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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Parents need to set the rules of the road for teen drivers *National Teen Driver Safety Week is Oct. 18-24*

Despite the fact teen driving fatalities have declined over the past five years in Michigan, traffic crashes remain the No. 1 killer of young adults ages 16-20.

National Teen Driver Safety Week, Oct. 18-24, is an effort to raise awareness and provide solutions to young driver crashes. It's also an opportune time for parents to discuss the dangers of distracted driving, speeding and cell phone use with their teens.

According to research by The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and State Farm, teens who say their parents set rules and pay attention to their activities in a helpful, supportive way are half as likely to be involved in a crash.

"Parents need to realize that what they say to their teens about driving issues is very important," said Michael L. Prince, Office of Highway Safety Planning director. "By establishing rules about cell phone and seat belt use or number of passengers allowed in the vehicle, they could very well save their child's life."

Prince added it is also important that parents serve as role models by following the rules of the road.

Last year in Michigan, 174 people were killed and 1,517 seriously injured in crashes involving drivers ages 16-20. Of those fatalities, 106 were a 16-20-year-old driver or passenger.

Nationally, among 16-17 year-olds, the main cause of teen driver crashes is inexperience mixed with other distractions (75 percent), speeding (40 percent) or alcohol (17 percent), or some combination of these factors. According to CHOP and State Farm, a teen driver's fatal crash risk increases up to five times when there are two or more teen passengers in the vehicle.

To highlight the dangers of distractions such as cell phone use and texting while driving, Lansing area teens will attempt to navigate a driving course today while utilizing cellular devices. Instructors from the Michigan State Police (MSP) Precision Driving Team will supervise the exercise at the MSP Training Academy in Lansing.

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