

AAA Asserts Greatest Health Threat To Latino Children Is Motor Vehicle Crashes

WASHINGTON, D.C. (*Business Wire*) October 23 — In a letter published today in the nation's leading medical journal, AAA noted that a prominent study on the health issues of Latino children failed to mention the number one public health threat to this population — car crashes.

As one of the foremost advocates of traffic safety, AAA submitted the letter published in today's *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* to call specific attention to the disproportionately high death rate of Latino children in motor vehicle crashes. Latino children die in crashes at rates up to 60 percent higher than non-Latino white children.

"Medical studies assessing children's

health risks often overlook motor vehicle-related injuries even though they are the leading cause of death for children," said Bella Dinh-Zarr, PhD, MPH, AAA director of Traffic Safety Policy and the lead author of the letter to the editor. "AAA and our public health and medical colleagues across the country wrote this letter to highlight injuries as an unrecognized public health issue for Latino children, but it is a neglected issue for all ethnicities and all ages. We hope this will encourage everyone in the medical community to join the efforts to reduce the loss of 42,000 people every year on our nation's highways.

"Doctors and nurses are invaluable advocates for traffic safety. When pediatri-

cians tell parents how to keep their children healthy, parents listen. Adding traffic safety messages to doctors' standard advice for parents will save many young lives."

In 2000, motor vehicle crashes killed 2,343 children age 14 and under — about six kids every day. Nearly 300,000 more children — almost 800 every day — were injured.

"There are especially great opportunities to save lives in the Latino community," said Dinh-Zarr. "Efforts to increase seat belt use among Latino parents, for example, will produce higher seat belt and child seat usage — and fewer deaths and injuries — for parents and children."

AAA, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and other groups are working to overcome cultural and linguistic barriers by offering educational literature in Spanish. Additionally, AAA is helping to develop a child passenger safety course in Spanish to be launched in 2003.

AAA launched a national, multi-year child passenger safety campaign in March 2002 as part of its centennial celebration. Called "Seated Safe and Secure," the major focus is to change the behavior of parents through public awareness as well as strengthen child passenger safety laws.

"This is a call to action for all of us — in public health, traffic safety, and medicine — to join forces to combat the public health crisis of traffic deaths," said Dinh-Zarr.

As North America's largest motoring and leisure travel organization, AAA provides its 45 million members with travel, insurance, financial and automotive-related services. Since its founding in 1902, the not-for-profit, fully tax paying AAA has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers.

AAA Reports Study On ADHD And Disproportionate Share Of Accidents, Deaths By Teen Drivers Under Medication

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Studies conducted for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, according to a report by the American Automobile Association, indicate that the presence of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) among adolescents is a significant contributor to the disproportionate share of overall and fatal automobile accidents in the nation.

The first study to compare impact of different stimulant medications on driving performance, AAA reports, found that teens taking a particular once-daily medication:

- Drove with significantly less erratic or variable speed

- Used their brakes more appropriately
- Missed fewer stop signals
- Driving performance at 8:00 pm — a time when many teens are likely to be driving — was significantly better

Conversely, with three daily doses of methylphenidate, teens tended to:

- have more high-speed collisions
- drive off the road more often
- more frequently crossed the midline

Researchers used a combination of real-world driving experience and state-of-the-art driving simulation to evaluate performance. The study will be presented at a national meeting of child and adolescent psychiatrists.

TEENAGERS + DRIVING + ADHD — FACT SHEET

- According to the American Automobile Association, teenagers account for only seven percent of all drivers, yet they are involved in 14 percent of all fatal auto accidents and 20 percent of all accidents.

- According to the National Safety Council, 16-year-olds have 40 crashes per 100 licensed drivers each year, compared with a rate of nine crashes per licensed driver in the 45- to 54-year-old age group. In some years, the fatal involvement rate for teen drivers is three times higher than the overall rate. And darkness presents yet another risk factor: 41 percent of fatal crashes involving teenagers occur at night-time, between 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

- According to the National Center for Health Statistics, motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death for teenagers. Studies conducted for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) indicate the presence of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) contributes significantly to this statistic and

that failure to obey traffic signals or officer directions accounts for one in five fatal crashes.

- Research shows that young drivers with ADHD are two to four times more likely to have a motor vehicle accident, are more than three times as likely to be injured, and are four times more likely to be at fault for such accidents compared to young drivers without ADHD.

- Adolescents with ADHD are more likely to engage in risky driving behaviors that merit the attention of law enforcement. They are two to six times more likely to be given speeding violations, receive four to five times the number of violations, and are six to eight times more likely to have their license suspended than comparable young drivers without ADHD.

- The impact of ADHD on driving is not limited to boys. Scientific studies have also found that ADHD is significantly associated with increased risk for traffic accidents and traffic convictions in females.

Manero Joins Alliance As Director Of Federal Public Affairs In D.C.

DOWNERS GROVE, Ill. — Joseph A. Manero has joined the Alliance of American Insurers as director of federal public affairs in the association's Washington, D.C., office. In his new position, Manero will be responsible for public affairs, media relations and communications related to the alliance's policy positions and issues advocacy in the nation's capitol. He will report Roger Morris, vice president of public affairs in the Downers Grove, Illinois headquarters of the alliance.

Manero comes to the alliance from the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) in Washington where he was political and public affairs manager.

