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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Parent - Teen Interactions May Cut Teen Crash Risk In Half:

Two new studies confirm fewer crashes among teens with supportive parents and clear rules.

PHILADELPHIA, September 28 – Two new studies reveal that teen crashes and risky driving behaviors such as cell phone use, failure to wear seat belts, and drinking and driving are strongly linked with the way teens and parents communicate and approach rules about safety. The results of the studies by The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and State Farm® were published today in the journal *Pediatrics*.

The studies are based on the nationally-representative National Young Driver Survey of more than 5,500 teenagers. The first study shows that teens who said their parents set clear rules, paid attention to where they were going and whom they were with, and did so in a supportive way were:

- half as likely to crash
- twice as likely to wear seat belts
- 71 percent less likely to drive while intoxicated
- 30 percent less likely to use a cell phone while driving

These findings are compared to teens who said their parents were less involved.

A second study found that teens who reported being the main driver of a vehicle were twice as likely to be involved in a crash, compared with teens who said they shared a vehicle with other family members. Nearly 75 percent of the teens surveyed reported being the main driver of a car.

“Once they’re behind the wheel, teens have ultimate responsibility for their behavior,” says Kenneth Ginsburg, MD, MEd, co-author of the study. “But kids who said their parents set rules in a supportive way were half as likely to crash compared with teens who saw their parents as less involved.”

According to the researchers, there are specific things parents can do to keep teens safer around driving: set clear rules about driving; talk with kids about where they’re going and who they’re with; and make sure teens know the rules are in place because you care about them and their safety – not because you wish to control them. This approach may make it more likely teens will tell their parents what is going on in their lives. This in turn helps parents follow through on the rules they set with their kids.

Approximately half of the teens surveyed reported that their parents consistently set rules, paid attention to where they were going and who they would be with in a way that was supportive.

“Our data show that one of the safest decisions families can make is for parents to control access to the keys for at least the first 6 to 12 months after a teen gets his license,” says Flora Koplin

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Winston, MD, PhD, study co-author and scientific director of the Center for Injury Research and Prevention at CHOP. “Our data show an alarming trend - almost three-quarters of teens say they have easy access to a car. Compared to teens who have to share a car, these teens are twice as likely to crash and more likely to speed and to use a cell phone while driving. When teens have to ask for the keys before taking the car, it naturally creates the opportunity for parents to have conversations with their teens about where they are going, who they will be with, and to review the house rules about driving with passengers, wearing seat belts, using cell phones, and which routes are safe.”

Other research has found that a person’s greatest lifetime chance of being in a fatal crash occurs during the first 6 to 12 months after receiving a license as a teenager. State Graduated Driver Licensing laws have been proven to reduce this risk by keeping new drivers out of the most dangerous situations during this crucial time. These findings confirm that parents who set rules are also effective in protecting their children from crashing.

“As the leader in auto safety, State Farm values these studies to help us understand the complex issue of teen driver safety,” says Laurette Stiles, State Farm’s vice president of Strategic Resources. “Together with The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, through our Young Driver Research Initiative, we have developed some tools to help parents keep teens safer on the road.”

Visit www.chop.edu/youngdrivers and www.statefarm.com/teendriving to find resources to help:

- Guide parents and teens in setting rules that are the most likely to protect teen drivers
- Help parents understand effective ways to protect their teens, while also allowing them to gain appropriate independence
- Help teens understand how to be safe drivers and safe passengers

About the Young Driver Research Initiative

Motor vehicle crashes remain the No. 1 cause of death among teens in the United States. Teen drivers (ages 16 to 19) have fatal crashes at four times the rate of adult drivers (ages 25 to 69). To reduce injury and death from young driver-related crashes through scientific research and outreach, The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and State Farm Insurance Companies® formed an alliance called the Young Driver Research Initiative (YDRI). These papers as well as other recent research from CHOP and State Farm are described in a just-released report called *Driving Through the Eyes of Teens, A Closer Look*. For more information, visit www.chop.edu/youngdrivers or www.statefarm.com/teendriving.

About The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia was founded in 1855 as the nation's first pediatric hospital. Through its long-standing commitment to providing exceptional patient care, training new generations of pediatric health care professionals and pioneering major research initiatives, Children's Hospital has fostered many discoveries that have benefited children worldwide. Its pediatric research program is among the largest in the country, ranking third in National Institutes of Health funding. In addition, its unique family-centered care and public service programs have brought the 430-bed hospital recognition as a leading advocate for children and adolescents. For more information, visit <http://www.chop.edu>.

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