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NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release
November 10, 2004**

OHIO RECEIVES FEDERAL FUNDING FOR SAFETY PROGRAMMING Commission reports lead to almost \$250,000 for safety programs

COLUMBUS – The Ohio Commission on the Prevention of Injury and the Ohio Post-critical Trauma Care Commission released findings and recommendations today at Children's Hospital in Columbus.

As a result of the work from the two reports about \$250,000 in new federal funding was awarded to a partnership group for statewide safety programming. The group includes Columbus Children's Hospital, the Ohio Hospital Association, the Ohio Department of Public Safety and the Ohio Department of Health.

The new federal Crash Outcome Data Evaluation System (CODES) grant will fund a system to link statewide databases, such as those for the statewide trauma registry, emergency medical services, traffic crash reports, driver's licenses, hospital discharges, emergency department visits, and vital statistic records. By linking crash, vehicle and behavior characteristics to their specific medical and financial outcomes, experts hope to identify issues and set priorities for motor vehicle traffic safety.

The funding, granted from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), covers the first 21 months of the award period. Ohio is then slated to receive \$50,000 annually for maintenance of the program.

"This valuable new program will enhance our efforts to save lives and reduce injuries in Ohio," said Kenneth L. Morckel, director of the Ohio Department of Public Safety. "The project will provide us with a broader and more complete picture of motor vehicle crashes, which will enable us to be more effective in identifying issues and setting priorities for highway safety programs."

"The cost and long-term consequences of injury on the health care system, the workplace and among survivors and their families are enormous," said Gary A. Smith, M.D., Dr.P.H., chair of the Ohio Commission on the Prevention of Injury. "The good news is that injuries largely follow predictable patterns and are mostly preventable."

Injury is the leading cause of death and disability for Ohioans ages 1 through 34 and is the sixth-leading cause of death for all age groups, the prevention of injury report says. More than 5,000 Ohioans die each year from injury-related causes. Motor vehicles and firearms are the two leading causes of injury-related deaths.

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“Of the millions of Ohioans who survive injuries, many suffer long-term consequences such as permanent disability; time lost from work and family; costly medical expenses; and pain and suffering,” said John Corrigan, Ph.D. chair of the Ohio Post-critical Trauma Care Commission. “The commission’s goal is to improve accessibility, affordability, quality and cost effectiveness of post-critical trauma care for these individuals.”

Traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury and burns tend to result in more serious and long-term consequences. About 5.3 million Americans have long-term disabilities from traumatic brain injury with 80,000 new cases added each year. Another 200,000 have disabilities due to traumatic spinal cord injury with 11,000 new cases annually.

The injury prevention report places emphasis on pediatric and geriatric populations in Ohio and identifies several overarching themes.

The themes include:

- Injuries are costly; injury prevention saves lives and money.
- Improved injury surveillance efforts and program evaluations are needed.
- Improved statewide coordination of programs is needed.
- Injuries disproportionately affect those living in poverty, the young and the old.
- Alcohol use is an important risk factor for injury.
- Legislation can be an effective strategy for preventing injuries.

“The Ohio Department of Health is committed to prevention as a key strategy for protecting and improving the health of all Ohioans,” said J. Nick Baird, M.D., director of the Ohio Department of Health.

According to the injury prevention report, the benefits of prevention efforts outweigh any cost. Examples of the cost benefit of preventing injuries include the following:

- For every dollar spent on a smoke alarm, \$69 can be saved in fire-related costs.
- For every dollar spent on a child safety seat, \$32 is saved in direct medical costs and other costs to society.
- For every dollar spent on a bicycle helmet, \$30 is saved in direct medical care costs and other costs to society.

The Ohio Commission on the Prevention of Injury and the Ohio Post-critical Trauma Care Commission were created in November 2000 after the Ohio General Assembly enacted HB. 138. Copies of the reports are available at: http://ems.ohio.gov/trauma/trauma_commissions.htm

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Filename: Jointrelease11-10-04 FINAL.doc
Directory: C:\Documents and Settings\BATKINS\Desktop
Template: C:\Documents and Settings\BATKINS\Application
Data\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dot

Title:

Subject:

Author:

Keywords:

Comments:

Creation Date: 11/9/2004 12:28:00 PM

Change Number: 2

Last Saved On: 11/9/2004 12:28:00 PM

Last Saved By:

Total Editing Time: 1 Minute

Last Printed On: 11/10/2004 8:30:00 AM

As of Last Complete Printing

Number of Pages: 2

Number of Words: 814 (approx.)

Number of Characters: 4,642 (approx.)