



## Texas Families are Urged to Take Precautions Ahead of One of the Year's Deadliest Weekends on Roadways – Advocates Highlight 4-Step Plan to Stay Safe

*Fourth of July weekend ranks among the most dangerous and deadly days due to impaired driving – Last year nearly 50 deaths were the result of DUI crashes during holiday*

(Austin, TX | July 1, 2022) – As Texans prepare to celebrate this Fourth of July, data showing high risks for alcohol-related injuries and deaths on the state's roadways was released and advocates urged families to take precautions, especially for helping keep underage youth safe. The data was released by Texans for Safe and Drug-Free Youth, the state's leading advocacy coalition on youth underage drinking and substance use prevention.

According to the data, analyzed from the Texas Department of Transportation, last year:

- With 48 deaths, the Fourth of July was the third highest holiday period for crash fatalities;
- 1,692 DUI drivers under age 21 were involved in crashes over the course of the year;
- 66 of these incidents were fatal crashes; and
- There were 154 deaths of youth under age 21 resulting from DUI crashes.

"As any person who has experienced the tragedy of loss knows, one life lost is one too many - and often, that decision to drink is one too many as well. Communities, parents and families must all come together in a In effort to keep our kids safe, both this holiday season and throughout the year," said Nicole Holt, CEO of Texans for Safe and Drug-Free Youth. "Simple, actionable measures can go a long way in saving lives."

Parents play a critical role in improving these statistics, and can take action by:

**Maintaining Open Communication** – Having honest, straightforward conversations with kids that set clear boundaries and expectations about alcohol is one of the most influential and impactful measures. Parents should make clear that alcohol is only safe – and legal – for responsible adults. Ultimately, when youth are confronted with difficult situations, they will be much more likely to make smart, safe decisions.

**Having a Plan of Action** – Kids need to know exactly what to do when placed in difficult situations – and that anyone who has been drinking shouldn't be behind the wheel. By setting a plan of action ahead of time, they will be prepared and more confident in handling that moment when it arises.

**Knowing Modeling Matters** – It's incredibly important parents limit negative influences and behaviors around youth, even older teenagers. Kids constantly watch and take note of adults, and ultimately follow our example. Very simple awareness can make a big difference in what our kids are aware of and later repeat in their own lives.

Minimizing Access – Alcohol should not be kept where it can be accessed by anyone but responsible adults. When possible, parents should consider locking it or keeping it in a clearly off-limits area. And when alcohol is kept in places where it is accessible, parents should make clear that it is off-limits to youth.

Through the holiday weekend as well as the rest of the year, collaborative action from adults can help ensure youth remain safe from underage drinking's many consequences, including car crashes and deaths. More information about the science behind the impact alcohol has on underage drinkers can be found at <https://txsdy.org/the-science-alcohol/> and resources for parents can be found at <https://txsdy.org/talking-with-youth/>.

#### About Texans for Safe and Drug-Free Youth

Texans for Safe and Drug-Free Youth is the state's leading organization working to end underage alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. Founded in 1997 with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation administered by the American Medical Association, the statewide coalition builds on the strengths and successes of its longtime identity, Texans Standing Tall, while bringing new focus and energy to its mission of creating healthier and safer communities.

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