



# VERMONT

Occupant Protection Program Assessment

January 25 – 29, 2016

## *ASSESSMENT TEAM MEMBERS*

*Robin Mayer*

*Carol Meidinger*

*Daniel H. Schulte*

*Jana Simpler*

*Stephen Walsh*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
INTRODUCTION	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND	6
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	8
1. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT	12
1A. STRENGTHS	12
1B. CHALLENGES	14
1C. RECOMMENDATIONS	14
2. LEGISLATION/REGULATION AND POLICY	16
2A. STRENGTHS	16
2B. CHALLENGES	17
2C. RECOMMENDATIONS	18
3. LAW ENFORCEMENT	20
3A. STRENGTHS	20
3B. CHALLENGES	22
3C. RECOMMENDATIONS	23
4. COMMUNICATION	25
4A. STRENGTHS	25
4B. CHALLENGES	27
4C. RECOMMENDATIONS	28
5. OCCUPANT PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN	30
5A. STRENGTHS	30
5B. CHALLENGES	32
5C. RECOMMENDATIONS	33
6. OUTREACH	34
6A. STRENGTHS	36
6B. CHALLENGES	37
6C. RECOMMENDATIONS	38
7. DATA AND EVALUATION	39
7A. STRENGTHS	39
7B. CHALLENGES	40
7C. RECOMMENDATIONS	40
ASSESSMENT AGENDA	42
ASSESSMENT TEAM CREDENTIALS	47

## INTRODUCTION

The State of Vermont Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) is committed to improving highway safety and reducing deaths and serious injuries due to crashes. GHSP, housed within the Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT), guides Vermont's overall highway safety program; identifies the most critical statewide traffic safety needs; conducts program research and evaluation; awards and monitors highway safety grant funds to local, state, and not-for-profit agencies; and coordinates mobilizations such as *Click It or Ticket* (CIOT) each May and November.

The State of Vermont, in cooperation with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), initiated an Occupant Protection Program Assessment. During the December 17, 2015, pre-assessment conference call, GHSP identified a concern about the state's seat belt use rate remaining relatively flat over the past several years. Particular attention was given to this area. Recommendations from this assessment are intended to guide GHSP toward improvements in program management; regulations, legislation, and policy; law enforcement; communication; occupant protection for children (OPC); outreach; and data and evaluation.

Vermont is the sixth smallest state in land mass consisting of 9,616 square miles comprising 14 counties. The state's overall population density is 67.7 per square mile (2015 Census estimate). Vermont is the second least populous of the 50 states with 626,042 inhabitants (2015 Census estimate). The largest city is Burlington with a population of 42,284 (2014 Census estimate) located on Lake Champlain.

There are more than 14,000 total miles of roads in Vermont, of which only 746 are on the national highway system and 2,707 are on the state highway system. There are a total of 546,573 licensed drivers in Vermont, of which 9,234 are between the ages of 16-17 (2016 Vermont data). In 2015, there were 57 traffic fatalities statewide (initial FARS data) and as of January 20, 2016, there was one fatality since January 1, 2016. Vermont's higher risk audience is the hard-to-reach 18-34 year old male, pickup truck driver.

GHSP has a small staff and its 2015 annual occupant protection operating budget was approximately \$2,500,000 (liquidation of these funds, however, was substantially lower). Vermont's rural geography, particularly in the Northeast Kingdom (Essex, Caledonia, and Orleans counties), and extended winters present challenges when deploying coordinated occupant protection programs. According to the American Trauma Society 2010 survey, nearly 70 percent of Vermont residents have to travel more than 45 minutes (by helicopter or ground ambulance) to access a Level-I or Level-II designated trauma center. The University of Vermont Medical Center, formerly known as Fletcher Allen Health Care, is the only Level-I trauma center falling within Vermont's borders.

GHSP has recently experienced a considerable amount of change. In April 2015, GHSP moved from the Department of Public Safety to the AOT. Only two program staff made the move to AOT, one of which has since left. There is a new Chief, financial staff, and two new program staff positions that have started with GHSP since the April 2015 transition. There are two law enforcement liaison positions, and GHSP will soon add one additional fiscal position and an

impaired driving coordinator. In addition to GHSP staff, there are two full-time positions at the Vermont Department of Health that oversee the Child Passenger Safety program.

The State has struggled to see meaningful increases in its seat belt use rate over the past 10 years. In 2002, Vermont launched its first statewide CIOT campaign. At that point, Vermont's use rate was hovering in the vicinity of 67.0 percent. As a result of NHTSA-funded paid media, supported by earned media and strategically designed high-visibility enforcement saturating the state, the daytime seat belt use rate rose to an all-time high use rate of 87.3 percent in 2008. The 2015 seat belt survey indicated an 86.0 percent use rate. Seat belt use across the state ranges from 74.5 percent in the Franklin/Grand Isle Region (a very rural area within the state) to 89.1 percent in Bennington and Addison Counties.

Vermont has a secondary enforcement adult seat belt law. An operator is not subject to the seat belt fine unless required to pay a penalty for the primary offense. There is little political will in critical areas of state government to strengthen Vermont's occupant protection laws.

While the national CIOT campaigns are the cornerstone events of Vermont's occupant protection program, GHSP provides funding throughout the year to engage in occupant protection enforcement and education. As with any state, Vermont's law enforcement (comprised of 12 State Police barracks and two outposts, 14 sheriff's offices, and 53 municipal agencies) struggles with competing law enforcement priorities.

To bring together key players involved in highway safety, the State partners with the Vermont Highway Safety Alliance (VHSA). VHSA brings much promise in its ability to tackle highway safety challenges and provide coordinated direction for the state's critical emphasis areas. The VHSA also provides a basis for coordination between the Highway Safety Plan and the Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

Wearing a seat belt is the single most effective habit that Vermonters can do to protect themselves in a crash. Based on the fundamental elements of the Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs for Occupant Protection, this assessment report identifies Vermont's strengths and challenges, and provides recommendations for the major occupant protection program areas.

Despite Vermont's many challenges, GHSP staff and those interviewed as part of this assessment, are dedicated towards improving highway safety for all Vermonters. Each person brings his or her own unique expertise and experience that should be leveraged to the fullest capacity. It was evident that advocates and GHSP staff are willing to do whatever it takes to strengthen the current program in an effort to save lives and reduce injuries on Vermont's roadways.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The assessment team would like to acknowledge and thank Vermont's Secretary of Transportation, Chris Cole; the Governor's Highway Safety Representative Chief, Scott Davidson; Program Coordinators James Baraw, Evelyn McFarland, and Betsy Ross; Grants Management Specialist Danielle Record; and Law Enforcement Liaisons, Tom Fields and John Filipek, for their support, level of effort, and commitment to occupant protection in Vermont. Special thanks goes to Mr. Baraw and Ms. Record for their support in developing the assessment agenda, administering the information questionnaires, compiling briefing materials, and providing logistical support to the team.

The team would also like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of representatives from the Vermont State Police, the Vermont Agency of Transportation, the Vermont Highway Safety Alliance, the Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles, the Vermont Department of Health, local law enforcement, emergency medical services, and many others who volunteered their time to share their knowledge and expertise during the assessment. Thanks go to everyone committed to saving lives on the Green Mountain State's roads and highways.

This assessment could not have been conducted without the guidance and involvement from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's regional and headquarters staff: Angie Byrne and Janice Hartwill-Miller; and support from their supervisors, Region 1 Administrator, Michael Geraci and Occupant Protection Division Chief, Maria Vegega. Special thanks also goes to Belinda Oh, who served as the administrative consultant for this assessment.

### Notes:

The information included in this document has been collected from a variety of sources including interviews, official documents, websites, and other materials. Sources may not be consistent. Some copyrighted material has been used under the "Fair Use" Doctrine of the U.S. copyright statute.

## ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND

The purpose of the Occupant Protection Program Assessment is to provide the State of Vermont Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) with a comprehensive review of its occupant protection program by identifying program strengths, accomplishments, and challenges. In addition to using data and other resources, this report provides valuable insights for occupant protection program planning.

The assessment process provides a systematic approach for measuring progress by following the format of the *Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs, Guideline No. 20, Occupant Protection* (November 2006). These guidelines offer direction to states in formulating their plans for highway safety efforts that are supported with Section 402 (State and Community Highway Safety), Section 405(b) (Occupant Protection), and other grant funds. The guidelines provide a framework for developing a balanced highway safety program and serve as a tool with which states can assess the effectiveness of their own programs.

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 lasting increases in seat belt use, which will prevent fatalities and decrease the number and severity of injuries.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) staff facilitated the Occupant Protection Program Assessment. Working with GHSP, NHTSA recommended a team of five individuals with proven 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 GHSP.

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

Following completion of the interviews on Wednesday, January 27, 2016, the team convened to review and analyze the information presented. On Friday, January 29, 2016, the team briefed GHSP and other invited guests on its findings and discussed major points and recommendations.

The assessment team noted that many occupant protection and general traffic safety activities are conducted throughout Vermont. It is not the intent of this report to thoroughly document all of these successes, nor to give credit to the large number of individuals at all levels who are dedicated to traffic safety. By its very nature, this report focuses on areas where further improvements can be made. Please consider this report as constructive criticism. It is an attempt to provide assistance at all levels for improvement, which is consistent with the overall goals of highway safety program assessments.

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

This Occupant Protection Program Assessment Report is not a NHTSA document and it belongs to GHSP. Vermont is strongly encouraged to use the assessment report as the basis for making program improvements, assessing legislative priorities, providing additional training opportunities, evaluating funding priorities, and shaping future strategic highway safety plans.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

(Note: Key Recommendations are **BOLDED** in each individual section)

### 1. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

- Restructure the grant application process to give more comprehensive planning capabilities and responsibilities to the Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP). For example, law enforcement agency grant applications must include a specific enforcement plan that mirrors the identified problems in their jurisdiction and GHSP Program Coordinators must monitor to ensure that the agencies are complying with enforcement parameters. In addition, while the use of the *Click It or Ticket* Task Force is considered a best practice, care must be given to ensure that the guidance for the ensuing enforcement comes from GHSP and mirrors the data analysis that provides targeted locations, populations, and timeframes.
- Consider the possibility of restructuring the duties among current Governor's Highway Safety Program staff to allow the Occupant Protection Coordinator the ability to manage both occupant protection law enforcement grants and occupant protection education grants. Similarly, the Impaired Driving Coordinator can manage impaired driving enforcement grants as well as impaired driving education grants. This would free up a Program Coordinator to assist with media/outreach and address other priorities, including distracted driving, speed, and/or pedestrian safety. In considering options for restructuring, the Law Enforcement Liaison roles could include reviewing reimbursements from law enforcement partners to approve for payment.

### 2. LEGISLATION/REGULATION AND POLICY

- Utilize the Vermont Highway Safety Alliance and the OP802 Task Force to coordinate efforts among the various occupant protection partners to establish a plan to educate legislators about and increase support for the passage of a primary seat belt use law. Cite self-report survey data indicating support for a primary enforcement law, gather saved by the belt stories, identify a law enforcement champion, collect law enforcement testimonials, utilize federal partner assistance, gather statistical evidence, promote corporate/fleet seat belt use policies/benefits of same, and/or engage local and regional government entities to assist in the effort.
- Pursue a change to Title 23 V.S.A. §1259 by eliminating the language requiring that the operator must pay a penalty for the primary offense should the Agency of Transportation and the Governor's Highway Safety Program administration decide not to pursue primary legislation. This change would allow officers the discretion to issue a ticket for the secondary seat belt violation alone.
- Consider adding a provision to the teen licensing laws to allow for recall of the Learner's Permit or the Junior Operator License if a teen driver is cited for not wearing a seat belt.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS (continued)

### 3. LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Set a top law enforcement goal and priority of increasing public perception that they will be ticketed for failing to comply with occupant protection laws.
- Expand the *Click It or Ticket* Task Force significantly by increasing the number of committed officers and extending the areas and operational periods of deployment.
- Establish minimum performance measures for law enforcement grantees and manage the deployment of law enforcement resources, ensuring that grant-funded selective enforcement patrols are deployed in numbers and at times and locations that maximize the impact on occupant protection.
- Mandate training prior to selective enforcement patrols to relay strategies and information relative to the mission.
- Set clear goals and expectations for officers assigned to funded occupant protection enforcement, and hold officers accountable for their productivity.

### 4. COMMUNICATION

- Develop a comprehensive communications plan to include, at a minimum, the following:
  - Goals and objectives of the communications program;
  - Objectives of the paid and earned media program(s);
  - Details of the primary and secondary target audiences and any specific regions of the State, based on data;
  - Requirements for any new creative that will be developed, including methods to test the messages to ensure they resonate with the target audience(s);
  - Media buy plans by media type and region of the State and target audience(s);
  - Collateral materials such as fact sheets, seat belt and child restraint use data, frequently asked questions, etc.;
  - Template materials to aid law enforcement agencies, partners, and stakeholders in promoting the *Click It or Ticket* mobilization as well as social norming messaging for use during non-high-visibility enforcement periods;
  - A timeline for the development and delivery of all communications; and
  - An ongoing evaluation plan to ensure that the messaging is effective, as well as to make mid-course corrections when it is found to be lacking.
- Assign and train an appropriate Governor's Highway Safety Program staff member to be responsible for communications, materials development and review, and outreach.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS (*continued*)

### 4. COMMUNICATION (*continued*)

- Require that law enforcement agencies receiving *Click It or Ticket* grants include an earned media component and report their activities.

### 5. OCCUPANT PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN

- Expand the network of child passenger safety technician proxies who are able to sign off on technician seat checks, ensuring that they are located in all geographic areas of the State.
- Expand the role of health care providers, both public and private, in child passenger safety (CPS) education, outreach, and CPS technician certification. This would provide another avenue for parents and caregivers to hear CPS messaging which could be integrated into health and medical visits. It could also help with the Department of Health goal of having fitting stations available to most families within a 30 minute drive.
- Develop a standardized presentation and support materials that can be offered to local law enforcement, district health offices, and other community organizations for use in doing school-based presentations, to assure a consistent message with accurate and up-to-date content.

### 6. OUTREACH PROGRAM

- Identify, or develop and provide, online template occupant protection related materials (e.g., frequently asked questions, PowerPoint presentations, state and local data) for use by partners in formal presentations, small group discussions, or one-on-one conversations to ensure consistency of messaging across the State.
- Expand collaboration with youth groups (e.g., Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), Family Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)) and statewide youth organizations (e.g., Youth Safety Council) to obtain insights regarding innovative outreach methods, to have a ready source to focus test materials, and to ensure buy-in for evidence-based programs targeting young people.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS (*continued*)

### 7. DATA AND EVALUATION

- Design and implement a science-based, statewide child passenger safety (CPS) survey to monitor occupant restraint use rate data for child passengers covered under the primary CPS law, ages 0-18, with the ability to track results separately among children ages 0-4, elementary, middle school/junior high, and high school students, including teen drivers.
- Include systematic evaluation strategies as a requirement of occupant protection law enforcement grants, including a pre-enforcement survey and a post-enforcement survey. Also, set reasonable performance measures that mirror statewide Highway Safety Plan goals.
- Combine available and new data sets to construct a more comprehensive occupant protection picture of the State, and make those results available to partners, stakeholders, and the public. Consider working with a research-capable partner, accessing their expertise to analyze the data to periodically identify a new question or focus. As an example, try changing the perception that it is unlikely to get a citation for non-belt use. Repeatedly assess, measure (establish a baseline), intervene, and measure again, repeating the cycle as necessary.

## 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.*

- *Provide leadership, training and technical assistance to other State agencies and local occupant protection programs and projects;*
- *Establish and convene an occupant protection advisory task force or coalition to organize and generate broad-based support for programs. The coalition should include agencies and organizations that are representative of the State's demographic composition and critical to the implementation of occupant protection initiatives;*
- *Integrate occupant protection programs into community/corridor traffic safety and other injury prevention programs; and*
- *Evaluate the effectiveness of the State's occupant protection program.*

### 1A. STRENGTHS

- The Vermont Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) is well supported by the Agency of Transportation (AOT or VTrans) under the Office of Highway Safety. On April 1, 2015, GHSP officially transferred from the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to the AOT and is led by the Highway Safety Program Chief, Scott Davidson. With the exception of one staff member, GHSP staff is relatively new but all are committed to the mission of the Program and are quickly learning the ropes. GHSP staff provide support to occupant protection partners across the state and are committed to innovative program management.
- The Vermont Highway Safety Alliance (VHSA) combines collaborative resources from the four E's of traffic safety (enforcement, education, engineering, and EMS) and includes federal, state, and local partnerships. While the focus of the VHSA is on all traffic safety priorities, occupant protection is one of the VHSA's top emphasis areas. Their commitment to seat belt and child restraint use is evident in their inclusion of occupant protection as one of the Critical Emphasis Areas in the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). The VHSA provides support to GHSP in program implementation.
- GHSP wisely uses its resources to support the OP802 and *Click It or Ticket* Task Forces. With a limited staff, using these and other task forces to implement occupant protection programming fosters valuable partnerships and joint commitment to the mission. Similarly, the Regional Traffic Safety Forums are an excellent opportunity to share traffic safety information at the local level.
- GHSP's commitment to refining the grant process to be more efficient and effective is noted in its use of the Lean program with AOT. The Lean effort allowed GHSP to streamline its grant application process by reducing the time that staff spent handling

grant paperwork by over 200 days. The creation of these efficiencies is important in streamlining the application process for grantees and freeing up staff time that can be better utilized to achieve programmatic goals. GHSP is also considering the use of Intelligrants, an electronic grants management system, to further streamline their grant process.

- GHSP has a strong network of contractor personnel to assist in delivering highway safety programs across the State. Their contractors include two Law Enforcement Liaisons (LELs), a Judicial Outreach Liaison (JOL), a DUI Court coordinator, a media contractor, and a Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor (TSRP). Additionally, GHSP intends to contract with an impaired driving program manager to augment GHSP staff. These contractor personnel are a vital part of GHSP's efforts to further increase the State's seat belt use rate without relying solely on GHSP staff.
- GHSP successfully submitted a Fiscal Year 2016 Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21) Section 405(b) application for occupant protection funding. The application included a compliant seat belt enforcement plan, a high risk population countermeasure program, and an occupant protection assessment. These funds support the Vermont Department of Health's Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Program, the annual seat belt survey, and paid media for the May and November *Click It or Ticket* mobilizations.
- GHSP demonstrates its commitment to implementing a data-driven occupant protection program by relying on sound crash data analysis from the Office of Highway Safety (OHS) Crash Data Analyst and by utilizing results from the annual seat belt use survey and the annual self-report survey to drive their program development and implementation. It is from this analysis that GHSP has identified the areas of the State most in need of occupant protection resources and has identified young males, 18-34 years of age, as well as pickup truck drivers, as one of their target populations.
- GHSP recognized the value of the recommendations made during its 2013 Occupant Protection Program Assessment and has implemented a number of the recommendations in an effort to improve the State's seat belt use rate.
- GHSP has a strong relationship with its traffic safety partners, including the VHSA, its LELs, the OHS crash data analyst, law enforcement agencies statewide, and the Vermont Department of Health.
- While the State's seat belt use rate has remained stagnant at approximately 85 percent for several years, its unrestrained fatality rate for 2013 was below the national average of 49 percent. In addition, according to 2014 nationwide seat belt use rates, Vermont has the third highest seat belt use rate of all secondary law states. Lastly, the State boasts a 98 percent seat belt use rate for commercial vehicle drivers.

## 1B. CHALLENGES

- Despite a big drop in fatalities from 2013 to 2014 (from 70 to 44), the number of fatalities started to rise again in 2015 when 57 people lost their lives in fatal crashes. In addition, despite the State's efforts to implement best practices for occupant protection, the seat belt use rate across the State has remained at or near 85 percent for nearly a decade.
- While GHSP has access to a tremendous amount of data to identify target locations, target populations, and target timeframes, it is unclear if GHSP staff or its LELs are using the data to fully ensure that law enforcement agencies are conducting enforcement in such a way to impact these identified problems.
- Though some process measures do exist, there are currently no measurable CPS outcomes in place to measure the effects of the funds being expended in this program area.
- With the transition of GHSP from the DPS to AOT in April 2015, just one of the persons that remained on staff has more than a year of highway safety program experience. Despite the cohesiveness of the staff that was noted by the assessment team, GHSP staff will require a bit of time to "learn the ropes" related to the management of a highway safety office, including highway safety planning and program development, plus operating within federal guidelines.

## 1C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Restructure the grant application process to give more comprehensive planning capabilities and responsibilities to the Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP). For example, law enforcement agency grant applications must include a specific enforcement plan that mirrors the identified problems in their jurisdiction and GHSP Program Coordinators must monitor to ensure that the agencies are complying with enforcement parameters. In addition, while the use of the *Click It or Ticket* Task Force is considered a best practice, care must be given to ensure that the guidance for the ensuing enforcement comes from GHSP and mirrors the data analysis that provides targeted locations, populations, and timeframes.**
- Continue with plans to implement an electronic grants management system, especially as it relates to the ability to assist with highway safety planning and program development, to better streamline the grant application process and reduce the workload for Governor's Highway Safety Program Coordinators.
- Establish outcome goals against which child passenger safety efforts can be measured.
- **Consider the possibility of restructuring the duties among current Governor's Highway Safety Program staff to allow the Occupant Protection Coordinator the**

**ability to manage both occupant protection law enforcement grants and occupant protection education grants. Similarly, the Impaired Driving Coordinator can manage impaired driving enforcement grants as well as impaired driving education grants. This would free up a Program Coordinator to assist with media/outreach and address other priorities, including distracted driving, speed, and/or pedestrian safety. In considering options for restructuring, the Law Enforcement Liaison roles could include reviewing reimbursements from law enforcement partners to approve for payment.**

## 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. This legal framework should include:*

- *Legislation permitting primary enforcement that requires all motor vehicle occupants to use systems provided by the vehicle manufacturer;*
- *Legislation permitting primary enforcement that requires that children birth to 16 years old (or the State's driving age) be properly restrained in an appropriate child restraint system (i.e., certified by the manufacturer to meet all applicable Federal safety standards) or seat belt;*
- *Legislation permitting primary enforcement that requires children under 13 years old to be properly restrained in the rear seat (unless all available rear seats are occupied by younger children);*
- *Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) laws that include three stages of licensure, and that place restrictions and sanctions on high-risk driving situations for novice drivers (i.e., nighttime driving restrictions, passenger restrictions, zero tolerance, required seat belt use);*
- *Regulations requiring employees and contractors at all levels of government to wear seat belts when traveling on official business;*
- *Official policies requiring that organizations receiving Federal highway safety program grant funds develop and enforce an employee seat belt use policy; and*
- *Outreach to state insurance commissioners to encourage them to persuade insurers to offer incentives to policyholders who use seat belts and child restraints. Insurance commissioners are likely to have significant influence with insurers that write policies in their states.*

### 2A. STRENGTHS

- While Vermont's seat belt law does include a secondary enforcement component, the law incorporates a number of components that are essential in a strong law designed to increase seat belt use. Some of these include:
  - Seat belt use is required in any seating position in the vehicle;
  - Fines are progressively higher for each subsequent offense, up to three offenses; and
  - Federal and state laws allow primary enforcement of the seat belt law for those driving commercial vehicles.
- The 2015 Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) self-report surveys reveal public support for a primary enforcement seat belt law; specifically, 74.2 percent support primary enforcement. In addition, research revealed that if those respondents who

believed a primary law already existed or were unsure of the current law were removed from analysis, nearly 86 percent of the responses would reveal support for a primary law.

- Vermont’s child passenger safety law includes a number of components to support the increased correct and consistent use of child restraint seats, including:
  - Rear facing seats must be used at least until age one and under twenty pounds and shall not be used in front of an air bag;
  - A child over the age of one and over twenty pounds through the age of seven shall be restrained in a child restraint seat;
  - A child age eight through age 17 must be restrained in a child restraint seat or a seat belt;
  - Fines are progressively higher for each subsequent offense, up to three offenses; and
  - The law allows for primary enforcement.
  
- Vermont’s Learner’s Permit and Junior Operator License laws for teen drivers have several components that are critical in providing inexperienced drivers with time behind the wheel in a more controlled setting, including the following:
  - Learner’s Permit (12 months)
    - Drivers ages 15 through 17 that have completed a driver education and training course must possess a Learner’s Permit for not less than 12 months;
    - Drivers must be accompanied by a parent, driver education instructor, or other licensed driver over the age of 25;
    - Drivers must complete 40 hours of supervised driving (10 of these hours must be nighttime hours); and
    - Drivers must maintain a clean driving record for at least six months without suspension, revocation, or recall to obtain a Junior Operator License.
  - Junior Operator License (six months with restrictions/through age 18)
    - Once the one year Learner’s Permit is successfully completed, drivers may drive alone or with an approved adult for the first three months. With an approved adult in the vehicle, there are no passenger restrictions. For the second three months, drivers may transport siblings without an adult in the vehicle.
    - There are no restrictions after the initial six months.
    - Drivers must maintain a clean driving record for at least six months without suspension, revocation, or recall to obtain a full driver’s license.

## **2B. CHALLENGES**

- The secondary enforcement of Vermont’s seat belt law directly contributes to the stagnant seat belt use rate across the State. Since 2006, the seat belt use rate has remained at or near 85 percent, while states with primary enforcement averaged a 90 percent seat belt use rate in 2014.

- The secondary enforcement component of Vermont’s seat belt law makes law enforcement reluctant to issue seat belt citations due to the financial impact of issuing two citations and the ensuing administrative fees. As a result, seat belt citations have decreased.
- The collective feeling among occupant protection partners throughout the State is that there is little political will to address the secondary component of the seat belt law legislatively at this time.
- Vermont’s seat belt law provides seven exemptions outlining when the driver or passenger is not required to wear a seat belt, including the following:
  - United States Postal Service employees operating a motor vehicle in the performance of mail delivery;
  - Those drivers or passengers in a motor vehicle that makes frequent stops, provided the vehicle doesn’t exceed 15 miles per hour between stops; and
  - Emergency personnel operating an emergency motor vehicle.
- While Vermont’s seat belt law addresses drivers over the age of 18 and the State’s child restraint law requires the driver to ensure that children 18 and under are restrained, the State’s licensing laws for teens (Learner’s Permit and Junior Operator License) do not allow for the recall of their driving privileges should a teen be stopped for not wearing a seat belt.

## 2C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Utilize the Vermont Highway Safety Alliance and the OP802 Task Force to coordinate efforts among the various occupant protection partners to establish a plan to educate legislators about and increase support for the passage of a primary seat belt use law. Cite self-report survey data indicating support for a primary enforcement law, gather saved by the belt stories, identify a law enforcement champion, collect law enforcement testimonials, utilize federal partner assistance, gather statistical evidence, promote corporate/fleet seat belt use policies/benefits of same, and/or engage local and regional government entities to assist in the effort.**
- **Pursue a change to Title 23 V.S.A. §1259 by eliminating the language requiring that the operator must pay a penalty for the primary offense should the Agency of Transportation and the Governor’s Highway Safety Program administration decide not to pursue primary legislation. This change would allow officers the discretion to issue a ticket for the secondary seat belt violation alone.**
- Implement a programmatic component to driver education requiring more parental involvement, ensuring that parents are aware of the licensing laws related to their teen driver. Consider parent orientation programs or other opportunities to engage parents in

face-to-face dialog regarding the licensing requirements, including the requirement for 40 hours of behind-the-wheel instruction with an adult during the Learner's Permit phase.

- **Consider adding a provision to the teen licensing laws to allow for recall of the Learner's Permit or the Junior Operator License if a teen driver is cited for not wearing a seat belt.**

### 3. LAW ENFORCEMENT

#### GUIDELINE:

*Each State should conduct frequent, high-visibility law enforcement efforts, coupled with communication strategies, to increase seat belt and child safety seat use. Essential components of a law enforcement program should include:*

- *Written, enforced seat belt use policies for law enforcement agencies with sanctions for noncompliance to protect law enforcement officers from harm and for officers to serve as role models for the motoring public;*
- *Vigorous enforcement of seat belt and child safety seat laws, including citations and warnings;*
- *Accurate reporting of occupant protection system information on police accident report forms, including seat belt and child safety seat use or non-use, restraint type, and airbag presence and deployment;*
- *Communication campaigns to inform the public about occupant protection laws and related enforcement activities;*
- *Routine monitoring of citation rates for non-use of seat belts and child safety seats;*
- *Use of National Child Passenger Safety Certification (basic and in-service) for law enforcement officers;*
- *Utilization of Law Enforcement Liaisons (LELs), for activities such as promotion of national and local mobilizations and increasing law enforcement participation in such mobilizations and collaboration with local chapters of police groups and associations that represent diverse groups (e.g., NOBLE, HAPCOA) to gain support for enforcement efforts.*

#### 3A. STRENGTHS

- Law enforcement agencies (LEA) contracting with the Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) are required to have written internal seat belt use policies for law enforcement officers with sanctions for noncompliance.
- GHSP contracts with 89 agencies, or 81 percent of Vermont's law enforcement community, to conduct *Click It or Ticket* (CIOT) and other sustained occupant protection enforcement and educational efforts.
- Agencies contracting with GHSP to engage in occupant protection enforcement are eligible for equipment grants to be utilized for purchasing highway safety related products. The awards encourage participation in traffic safety mobilizations and further GHSP goals and objectives.
- Vermont's Occupant Protection Task Force (OP802) utilizes relevant data to identify sections of the State with low seat belt compliance and, through GHSP, focuses public outreach, media campaigns, and enforcement efforts in identified jurisdictions.

- Vermont's CIOT Task Force, a multi-agency select group of motivated LEAs, is deployed regionally in support of the May CIOT mobilization. In only a two-week operational window, the small cadre of officers assigned to the CIOT Task Force issued 20 percent of the State's occupant protection citations for 2015. The CIOT Task Force is a proven and efficient asset that maximizes GHSP's occupant protection enforcement mission.
- The Vermont Highway Safety Alliance (VHSA) brings together a public/private partnership focused on a common goal of highway safety. Law enforcement representatives in the coalition participate in educational programs, public outreach, and crash locus studies to further highway safety.
- Vermont employs *WebCrash*, a uniform crash reporting system, statewide to capture traffic crash information and statistics. The data include the use or non-use of seat belts, child safety seats, motorcycle helmets, and airbag deployment status.
- Collision reconstruction is a vital element in the investigation of fatal motor vehicle crashes, establishing the cause, contributing factors, violations of law, and most pertinent to this discussion, the use, non-use, or misuse of occupant restraints. The Vermont State Police support all requests for assistance with Troop level collision reconstruction experts.
- GHSP sponsors a Law Enforcement Challenge to showcase and recognize LEAs traffic safety accomplishments.
- Vermont law enforcement regularly participates in public outreach campaigns and educational opportunities focused on occupant protection and related enforcement activities.
- Data-Driven Approaches to Crime and Traffic Safety (DDACTS) strategies have been adopted by the Vermont State Police and DDACTS is utilized in a number of cities and towns in the State.
- Vermont State Police, Sheriff's offices, and municipal police agencies are trained and equipped as National Child Passenger Safety (CPS) certified technicians. These officers conduct child safety seat fittings and inspections and participate in public education campaigns.
- CPS training and education is being reinstated into basic training at the Vermont Police Academy. Trained officers are more apt to enforce CPS laws.
- GHSP contracts with two Law Enforcement Liaisons (LEL) that foster extraordinary relationships with law enforcement command staff and traffic safety administrators to communicate GHSP's occupant protection goals and objectives.

- GHSP employs a Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor that routinely communicates with and progressively works with the LELs and law enforcement agencies.

### 3B. CHALLENGES

- Secondary enforcement of seat belt law is an inherent challenge for Vermont law enforcement, as officers must observe a primary violation of law then attempt pre-stop or post-stop to determine if the operator or occupants of the vehicle were utilizing seat belts.
- An additional requisite of Vermont law requires officers to cite the offender for the primary violation in order to cite for the secondary seat belt violation. Some officers find this punitively oppressive and it gives them pause to enforce seat belt violations.
- LEAs with “zero-tolerance” policies on occupant protection enforcement preclude an officer from issuing a written warning to unrestrained motorists. While zero-tolerance is an aggressive and positive public safety message and enforcement strategy, the unintended consequence of this policy can result in officers opting not to take any action.
- In 2015, GHSP contracted with 89 LEAs to conduct 7,062 hours of dedicated occupant protection enforcement. These agencies issued a combined total of only 902 seat belt citations and 245 child restraint violations. This calculates to an inefficient rate of approximately one citation for every six hours of patrol.
- Public perception, or perhaps the reality of the low occupant protection citation issuance rate, is reflected in the *2015 Center for Research and Public Policy Governor’s Highway Safety Program Study* which indicates that nearly 50 percent of Vermont respondents perceive that their chances of getting ticketed for not wearing a seat belt is “somewhat unlikely” to “not at all likely.”
- GHSP affords LEA commanders wide discretion on the deployment of grant-funded occupant protection patrols. Consequently, patrols may be deployed sporadically throughout the year, without media support, diminishing the impact of the proven high-visibility enforcement (HVE) model.
- There is no standardized occupant protection lesson plan or curriculum for law enforcement to use statewide in presentations for any educational level from K-12, or at presentations for driver education classes.
- Seat belt compliance ranges from as low as 74 percent (Northeast Kingdom and Franklin County) to 89 percent in more populated counties, and as low as 68 percent for male pickup truck drivers. Focusing enforcement efforts in sparsely populated areas and targeting specific vehicles and genders is a challenge for Vermont law enforcement.
- Traffic Occupant Protection Strategies (TOPS) training is not part of the Vermont Police Academy basic training or in-service training. This National Highway Traffic Safety

Administration course is designed specifically for law enforcement officers to promote seat belt enforcement by state and local law enforcement agencies to reduce deaths and injuries due to traffic crashes.

### 3C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Set a top law enforcement goal and priority of increasing public perception that they will be ticketed for failing to comply with occupant protection laws.**
- Maximize law enforcement resources to most effectively further the occupant protection mission of the Governor’s Highway Safety Program by deploying short duration, evidence-based high-visibility enforcement, including earned or paid media, exclusively on the days of week, times, and locations where statistical analysis indicates they will have the greatest impact on public safety.
- Encourage “buy-in” from all law enforcement entities, beginning at the command staff level, to promote greater collaboration and a coordinated effort focused on occupant protection enforcement and education.
- Motivate law enforcement officers to become advocates for occupant protection through education and enforcement, and train officers in strategies to effectively enforce secondary seat belt laws. Every motor vehicle stop should be viewed as an opportunity for occupant protection enforcement.
- **Expand the *Click It or Ticket* Task Force significantly by increasing the number of committed officers and extending the areas and operational periods of deployment.**
- **Establish minimum performance measures for law enforcement grantees and manage the deployment of law enforcement resources, ensuring that grant-funded selective enforcement patrols are deployed in numbers and at times and locations that maximize the impact on occupant protection.**
- **Mandate training prior to selective enforcement patrols to relay strategies and information relative to the mission.**
- **Set clear goals and expectations for officers assigned to funded occupant protection enforcement, and hold officers accountable for their productivity.**
- Combine occupant protection enforcement with distracted driving enforcement; they are similar tasks in that they both require a focus on the actions of the driver rather than the vehicle in motion (e.g., using a covert spotter at an intersection or lane taper).
- Target enforcement on high risk driving behaviors such as speeding, aggressive and reckless driving, and impaired driving, as unrestrained operators tend to engage in other dangerous driving activities.

- Encourage law enforcement agencies to collaborate in joint traffic operations focusing occupant protection enforcement on targeted jurisdictions as a force multiplier. Though no individual police agency can sustain intense traffic enforcement within their jurisdiction throughout the year, a collaboration of forces deploying to multiple jurisdictions on a rotating basis is sustainable.
- Encourage law enforcement agencies to extend officers the discretion to issue written warnings during occupant protection enforcement. While a “zero-tolerance” approach is an effective enforcement model, extending discretion to officers enables them to be advocates for occupant protection and public safety through education as well as enforcement. This model extends community relations when judiciously applied.
- Develop a set of standardized occupant protection curricula and materials for use by law enforcement to meet K-12 educational needs and augment driver education programs.
- Implement Traffic Occupant Protection Strategies (TOPS) training for law enforcement officers at the academy and in-service levels.
- Motivate officers to enforce the secondary law by recognizing officers that demonstrate exceptional dedication and performance in traffic enforcement and public outreach through the Governor’s Highway Safety Program.

## 4. COMMUNICATION

### GUIDELINE:

*As part of each State's communication program, the State should enlist the support of a variety of media, including mass media, to improve public awareness and knowledge and to support enforcement efforts to about seat belts, air bags, and child safety seats. To sustain or increase rates of seat belt and child safety seat use, a well-organized effectively managed communication program should:*

- *Identify specific audiences (e.g., low belt use, high-risk motorists) and develop messages appropriate for these audiences;*
- *Address the enforcement of the State's seat belt and child passenger safety laws; the safety benefits of regular, correct seat belt (both manual and automatic) and child safety seat use; and the additional protection provided by air bags;*
- *Continue programs and activities to increase the use of booster seats by children who have outgrown their toddler seats but who are still too small to safely use the adult seat belts;*
- *Capitalize on special events, such as nationally recognized safety and injury prevention weeks and local enforcement campaigns;*
- *Provide materials and media campaigns in more than one language as necessary;*
- *Use national themes and materials;*
- *Participate in national programs to increase seat belt and child safety seat use and use law enforcement as the State's contribution to obtaining national public awareness through concentrated, simultaneous activity;*
- *Utilize paid media, as appropriate;*
- *Publicize seat belt use surveys and other relevant statistics;*
- *Encourage news media to report seat belt use and non-use in motor vehicle crashes;*
- *Involve media representatives in planning and disseminating communication campaigns;*
- *Encourage private sector groups to incorporate seat belt use messages into their media campaigns;*
- *Utilize and involve all media outlets: television, radio, print, signs, billboards, theaters, sports events, health fairs;*
- *Evaluate all communication campaign efforts.*

### 4A. STRENGTHS

- The Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) has identified its target audience, as defined by state data, as 18-34 year old males and pickup truck drivers, and has additionally targeted specific regions of the State having demonstrated lower seat belt use rates.
- GHSP supports the national *Click It or Ticket* (CIOT) mobilizations in May and November with paid and earned media, using materials developed and tested by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

- GHSP has a long-term contract with an advertising agency that creates and places advertisements on a variety of formats, including television, radio, YouTube, mobile applications (e.g., Pandora), social media platforms, and other venues based on the target audience(s).
- The State's advertising agency has negotiated bonus spots for paid media (at about 20 percent), increasing the frequency and reach of the messages and extending the value of the allotted funding.
- The Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT) provides variable message boards to display CIOT messaging during mobilizations.
- GHSP has participated in "border-to-border" press events resulting in expanded media coverage by surrounding states.
- Several law enforcement executives demonstrated innovative methods to garner earned media to support seat belt use and CIOT.
- The Vermont Highway Safety Alliance (VHSA), comprised of a large number of organizations interested in traffic safety, has included occupant protection as a critical emphasis area, and is actively engaged in assisting the State to increase seat belt and child restraint use. Further, the organizations that comprise the VHSA promote seat belt use in communications with their stakeholders and constituents.
- GHSP conducts self-report surveys to determine the success of its media program in reaching its target audience.
- Child passenger safety (CPS) materials (brochures, newsletters) are standardized and available through the Department of Health.
- CPS posters have been developed in six languages to meet the needs of Vermont's refugee settlement area, and progress is being made to address language and cultural differences among those seeking driver's licenses.
- The Vermont State Police and the majority of other law enforcement agencies routinely report seat belt use in press releases reporting fatal traffic crashes.
- Some law enforcement agencies use social media to inform their followers of traffic safety concerns, from crash locations and detours to work zones and the importance of seat belt and child restraint use.
- The AOT, which has 6,500 Twitter and 12,500 Facebook followers, promotes CIOT on its social media sites during national mobilizations and posts social norming messages at other times of the year.

- The Occupant Protection Task Force (OP802), created to address low seat belt use in specific areas of the State, includes media and outreach specialists who develop press releases for use by law enforcement to support CIOT mobilizations.

#### **4B. CHALLENGES**

- GHSP has not developed a comprehensive year-round communications plan.
- GHSP currently does not have a staff member dedicated to communications, materials development and review, and outreach.
- The Vermont media markets do not cover all parts of the State, with several areas of the State receiving media either from Albany, New York, or Boston, Massachusetts, making it somewhat difficult to reach all Vermonters through traditional methods.
- In a telephone awareness survey, those who believed that they were very likely to get a ticket when not wearing a seat belt decreased from 17.2 percent to 12.6 percent since 2012, indicating that the enforcement message is not resonating with the public.
- There are no grant requirements that law enforcement participate in earned media as part of their CIOT grants, and little evidence was presented that law enforcement agencies augment their enforcement activities with media (including presentations to service clubs, schools, etc.) to support the CIOT mobilizations.
- Local law enforcement agencies are not encouraged to use social media or presentations to community groups, in the absence of a local media outlet, to augment their high-visibility enforcement activities.
- It does not appear that GHSP emphasizes the importance of the communications aspect of a high-visibility enforcement campaign during the annual state chiefs or sheriffs meetings.
- Media training to assist law enforcement executives in expanding their presence through innovative earned media approaches is not currently available.
- Vermont-specific materials developed are not tested with a representative sample of the intended audience to ensure that they will resonate and change behavior.
- There is no state road signage as motorists enter the State indicating that Vermont has a seat belt law.
- While there were several paid media programs geared to sporting events/venues, the material provided indicated that the advertising was limited to impaired driving.

- There are several websites in the State that address traffic safety issues, including <http://ghsp.vermont.gov>, <http://highwaysafety.vermont.gov>, <http://www.beseatsmart.org>, resulting in a cumbersome process for individuals seeking specific traffic safety information and data.
- GHSP's website is out of date and challenging to navigate.

#### 4C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Finalize and regularly update the Governor's Highway Safety Program website to include the following:
  - Up-to-date statistics on seat belt and child restraint use and crash/fatality data;
  - Success stories of local programs that have resulted in increased seat belt use, innovative approaches to reach the target audience, etc.;
  - Results of attitude and awareness studies on seat belt and child restraint use; and
  - Links to related websites and materials.
- **Develop a comprehensive communications plan to include, at a minimum, the following:**
  - **Goals and objectives of the communications program;**
  - **Objectives of the paid and earned media program(s);**
  - **Details of the primary and secondary target audiences and any specific regions of the State, based on data;**
  - **Requirements for any new creative that will be developed, including methods to test the messages to ensure they resonate with the target audience(s);**
  - **Media buy plans by media type and region of the State and target audience(s);**
  - **Collateral materials such as fact sheets, seat belt and child restraint use data, frequently asked questions, etc.;**
  - **Template materials to aid law enforcement agencies, partners, and stakeholders in promoting the *Click It or Ticket* mobilization as well as social norming messaging for use during non-high-visibility enforcement periods;**
  - **A timeline for the development and delivery of all communications; and**
  - **An ongoing evaluation plan to ensure that the messaging is effective, as well as to make mid-course corrections when it is found to be lacking.**
- **Assign and train an appropriate Governor's Highway Safety Program staff member to be responsible for communications, materials development and review, and outreach.**
- Install Agency of Transportation approved highway signs along major roadways bordering neighboring states, to remind inbound motorists to use seat belts.
- Add occupant protection in the State's paid sports media program.

- **Require that law enforcement agencies receiving *Click It or Ticket* grants include an earned media component and report their activities.**
- Provide information and training to law enforcement officials regarding the use of earned media, including social media platforms.
- Increase emphasis on earned media opportunities featuring individuals who have been saved by a seat belt or child safety restraint, particularly at times when there are no high-visibility enforcement mobilizations occurring.
- Increase the Governor's Highway Safety Program's presence on social media, promoting seat belt use, reporting use or non-use in reported serious or fatal crashes, highlighting people who have been saved by the belt, etc.

## 5. OCCUPANT PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN

### GUIDELINE:

*Each State should enact occupant protection laws that require the correct restraint of all children, in all seating positions and in every vehicle. Regulations and policies should exist that provide clear guidance to the motoring public concerning occupant protection for children. Each State should require that children birth to 16 years old (or the State's driving age) be properly restrained in the appropriate child restraint system or seat belt. Gaps in State child passenger safety and seat belt laws should be closed to ensure that all children are covered in all seating positions, with requirements for age-appropriate child restraint use. Key provisions of the law should include: driver responsibility for ensuring that children are properly restrained; proper restraint of children under 13 years of age in the rear seat (unless all available rear seats are occupied by younger children); a ban of passengers from the cargo areas of light trucks; and a limit on the number of passengers based on the number of available seat belts in the vehicle. To achieve these objectives, State occupant protection programs for children should:*

- *Collect and analyze key data elements in order to evaluate the program progress;*
- *Assure that adequate and accurate training is provided to the professionals who deliver and enforce the occupant protection programs for parents and caregivers;*
- *Assure that the capability exists to train and retain nationally certified child passenger safety technicians to address attrition of trainers or changing public demographics;*
- *Promote the use of child restraints and assure that a plan has been developed to provide an adequate number of inspection stations and clinics, which meet minimum quality criteria;*
- *Maintain a strong law enforcement program that includes vigorous enforcement of the child occupant protection laws;*
- *Enlist the support of the media to increase public awareness about child occupant protection laws and the use of child restraints. Strong efforts should be made to reach underserved populations;*
- *Assure that the child occupant protection programs at the local level are periodically assessed and that programs are designed to meet the unique demographic needs of the community;*
- *Establish the infrastructure to systematically coordinate the array of child occupant protection program components;*
- *Encourage law enforcement participation in the National Child Passenger Safety Certification (basic and in-service) training for law enforcement officers.*

### 5A. STRENGTHS

- The Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) has a contract with the Vermont Department of Health (DOH) to coordinate a statewide Occupant Protection for Children Program. The program, Be Seat Smart, is located in the Division of Emergency & Public Health Preparedness. The DOH is the central point of contact for obtaining child passenger safety (CPS) educational materials and supplies for car seat checkups and fitting stations. The DOH oversees the CPS Certification Program for Vermont, including training and retention of CPS technicians.

- Be Seat Smart has a website that lists materials, projects, presentations, car seat installation videos and other resources available through the program. A Calendar of Events is included, along with the process for becoming a certified CPS technician. The site provides a list of fitting/inspection stations where caregivers can have their car seats checked.
- Car seat vouchers are provided to the DOH's district offices that are then given to low-income families. The vouchers are redeemed at local fitting stations, where the parent/caregiver is trained on the proper use and installation of the car seat.
- Vermont has 46 permanent car seat fitting stations that are all listed on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Seat Inspection website. Many of them are located with police, fire, or ambulance services. The DOH also has a mobile car seat checkup vehicle that provides checkups in locations without a permanent station.
- All fitting stations use the same car seat checkup form, making it easy to tabulate overall misuse rates. The DOH provides additional resources to efficiently support the fitting stations.
- The number of certified CPS technicians has increased from 97 in 2013 to 139 in 2014 to approximately 160 in 2015. There are eight CPS instructors and four or five CPS technician proxies.
- The DOH sponsored a *Safe Travel for All Children: Transporting Children with Special Health Care Needs* course in 2015 and plans to sponsor another one in 2016. There are approximately 12 CPS technicians in the State with this additional training. Car beds are provided to hospitals as needed. The DOH provides technical assistance to families who need special car seats, through coordination between CPS technicians and durable medical supply companies.
- Three CPS certification courses were held in 2015 and three in 2014, resulting in 77 new CPS technicians. This is compared to one course each in 2012 and 2013, which resulted in 19 new CPS technicians. The DOH, through GHSP funding, provides CPS technician training at no cost to the participants to ensure geographic distribution of technicians across the state.
- Vermont maintained a higher-than-average CPS technician recertification rate of 75 percent in 2014. The national recertification rate was 58.5 percent.
- Vermont's CPS law requires children under age eight to ride in a child restraint and children ages eight through 17 to ride in a seat belt or child restraint. This law allows for primary enforcement.

- Special activities were held during September's Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week that included a gubernatorial proclamation, promotion of existing fitting stations, and a large enforcement event on Seat Check Saturday.
- The DOH will be collecting baseline data on new mothers' knowledge and proper use of infant car seats through the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) questionnaire.
- Vermont public schools and approximately 45 private companies offer driver education classes, which must be taken for students to receive their driver's license before age 18. These courses provide a heavy emphasis on occupant protection laws, crash dynamics, consequences of not buckling up, etc.

## **5B. CHALLENGES**

- It is difficult for some CPS technicians to complete the observed car seat installations required for recertification because of the limited number and/or location of CPS instructors and proxies.
- There is no statewide observation survey to measure restraint use for child occupants, ages 0-18.
- The role of public and private health care providers in CPS appears to be limited when compared to law enforcement, fire, and emergency agencies. The DOH has public health offices in 12 districts, none of which have certified CPS technicians on staff. There are only a few hospitals on the State's fitting station list.
- Other than a review of the CPS law, CPS is not currently included as part of the basic training for new law enforcement officers at the Vermont Police Academy.
- The CPS law does not include all components of the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations for safe transportation of children.
- There are no statewide projects, promotions, or outreach activities aimed specifically at increasing the use of booster seats by young children.
- While some partners do occupant protection presentations in schools in their communities, there is no standardized presentation or curriculum that outlines recommended content to be included and that provides consistent messaging.
- Hospital involvement in CPS is sporadic, with some having CPS technicians on staff who assist parents with seat installation, some providing educational materials or basic assistance, and some doing referrals only. It is unclear if all hospitals have discharge policies and what level of CPS training has been provided to their staff.

## 5C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Expand the network of child passenger safety technician proxies who are able to sign off on technician seat checks, ensuring that they are located in all geographic areas of the State.**
- Design and implement a statewide scientific observation survey to measure restraint use for child occupants, ages 0-18.
- **Expand the role of health care providers, both public and private, in child passenger safety (CPS) education, outreach, and CPS technician certification. This would provide another avenue for parents and caregivers to hear CPS messaging which could be integrated into health and medical visits. It could also help with the Department of Health goal of having fitting stations available to most families within a 30 minute drive.**
- Reinstigate a child passenger safety (CPS) component in the basic training course at the Vermont Police Academy, that could include a review of the CPS law, strategies for enforcement, best practices for buckling up children, basic elements of correct child restraint and seat belt use, and crash investigation of car seats in which a child was fatally or seriously injured.
- Enhance booster seat outreach to encourage correct use of booster seats and to clarify when a child is ready to move to a seat belt.
- **Develop a standardized presentation and support materials that can be offered to local law enforcement, district health offices, and other community organizations for use in doing school-based presentations, to assure a consistent message with accurate and up-to-date content.**
- Survey Vermont hospitals regarding their policies and practices related to the discharge of infants and children, premature baby car seat angle tolerance tests, staff training, educational materials used, car seat distribution, etc. Follow up with sample policies, updated materials if needed, and child passenger safety certification training or short awareness courses.

## 6. 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. To encourage statewide and community involvement, States should:*

- *Establish a coalition or task force of individuals and organizations to actively promote use of occupant protection systems;*
- *Create an effective communications network among coalition members to keep members informed about issues;*
- *Provide culturally relevant materials and resources necessary to conduct occupant protection education programs, especially directed toward young people, in local settings;*
- *Provide materials and resources necessary to conduct occupant protection education programs, especially directed toward specific cultural or otherwise diverse populations represented in the State and in its political subdivisions.*

*States should undertake a variety of outreach programs to achieve statewide and community involvement in occupant protection education, as described below. Programs should include outreach to diverse populations, health and medical communities, schools and employers.*

### **a. Diverse Populations**

*Each State should work closely with individuals and organizations that represent the various ethnic and cultural populations reflected in State demographics. Individuals from these groups might not be reached through traditional communication markets. Community leaders and representatives from the various ethnic and cultural groups and organizations will help States to increase the use of child safety seats and seat belts. The State should:*

- *Evaluate the need for, and provide, if necessary, materials and resources in multiple languages;*
- *Collect and analyze data on fatalities and injuries in diverse communities;*
- *Ensure representation of diverse groups on State occupant protection coalitions and other work groups;*
- *Provide guidance to grantees on conducting outreach in diverse communities;*
- *Utilize leaders from diverse communities as spokespeople to promote seat belt use and child safety seat;*
- *Conduct outreach efforts to diverse organizations and populations during law enforcement mobilization periods.*

**b. Health and Medical Communities**

*Each State should integrate occupant protection into health programs. The failure of drivers and passengers to use occupant protection systems is a major public health problem that must be recognized by the medical and health care communities. The SHSO, the State Health Department and other State or local medical organizations should collaborate in developing programs that:*

- *Integrate occupant protection into professional health training curricula and comprehensive public health planning;*
- *Promote occupant protection systems as a health promotion/injury prevention measure;*
- *Require public health and medical personnel to use available motor vehicle occupant protection systems during work hours;*
- *Provide technical assistance and education about the importance of motor vehicle occupant protection to primary caregivers (e.g., doctors, nurses, clinic staff);*
- *Include questions about seat belt use in health risk appraisals;*
- *Utilize health care providers as visible public spokespeople for seat belt and child safety seat use;*
- *Provide information about the availability of child safety seats at, and integrate child safety seat inspections into, maternity hospitals and other prenatal and natal care centers;*
- *Collect, analyze and publicize data on additional injuries and medical expenses resulting from non-use of occupant protection devices.*

**c. Schools**

*Each State should encourage local school boards and educators to incorporate occupant protection education into school curricula. The SHSO in cooperation with the State Department of Education should:*

- *Ensure that highway safety and traffic-related injury control, in general, and occupant protection, in particular, are included in the State-approved K-12 health and safety education curricula and textbooks;*
- *Establish and enforce written policies requiring that school employees use seat belts when operating a motor vehicle on the job; and*
- *Encourage active promotion of regular seat belt use through classroom and extracurricular activities as well as in school-based health clinics; and*
- *Work with School Resource Officers (SROs) to promote seat belt use among high school students;*
- *Establish and enforce written school policies that require students driving to and from school to wear seat belts. Violation of these policies should result in revocation of parking or other campus privileges for a stated period of time.*

#### **d. Employers**

*Each State and local subdivision should encourage all employers to require seat belt use on the job as a condition of employment. Private sector employers should follow the lead of Federal and State government employers and comply with Executive Order 13043, “Increasing Seat Belt Use in the United States” as well as all applicable Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Regulations or Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations requiring private business employees to use seat belts on the job. All employers should:*

- *Establish and enforce a seat belt use policy with sanctions for non-use;*
- *Conduct occupant protection education programs for employees on their seat belt use policies and the safety benefits of motor vehicle occupant protection devices.*

### **6A. STRENGTHS**

- In 2012, the Vermont Highway Safety Alliance (VHSA), a network of diverse organizations, was devised whose mission is to promote strategies to reduce crashes on Vermont’s roadways through the development and support of partnerships and coalitions. This organization, comprised of more than 35 public and private organizations representing health, education, youth, criminal justice, business and industry, governmental entities, and more, has worked to identify Vermont’s most critical needs in traffic safety, and has identified actions to reduce crashes and resultant injury and/or death in the State. VHSA successes include:
  - The development of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP), which identifies traffic safety critical emphasis areas and action plans to address each;
  - Coordination of eight regional highway safety forums that address safety at the local level;
  - Formation of the OP802 subcommittee to provide direct assistance to targeted regions in the State with lower seat belt use rates; and
  - A website that contains a wealth of information and resources addressing a variety of highway safety topics, including seat belts and child restraint systems.
- The Vermont Department of Health maintains an active child passenger safety (CPS) program, and maintains a website ([www.beseatsmart.org](http://www.beseatsmart.org)) that provides the CPS law, information and materials regarding proper child restraint use, locations and hours of fitting stations, and more.
- The Governor’s Highway Safety Program (GHSP), other state agencies, and partners make use of materials developed and pilot tested by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and national organizations such as the National Safety Council, AARP, and others.
- Vermont has developed CPS materials in six languages to meet the needs of its refugee settlement populations, and is currently working to develop linguistically and culturally relevant materials for those interested in obtaining driver’s licenses.

- The Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles provides a wealth of information on traffic safety for teens and their parents in its driver education programs.
- The Associated General Contractors of Vermont (AGC/VT) has an aggressive outreach program, “Project RoadSafe,” which includes seat belts in its training programs. According to the information provided, all businesses in AGC/VT have mandatory seat belt use policies for their employees driving any vehicle (company owned or private) for company business.
- The Vermont Agency on Transportation (AOT) has 6,500 Twitter and 12,500 Facebook followers to whom traffic safety messages, including seat belt use, are routinely directed.
- The State Police and some county sheriffs and municipal law enforcement agencies provide traffic safety education programs in schools that include, in part, the necessity for seat belt use whether a driver or passenger.
- A number of organizations participate in fairs and festivals throughout the State, hosting exhibits on traffic safety, including seat belts and child restraint systems.

## **6B. CHALLENGES**

- While there is extensive collaboration between organizations at the state level, there appears to be few outreach strategies available to the organizations to implement at the local level.
- There are no standardized occupant protection outreach materials, based on current data, for use by partners to reach out to their constituents at the regional and local levels.
- Other than fitting stations, there appears to be little consistency in CPS outreach efforts among local programs within the State.
- There are no state-approved K-12 health and safety education curricula on seat belts and child restraint system use.
- There is no standardized occupant protection lesson plan or curriculum for law enforcement to use in their presentations at any educational level from K-12.
- While there are several initiatives to reach out to the refugee settlement population in the State, there is no formal process to work with local organizations or community champions that represent ethnic and cultural populations in the State to ensure consistency in occupant protection messaging and materials.

- While it was noted that different organizations reach out to youth groups, there is insufficient representation of youth in the development of occupant protection programs and materials.
- Although identified as a priority in the SHSP and because Vermont has a secondary seat belt law, occupant protection does not receive the same level of attention as impaired driving (alcohol/drugs), distracted driving, or speeding in outreach programs.

## 6C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Identify, or develop and provide, online template occupant protection related materials (e.g., frequently asked questions, PowerPoint presentations, state and local data) for use by partners in formal presentations, small group discussions, or one-on-one conversations to ensure consistency of messaging across the State.**
- Create occupant protection materials that are culturally and linguistically appropriate, in collaboration with organizations or champions that represent the refugee settlement population or other minority groups.
- Establish, in conjunction with the Department of Health, model programs and materials for local child passenger safety partners to use in their day-to-day operations.
- **Expand collaboration with youth groups (e.g., Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), Family Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)) and statewide youth organizations (e.g., Youth Safety Council) to obtain insights regarding innovative outreach methods, to have a ready source to focus test materials, and to ensure buy-in for evidence-based programs targeting young people.**
- Develop and promote standardized occupant protection presentation materials for K-12 educational levels for use by health and safety instructors and law enforcement personnel.
- During presentations regarding impaired driving, speeding, and distracted driving, include a reminder that if not buckled up when stopped for these or other offenses, there will be two offenses and offenders will receive two citations.

## 7. DATA AND EVALUATION

### GUIDELINE:

*Each State should access and analyze reliable data sources for problem identification and program planning. Each State should conduct several different types of evaluation to effectively measure progress and to plan and implement new program strategies. Program management should:*

- *Conduct and publicize at least one statewide observational survey of seat belt and child safety seat use annually, making every effort to ensure that it meets current, applicable Federal guidelines;*
- *Maintain trend data on child safety seat use, seat belt use and air bag deployment in fatal crashes;*
- *Identify high-risk populations through observational usage surveys and crash statistics;*
- *Conduct and publicize statewide surveys of public knowledge and attitudes about occupant protection laws and systems;*
- *Obtain monthly or quarterly data from law enforcement agencies on the number of seat belt and child passenger safety citations and convictions;*
- *Evaluate the use of program resources and the effectiveness of existing general communication as well as special/high-risk population education programs;*
- *Obtain data on morbidity, as well as the estimated cost of crashes, and determine the relation of injury to seat belt use and non-use;*
- *Ensure that evaluation results are an integral part of new program planning and problem identification.*

### 7A. STRENGTHS

- The Vermont Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) has a current National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) approved direct observational survey design, under the new Uniform Criteria for State Observational Surveys for Seat Belt Use, as defined in the Federal Register Volume 76, Number 63. The most recent report is named *Vermont 2015 Annual Seat Belt Use Survey*.
- GHSP uses the results from the annual seat belt survey to identify low belt use counties and regions, and also high risk demographic populations.
- GHSP has developed and implemented the new Vermont Public Crash Data Query Tool which is available online.
- GHSP is developing and is near completion of an extensive Emergency Medical Services (EMS) database, Statewide Incident Reporting Network (SIREN).
- GHSP conducts an annual self-report survey to measure knowledge and attitudes about occupant protection laws and systems.

- Citation data are available to the State for both seat belt and child passenger safety violations monthly, yearly, and upon request.
- Student groups within Vermont conduct seat belt surveys as part of their school projects, demonstrating a commitment to occupant protection.
- GHSP has been communicating with students as a strategy for influencing adults to buckle up.

## **7B. CHALLENGES**

- There is currently no systematic, scientific, statewide occupant restraint rate data for child passengers covered under the primary law, ages 0-18.
- A limited number of questions are included in the annual self-report survey, regarding the topic of occupant protection.
- Though citation data are available for both seat belt and child passenger safety violations, conviction data are not.
- There are currently no systematic evaluation strategies or performance measures embedded in the occupant protection law enforcement grants.
- Student seat belt surveys vary in method from school to school and are usually not conducted as part of an intervention assessment (i.e., measure (establish a baseline), intervene, and measure again).
- No information is systematically available to periodically monitor the beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes of students regarding occupant protection issues.
- No Vermont-specific costs of crashes or injuries related to seat belt use and non-use are currently available.
- Though extensive data sets exist in the State, they are not combined into a comprehensive whole, allowing for a more complete picture from which to derive targets, strategies for intervention, and subsequent outcomes.

## **7C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **Design and implement a science-based, statewide child passenger safety (CPS) survey to monitor occupant restraint use rate data for child passengers covered under the primary CPS law, ages 0-18, with the ability to track results separately among children ages 0-4, elementary, middle school/junior high, and high school**

**students, including teen drivers.**

- Add additional self-report survey questions that facilitate occupant protection program evaluation to further assess the reasons for seat belt use and non-use; the saturation of specific media messages (e.g., market saturation of the *Click It or Ticket* message); attitudes toward enforcement and reasonable, fair, and effective fines; etc. Questions could alternate from year-to-year to cover more topics while maintaining a shorter, more public-friendly survey.
- Develop a system to monitor seat belt and child passenger safety convictions quarterly and by county or region, as appropriate.
- **Include systematic evaluation strategies as a requirement of occupant protection law enforcement grants, including a pre-enforcement survey and a post-enforcement survey. Also, set reasonable performance measures that mirror statewide Highway Safety Plan goals.**
- Standardize a school survey instrument and implement a pre-intervene-post model. Consider gathering resulting pre- and post-survey data centrally to produce a database which can be summarized on a larger scale and eventually divided into geographic regions.
- Develop and implement an annual self-report student survey to monitor the beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes of students regarding occupant protection issues.
- Establish a group to assemble data to estimate the cost of crashes and injuries, in the context of occupant protection use, non-use, and misuse, to be used for consistent messaging with the public, high risk populations, and the legislature.
- **Combine available and new data sets to construct a more comprehensive occupant protection picture of the State, and make those results available to partners, stakeholders, and the public. Consider working with a research-capable partner, accessing their expertise to analyze the data to periodically identify a new question or focus. As an example, try changing the perception that it is unlikely to get a citation for non-belt use. Repeatedly assess, measure (establish a baseline), intervene, and measure again, repeating the cycle as necessary.**

# Occupant Protection Assessment 2016

## Vermont Governor's Highway Safety Program

Sunday, January 24, 2016

### **7:30 PM - 8:30 PM Greetings and Introductions**

- Vermont Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) and Panel Members
- Discuss changes in Vermont GHSP Structure (DPS to AOT)
- Problem Identification
- Agenda review and changes
- State concerns, issues, interests

Monday, January 25, 2016

### **8:00 AM - 8:30 AM Welcome all to the 2016 Occupant Protection**

#### **Assessment Introductions and Orientation**

- Scott Davidson, Chief, Vermont Governor's Highway Safety Program
- Jim Baraw, Governor's Highway Safety Program, Program Coordinator

### **8:30 AM - 10:00 AM Session I - Occupant Protection Program Management**

#### **Program Overview**

- Scott Davidson, Chief, Vermont GHSP

#### **Law Enforcement Grants**

- Betsy Ross, GHSP Program Coordinator
- Evelyn McFarlane, GHSP Program Coordinator

#### **Community Education Grants**

- Jim Baraw, GHSP Program Coordinator

#### **Grants Management**

- Danielle Record, GHSP Grants Management Specialist

**10:00 AM - 10:15 AM BREAK**

**10:15 AM - 12:15 PM Session II - Legislation, Regulation, and Policy**

- Commissioner Robert Ide, Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles
- Bruce Nyquist, VTrans, Office of Highway Safety
- Glen Button, VHSA Chair
- Roger Thompson, ITS & Safety Engineer
- Ted Minall, NHTSA, R-1 LEL Contractor
- Tom Fields, Vermont GHSP LE Liaison (Southern VT)

**12:15 PM - 1:15 PM LUNCH**

**1:15 PM - 3:15 PM Session III - Law Enforcement**

- Tom Fields, Vermont GHSP LE Liaison (Southern VT)
- John Filipek, Vermont GHSP LE Liaison (Northern VT)
- John Flannigan, Lieutenant, Vermont State Police
- Bill Bohnyak, Sheriff, Orange County Sheriff's Department
- Jake Elovirta, Colonel, Chief of Safety, Department of Motor Vehicles
- Al Fortin, Sergeant, Shelburne Police Department
- Kevin Geno, Commander, Rutland City Police Department (*via phone*)
- Mandy White, VTrans, Crash Data Analyst
- Betsy Ross, GHSP Program. Coordinator

**3:15 PM - 3:30 PM BREAK**

**3:30 PM - 4:30 PM Session III - Law Enforcement (Continued)**

**Tuesday, January 26, 2016**

**9:00 AM - 10:15 AM Session IV - Communication Program**

- Scott Davidson, Chief, Vermont GHSP
- Erik Filkorn, Communications Director, AOT
- Betsy Ross, GHSP Program. Coordinator
- Paula Bazluka, VP, Media Director, HMC Advertising
- Tom Fields, Vermont GHSP LE Liaison (Message Boards)

**10:15 AM - 10:30 AM BREAK**

**10:30 AM - 11:30 AM Session IV - Communication Program (Continued)**

**11:30 AM - 12:15 PM Session V - Data and Evaluation Program**

- Chris Bell, Vermont Department of Health
- Emma Gauze, Vermont Department of Health
- Samantha Tilton, UVM Transportation Research
- Mandy White, Highway Safety, Crash Data Analyst
- Tom Fields, Vermont GHSP LE Liaison (Southern VT)
- Jerry Lindsley, Center for Research & Public Policy (*via phone*)

**12:20 PM - 1:20 PM LUNCH**

**1:20 PM – 1:55 PM Session V - Data and Evaluation Program (Continued)**

**1:55 PM - 2:00 PM BREAK**

**2:00 PM – 4:00 PM Session VI - Occupant Protection for Children**

- Tanya Wells, Vermont Department of Health, CPS Program
- Chris Bell, Vermont Department of Health
- James Baraw, Vermont GHSP, Program Coordinator, Education
- Nancy Andrus, Vermont DMV, Driver Education (*via phone*)

**Law Enforcement Techs:**

- Sheriff Ray Allen, Grand Isle County Sheriff's office (*via phone*)
- Donna Polk, Grand Isle County Sheriff's office (*via phone*)
- Sergeant Allen Fortin, Shelburne Police Department

**EMS Techs:**

- Jay Wood, Paramedic, Newport Ambulance Service

**Health & Nurses:**

- Sandy Peplau, CPS technician, Springfield Hospital (*via phone*)
- Nancy Klopfenstein, RN, Tapestry Midwifery Middlebury

## Wednesday, January 27, 2016

### **9:00 AM - 10:25 AM Session VII - Outreach Programs**

- Susan Clark, Vermont AOT, Highway Safety/VHSA

#### **Diverse Populations:**

- Dave Peters, AARP

#### **Schools:**

- Nancy Andrus, Driver Training Coordinator, Vermont DMV
- Pat McManamon (School Bus/DMV)
- Lt. Dave Eggum, Orange County

#### **Employers:**

- Norman James, Associated General Contractors, Workplace Safety

### **10:25 AM - 10:50 AM BREAK**

### **10:50 AM - 12:10 PM Session VII - Outreach Programs (Continued)**

### **12:10 PM - 1:15 PM LUNCH**

### **1:15 PM - 1:30 PM Session V - Data and Evaluation Program (Continued)**

- Gabrielle Lapointe, Vermont Traffic Ticket Bureau (*via phone*)

### **1:30 PM – 2:10 PM Session VIII - Actions Taken - 2013 OP Assessment**

- Scott Davidson, Chief, Vermont GHSP
- Betsy Ross, GHSP Program Coordinator
- Evelyn McFarland, GHSP Program Coordinator
- Jim Baraw, GHSP Program Coordinator
- Danielle Record, GHSP Grants Management Specialist
- Tom Fields, Vermont GHSP LE Liaison (Southern Vermont)
- John Filipek, Vermont GHSP LE Liaison (Northern Vermont)

**2:10 PM – Close Team Member Discussion, Deliberation, and Report Preparation**

Thursday, January 28, 2016

**All Day Team Member Discussion, Deliberation, and Report Preparation**

Friday, January 29, 2016

**9:00 AM - Close Final Report Out**

## ASSESSMENT TEAM CREDENTIALS

### ROBERTA C. MAYER

[robinmayer1@aol.com](mailto:robinmayer1@aol.com)

Roberta (Robin) Mayer is currently Principal at Mayer & Associates strategic communications consulting firm. She has participated in a number of assessments of State occupant protection and impaired driving programs; has assisted in the development and updating of traffic safety curricula, websites, and guidebooks on a variety of topics; and has provided training on social media for state and local governmental agencies. She is a communications/outreach consultant to the Orton Family Foundation; serves as the director of communications and public relations for the *Damariscotta Pumpkinfest & Regatta*; provides services as a copywriter, technical editor, and social media trainer; and is a contributing writer for several newspapers.

In 2015 Mayer was re-elected to a three-year term of the Damariscotta, Maine, Board of Selectmen, and currently serves as its chairman.

Prior to opening her consulting firm, Mayer retired from NHTSA as its Chief of the Office of Consumer Information, where she was responsible for the development and implementation of NHTSA's national media campaigns and consumer information and materials for both behavioral and motor vehicle programs. She managed the *Click It or Ticket* and "Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest." advertising campaigns at the national level (English and Spanish), and provided technical assistance to States in the development and placement of State-specific ads in local media. She also led the development of NHTSA's Diversity Summit, bringing together 100 participants representing 75 multicultural organizations to engage them in traffic safety initiatives. During her 20+ year tenure at NHTSA, she also served as the Chief of the Impaired Driving Division, Chief of the National Outreach Division, Policy Advisor, and Program Analyst/Highway Safety Specialist.

Prior to joining NHTSA, Mayer was a Senior Program Analyst with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), during which time she was responsible for highway safety programs including Standardized Field Sobriety Test training and related programs, occupant protection communications, police pursuit policies, and assessments of law enforcement agencies' programs. She was involved in the development of the initial traffic standards for law enforcement agency accreditation (which came to be known as CLEA standards). She was also responsible for international policing activities, women in law enforcement, and human factors programs including child abuse, hostage negotiations, and international terrorism.

Mayer graduated from Frostburg State University with a degree in English Education, and has worked toward a Masters of Education at Bowie State University in Maryland.

**CAROL MEIDINGER**

[carolm@bektel.com](mailto:carolm@bektel.com)

Carol Meidinger is a child passenger safety consultant and certified instructor from North Dakota. She has been involved in child passenger safety for over 35 years. From 1985 through 2005, Carol was the director of the Injury Prevention Program in the North Dakota Department of Health. Within the Injury Prevention Program, Carol coordinated a statewide child passenger safety program that involved grants administration, public information and education, training and technical assistance, advocacy, car seat distribution, and public policy development and implementation.

As a volunteer, Carol has been actively involved in the legislative process and was a key player in obtaining passage and upgrading of North Dakota's child passenger safety law, its seat belt law and other injury prevention laws.

Carol has served on several national task forces and committees, including NHTSA's "Patterns for Life" team, GHSA's Child Occupant Protection Committee, and the Safe Kids State Coordinator Task Force. Over her career, Carol has been recognized for her work in injury prevention with awards from the North Dakota Public Health Association, National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition, American Public Health Association, Aberdeen Area Indian Health Service, National Governor's Highway Safety Association (Peter O'Rourke Award), North Dakota Medical Association and the National Highway Traffic Administration (Public Service Award).

Although retired from her position in the North Dakota Department of Health, Carol remains active in the injury prevention field and is a member of the North Dakota Child Fatality Review Panel, the Bismarck-Mandan Safety Council and the North Dakota Child Passenger Safety Advisory Committee. From 2012 to 2015, Carol served on the National Child Passenger Safety Board, holding the Advocate position.

**DANIEL H. SCHULTE**

[dschulte@dcca.org](mailto:dschulte@dcca.org)

Dan Schulte has been the Director of Research and Evaluation Services for DCCCA, Inc., since 1990.

Currently, he serves as a technical advisor and program evaluator for the Kansas Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Safety and Technology. He has also been the Project Director of the Kansas Occupant Protection Observational Surveys, and the Kansas Direct Observation Child Safety Seat Surveys since 2002. He also currently provides technical assistance to the Kansas Traffic Safety Resource Office (KTSRO), and Project S.A.F.E. (*Seatbelts Are For Everyone*).

Previous projects include serving as program evaluator of the Kansas Drunk Driving Prevention Program, the Youth Alcohol Media Campaign, the Kansas Safety Belt Education Office, the Wichita School Traffic Officer Program, and the Governor's Center for Teen Leadership. He conducted the Statewide Student Survey of Traffic Safety Issues and was also a NHTSA Region VII Data Contractor.

**JANA SIMPLER**

[jana.simpler@state.de.us](mailto:jana.simpler@state.de.us)

Jana Simpler joined the Delaware Office of Highway Safety in 1997; was promoted to the Deputy Director in 2000; and served as the Occupant Protection Coordinator, Aggressive Driving Coordinator, and the Traffic Records Coordinator. Prior to being selected to serve as the Director in 2010, Jana served on the Board of the Association of Transportation Safety Information Professionals from 2005-2009 and as co-chair of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan. She was responsible for the management of most of the federal funding sources and served as the senior policy advisor to the Director for most of her career.

Since 2010, she has served as the Governor's Highway Safety Association (GHSA) Region 3 representative to the Board, participated as a faculty member for the GHSA Executive Seminar, and currently serves on the GHSA Board as the Secretary as well as Chair of the Federal Relations Committee. As Director, Jana is responsible for the direction, management, and administration of the operations and programs of the Office of Highway Safety in accordance with Federal and state rules, regulations, and guidelines. She is responsible for monitoring state and federal legislation that impacts highway safety and the State of Delaware and is responsible for a staff of seven full-time and four part-time positions.

**STEPHEN WALSH**

[sjw2040@yahoo.com](mailto:sjw2040@yahoo.com)

Lieutenant Stephen Walsh retired from the Massachusetts State Police in December 2015, after 35 years of State and municipal law enforcement experience principally focused on the deployment and administration of traffic investigations/enforcement and highway safety initiatives. He currently serves as a Highway Safety Research Consultant and a Subject Matter Expert for several NHTSA initiatives and contracted State Assessments, particularly in the areas of impaired driving, distracted driving, and occupant protection. He is a U.S. Army veteran and holds a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice.

As the Commanding Officer of the Andover barracks of the Massachusetts State Police he conducted a two year NHTSA coordinated *Distracted Driving* pilot initiative aimed at determining if law enforcement can effectively enforce current laws focused on distracted driving and if high visibility enforcement combined with an effective media campaign will reduce instances of distracted driving. As the Chief of Staff to the Commander of the Division of Field Services of the Massachusetts State Police, he served as the Officer in Charge of the Department's Traffic Programs Section he was responsible for formulating and instituting statewide policies and strategies associated with the deployment of highway safety mobilizations using *Compstat* models via *Intelligence Led Policing* and *Data Driven Approaches to Crime & Traffic Safety*.

As the NHTSA liaison to the Massachusetts State Police, his duties included grant procurement and management, resource allocation, mobilization assessment, and after action reporting. These initiatives included training, operational planning, deployment, and reporting on the State's highway safety initiatives, including the highly successful sobriety checkpoint program, of which he was the Officer in Charge of hundreds of checkpoints. He further served as the liaison to several private and public partners, including MADD, AAA, NSC, CARE, and the State's *Strategic Highway Safety Plan* and *Traffic Incident Management Committee*. He was the key author to three award winning *IACP National Law Enforcement Challenge* submissions, as well as the *2009 Martha Irwin Award for Highway Safety Initiatives*.

Earlier in his career he was assigned to the Collision Analysis and Reconstruction Section where he conducted and supervised thousands of fatal motor vehicle crash investigations and prosecutions. Analyzing the causative factors that led to these fatal crashes formed the foundation for strategies he later deployed to promote compliance with traffic laws through education, enforcement, and engineering.