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## **Risk for Dying in Car Crashes Increases During Adolescence**

As Prom Season Approaches, LSU Simulates Trauma Response at Mock Crash Site

Baton Rouge (March 5, 2008) -- Of the nearly 10,000 deaths of motor-vehicle passengers 8 to 17 years old studied by researchers at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, more than half (54.4 percent) were riding with a driver under age 20; nearly two-thirds were unrestrained; and more than three-quarters of the crashes occurred on roads with posted speed limits above 45 miles per hour.

To illustrate the dangers of teen driving, Interim LSU Public Hospital and other agencies will produce a mock crash site at Metairie Park Country Day School, 300 Park Road, Metairie, Louisiana, on Thursday, March 6, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Child car passengers 12 to 16 years old are more likely to die in a crash than younger children, according to the results of the study released this week in the Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine. This risk increases with the passing of each teen year.

Researchers examined 45,560 crashes involving passengers 8 to 17 years old. Between 2000 and 2005, 9,807 passengers in this age group died in crashes.

Alcohol was a factor in one-fifth of the fatal crashes.

As children grow into adolescence, they are more likely to ride in cars with drivers other than their parents, such as classmates, friends, or older siblings, according to previous research.

"Prom season is quickly approaching. This is an excellent time to remind students of the physical, emotional, financial, and legal consequences of driving under the influence," said Bridget Gardner, RN, injury prevention program coordinator at Interim LSU Public Hospital.

To depict the effects of a serious car crash and the measures first responders employ, including the use of rescue equipment, multiple agencies will produce the mock crash site on the football field of Metairie Park Country Day School.

Students will participate as deceased and injured victims.

Interim LSU Public Hospital will conduct a mock trauma response for the extricated male victim. Students in attendance will witness the lifesaving measures LSU staff take to lessen the lifelong disabilities endured from driving unrestrained.

As officials from the coroner's office place a deceased victim in a body bag and drive him to the morgue, the attending physician will notify the trauma victim's parent, played by a school coach, of the child's death.

Besides Interim LSU Public Hospital, the Jefferson Parish Fire Department, New Orleans EMS, East Jefferson Hospital EMS, Louisiana State Police and Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office will participate in the response to the mock crash.

The LSU Health System is one of the largest public health care delivery systems in the country. It has over 60,000 admissions, 350,000 patient days, 1 million outpatient visits, and over 350,000 emergency department visits. Each year 1700 residents from the LSU and Tulane Schools of Medicine and Ochsner Health System and 4,000 nurses and allied health students from many colleges and universities are trained in LSU facilities.

LSU is the largest single provider of uncompensated inpatient care in Louisiana. LSU hospitals have an economic impact of over \$1.6 billion in asset business activity, \$918 million in personal earnings, and support over 10,000 jobs.

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