

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2020, 607 child passengers ages 12 and younger were killed in motor vehicle crashes in the United States, and more than 63,000 were injured (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). Of the children who were killed in a crash, 38% were not buckled up (CDC, 2020). With proper installation and utilization, car seats and booster seats reduce the fatality rate for infants, toddlers, and children. Despite the potential life-saving effects of car seats, 59% of car seats are misused (CDC, 2019). By providing parents and caregivers with the information necessary to ensure the proper installation and utilization of car seats, the New Haven Health Department can be instrumental in reducing the motor vehicle morbidity and fatality rate for children under the age of ten.

This program will continue to provide parents and caregivers with the basic information needed to keep children safe when riding in vehicles, including information on the stages of child passenger protection, proper installation of car seats, recalls, and the importance of reading car seat installation instructions and vehicle manuals. The Latch System, after-market products, the importance of visiting child car seat fitting stations, and other safety points will also be addressed. Additionally, the New Haven Health Department will continue to operate a Car Seat Fitting Station to ensure children are riding in the proper seat and that the seat is correctly installed.

Presentations on child passenger safety will be conducted at Head Start Centers, School Readiness Sites, daycares, and other community agencies, as these venues serve the target population. The target population for this program is parents and caregivers with children under the age of six. It is anticipated that a minimum of 60 individuals between the ages of 18-45 will attend a child passenger safety presentation. Of the attendees, it is anticipated that 90% will be female, 40% will be Black, 40% will be Hispanic, and 20% will be White.

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Additionally, the New Haven Health Department will focus on educating the public about the dangers of driving under the influence. In 2020, 11,654 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes involving alcohol-impaired drivers, accounting for 30% of all traffic-related deaths in the United States (CDC, 2020). In 2020, 24% of deaths among child passengers (ages 14 and younger) involved an alcohol-impaired driver (CDC, 2020). The New Haven Health Department will develop educational materials to inform residents about the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs and to share local resources for safe rides and substance use treatment.

Finally, the New Haven Health Department will also focus on reducing suicide rates, particularly among young people. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated concerning trends related to mental health challenges and suicide attempts. Suicide was responsible for 48,183 deaths in 2021, and suicide rates increased approximately 36% between 2000–2021 (CDC, 2021). Suicide was the second leading cause of death for people ages 10-14 in 2021 (CDC, 2021). The New Haven Health Department will offer a gatekeeper training toolbox, supported by statewide infrastructure, including offering the Question, Persuade, refer (QPR) trainings to community groups and residents in New Haven. This evidence-based program teaches participants how to identify suicidal ideation and how to intervene.