a bob!* drowsy driving initiative, *Don't Drive Stupid*, and the Zero Fatalities Program. She is a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician and continually receives instruction and training in all aspects of program management.

Kristy represents the HSO on various boards and committees that include the Safe Kids Utah Executive Committee, Emergency Medical Services for Children Advisory Board, Coalition for Utah Traffic Safety, Teen Driving Task Force, and Zero Fatalities Safety Summit Planning Committee. She currently chairs the Booster Seat Task Force, Click It Club Committee, and the Sleep Smart. Drive Smart. Committee. In addition, she is a member of the National Association of Women Highway Safety Leaders and the Governor's Highway Safety Association.

Kristy has received recognition for her work to improve traffic safety in Utah, including: Governor's Medal of Excellence in Outstanding Public Service, Public Safety Medal of Excellence, Catherine Summerhays Award from the Health Education Association of Utah, Special Act/Special Service Award for her dedication to child passenger safety on the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation, and an Appreciation and Recognition Award from the Utah Minority Community Information and Education Center.

LORRIE WALKER

Training Manager and Technical Advisor
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Lorrie Walker has more than 20 years experience in the traffic safety field, predominately in the areas of child passengers, bikes, school buses, children with special health care needs, teen drivers, teen passengers, and pedestrian safety.

Lorrie joined Safe Kids Worldwide as the training manager and technical advisor for the Safe Kids Buckle Up program in August, 2004. She develops community-based educational programs on vehicle safety and oversees the national training program for more than 300 Safe Kids Coalitions throughout the United States

Lorrie also currently serves as the chairperson of the National Child Passenger Safety Board.

Prior to working in Washington, DC, with Safe Kids Buckle Up, she served as the director of the Florida Traffic Safety Resource Center and assistant professor of research at Florida Atlantic University. She was also the program administrator of the Traffic Injury Prevention Project at the American Academy of Pediatrics, Pennsylvania Chapter for more than a decade.

As an advocate for child safety and injury prevention, she is a nationally certified child passenger safety instructor, has consulted on numerous studies and published articles and routinely participates as an expert panel member for NHTSA and other organizations.

Lorrie holds a bachelor's degree in social work from Eastern College in St. Davids, PA, and a master of science from St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia. She worked for nine years as an adjunct professor in the Health Administration and Health Education Departments in both the graduate and undergraduate schools at St. Joseph's University.