

# SafetyBeltSafe News

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May 2009

## Obama Nominates Longtime Safety Advocate to Head NHTSA

Charles “Chuck” Hurley, most recently CEO of MADD since 2005, has just been nominated by President Obama to head National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Hurley has a long history of action in child passenger safety (CPS), safety belt and graduated-license legislation, support for law enforcement to bring legislative goals home to the public, and breathalyzer-equipped vehicles for even 1<sup>st</sup>-time impaired driving violators. SBS USA has long teamed with Chuck on issues related to protecting children and is honored to have him on our Advisory Board.

Recently, Hurley joined CPS advocates at the SBS Social at Lifesavers for discussions of important steps to inform professionals and the public that children lost as the result of an impaired driver are most likely to be unrestrained in that driver’s vehicle. Revealed in research by Kyran Quinlan, MD, this finding often surprises safety advocates *and* social service professionals.

Hurley agreed that those charged with working with impaired drivers and their family members need to be alert to this risk.

Hurley, who worked at the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) and headed the National Safety Council, was described by the current NSC head, Janet Froetscher, as a “passionate, research-based leader” which meshes with our long experience with Chuck.

We invite anyone who wishes to comment on the nomination to reach the chairs of the Commerce Committee and Surface Transportation subcommittee at <http://commerce.senate.gov/public/>. Imagine having a CPS advocate heading NHTSA again!

## Research Report Underscores 5-Step Test

Four research approaches on the “booster cohort” were reported by a Lifesavers conference panel. Larry Decina, TransAnalytics, studied effectiveness of brief training to encourage CPS law enforcement in different environments. Checkpoints with spotters worked well as did focusing on locales most likely to find kids in cars. Providing overtime funds enabled officers to dedicate time to finding kids at risk.

Joseph O’Neil, MD, MPH of Riley Children’s Hospital, studied misuse of boosters by observing kids in cars at fast-food locations in Indiana. As noted in *SBS News*, 3/09, misuse is rampant. The younger the child and driver, the more likely was misuse. Active supervision of kids in back is needed.

Miriam Manary, PhD of University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute, reviewed the detailed study of fit on kids of varied sizes/ages in many boosters in various vehicles. The data indicate the same child will have markedly different fit, depending on booster design and shoulder belt D-ring location. She concluded the best way to determine fit, either in a booster or a belt alone, is the 5-Step Test. (See #630, [www.carseat.org](http://www.carseat.org).)

Chris Sherwood, PhD of IIHS reported on the booster assessment study released in 10/08. (See 11/08 *SBS News*.) Abdominal injuries peak from ages 6-9; a booster that directs the belt over the tops of the thighs usually will fit at the shoulder as well. Ratings of locations of belt at neck/shoulder and lap were quantified; one booster put the lap belt so far forward that slack was introduced. The rating program will go on until all boosters on the market offer reasonable fit.

## THANK YOU

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## Safety Seat Checkup Week: Thanks to All!

April 25 was a lively day at Petersen Automotive Museum with 10 teams of checkers working and 33 volunteers from teens to seniors smoothing the way. The 50 families from 12 cities, including 23 different zip codes in L.A. itself, brought 63 safety seats in 55 vehicles.

The incorrect use rate was 94%, 161 errors were noted with 1 to 10 errors per seat. Among the highest concerns were 2 seats LATCHed on only one side, an infant riding forward facing, and another breast-feeding in arms!

Bucklebear visited children, families visited the museum, and checkers appreciated snacks and quick lunch breaks, thanks to Advisory Board member Michael Sachs, MD, who called from Israel to ensure that everyone was fed!

Sadly, the week was marred by the loss of a mother and 9 year old, unrestrained in a 6-vehicle collision en route to school, and a 3 year old ejected from his dad's truck due to alleged driving while impaired. In the first crash, 2 younger children survived in their safety seats.

## CALENDAR

### CONFERENCE

**\*8/29-31:** Kidz in Motion, Fort Worth, TX. ([www.kidzinmotion.org](http://www.kidzinmotion.org))

**CERTIFICATION TRAINING**  
*through SBS USA. Call Cheryl Kim, 626/968-6555, for details.*

- \*6/18 & 19, 22 & 23:** South Los Angeles, with Safety Seat Checkup on:
- \*6/24** Call for location. *Checkers needed.*

## Special Funding for Projects

*American Honda Motors* made a special gift of \$15,000 to supplement their ongoing \$1500 monthly contribution to help SBS USA maintain and expand [www.carseat.org](http://www.carseat.org) and continue outreach to professionals, like child care providers, who transport children as part of their work life but often have no cps training.

This challenging effort is rewarding and takes us to events, such as the South Central Training and Research Consortium Conference. There, SBS USA exhibited and was permitted to address the conference luncheon with the basics of cps, and for Pathways conference, especially focused on care of children with special challenges, SBS USA shared materials. Finding ways to provide essential hands-on training is an ongoing effort.

The Web site receives 40-65,000 requests weekly with almost 2000 Technician-member logins monthly. Keeping the material current and expanding coverage take ongoing care.

## Toyota Comes Through for the Safe Ride Helpline!

A special thanks for the \$22,000 gift goes to *Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A.* for generously supporting outreach and services beyond California.

Serving the public and professionals nationally not only provides resources but also keeps SBS USA on top of emerging issues from the grassroots.

**You can help SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. save children's lives with your membership or donation.**

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 All memberships/subscriptions include *SafetyBeltSafe News*, which qualifies for 1 Continuing Education Unit per year for re-certifying Technicians with subscriber code. \$200 or more includes *Safe Ride News*.

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## Department of Transportation Backs Higher Standards for Safety Seats

Soon after DOT Secretary Ray LaHood took office, the *Chicago Tribune* published findings implying the agency was not pursuing stringent enforcement nor reporting risky seats to the public. (See 3/09 *SBS News*.) In response, LaHood promised a thorough review.

Although most specific cases noted already had been addressed, the team recruited by LaHood pointed out federal standards match the violence of 99.5% of actual crashes. But given that a third of crash deaths of youngsters under age 13 occur in side-impact collisions, the team recommended NHTSA develop a side-impact crash protection requirement.

To help parents find seats that fit their vehicles, NHTSA will create a new consumer program as well. SBS USA has shared some measurements that might help companies to define fit in vehicles. For many years, Nissan North America has had a Snug Kids program on its Web site to indicate which models fit their current vehicles.

## Recall

**Baby Ride** infant-only seats (Model #374199) made by Team-Tex America on 12/18/08 had a belt routing label with the "horizontal reference line" incorrectly placed. Call 877/912-1313 for a correct label and placement instructions.

## New Infant-Only Seats

The new **Mia Moda** model, **Viva Supreme**, like the original Viva, has a 5-point harness, single crotch strap location, front adjuster strap, and adjustable base. Its differences: a newborn insert, a smaller chest clip, and 4 sets of shoulder strap slots instead of 3. Viva Supreme is certified from 4 to 22 lbs.; the Viva, birth to 22 lbs.

**Teutonia T-Tario 32** is an infant-only seat for use up to 32 lbs. with a 5-point harness, front adjuster strap, single crotch strap location, and detachable base. The new model looks like the Graco SnugRide 32. (Both Teutonia and Graco are divisions of Newell Rubbermaid.)

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**SafetyBeltSafe News**

**May 2009**

## **At LIFESAVERS, Manufacturers Share Tips on Safety Restraints**

**Britax** made the D-ring attachment for rear-facing tethering 2 inches longer and added Side Impact Cushion technology to seats to cut in half impacts on the child. Their Click & Safe buckle will show up on more models.

**Chicco** has included specific instructions not to hang toys from the handle, requires use of their lockoffs but permits switching the vehicle retractor as well, and stresses that noodles are never needed with their adjustable bases.

**Combi** has a new outreach for professionals called CARES, with Vera Fullaway, longtime cps advocate/Instructor, providing aid. The new Cocorro convertible, designed specifically for smaller vehicles, has 2 options for belt placement, permitting the shoulder belt to be placed around the back of the safety shell for additional support if the belt is long enough. Child ID labels have been added. The Shuttle will be certified to 33 lbs later this year; it will have a new Canadian platform base, not interchangeable with the present model. The Zeus Turn will be redesigned to be used rear facing to 33 lbs, eliminating the last convertible seat on the market with a rear-facing weight under 30 lbs.

**Dorel** has completed labeling all seats with model names on the date of manufacture label; of color coding instructions—yellow for safety tips; green for rear facing, blue for forward facing, and purple for booster mode; and has introduced 2 different rear-facing angles for the under- and over-11 lb. child for onBoard/SureFit, now certified to 35 lbs, as well as a “green” indicator when the handle is in a locked position. An icon for correct placement of the chest clip has replaced a company logo there.

**Eventflo** offers “Quick Start” guides to safety seat use, tether extenders for all models, side-impact testing of all models, and a 4<sup>th</sup> set of strap slots in the Tribute.

The **Learning Curve** True Fit convertible has a separate headrest to be added when the rear-facing baby reaches 23 lbs or is closer than an inch to the top of the plastic shell. This feature, and its narrow rails, allows for easier fit in smaller rear seats, particularly when the seat must be halfway back for the newborn, and for adequate head protection rear facing for older babies who will sit more upright. The True Fit 670 will have a rebound panel. Their boosters fold for storage; to open, pull firmly without fearing breakage.

Watch for the new **Magna Clek** Oober booster, to be covered when it is available.

**Safe Traffic System** points out their Ride Safer Vests have belt guides that grow with the children and their buckles are not easy for kids to open, a factor important if kids find it hard to stay in boosters, for instance.

**Sunshine Kids** focused on their German side-impact testing and good head excursion figures, even when the top tether is not attached, a factor for families with the oldest vehicles. To assist those who check safety seats, we remind the Safe Stop piece is attached on the harness between the splitter plate and harness only when the seat is facing forward with a child under 40 lbs AND the top tether is attached.

Overall improved instructions, attention to fit in smaller cars, and more features, such as lockoffs, better adjuster access, and higher harness weights, are encouraging signs of progress in the field.