Impact of Alcohol and Illicit Drug Impaired Drivers on Public Safety in Alaska

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ABSTRACT

In 2004, almost 65% of alcohol related fatalities involved hitting a fixed object.
In 2004, almost 41% of alcohol related fatalities resulted in an overturned vehicle.
From 1994 to 2004, 47% of fatal crashes had alcohol and/or drugs involved.
In 2004, impaired drivers in alcohol related crashes were 68% male and 26% female.
In that same year, 36% of the male and 29% of the female impaired drivers in alcohol related crashes were 21-30 years old.

RESULTS

During this same time period, 35% of all drugs identified, with Lab confirmation, were in the class of Depressants (alcohol, barbiturates, benzodiazepines).
During this same time period, 26% of Lab confirmed DRE Evaluations were those 40-49 years old.

SUMMARY OF DRUG CLASSES

DRE EVALUATIONS
01/01/2004 to 06/30/2006

Total DRE Evaluations by Gender
01/01/04 to 06/30/06

Total DRE Evaluations by Race
01/01/04 to 06/30/06

CONCLUSIONS

It is important that health economists, public health professionals, physicians, educators, and our law enforcement agencies recognize that the next major step in improving the general health, safety, and well-being of Alaska residents and visitors should be largely behavioral rather than solely medical. Instituting more drug education programs, more referral to drug treatment and rehabilitation, a public awareness campaign that drug impaired driving is now as easy to detect as alcohol impaired driving, and a strengthening of the designated driver program should all help to reduce the prevalence and harm of drug and alcohol impaired driving.

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