



IGNITION INTERLOCK POLICY EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT IN NORTH CAROLINA



Shared risk and protective factor (SRPF) approaches are efforts that address the underlying conditions that affect multiple health outcomes. By improving these conditions and shared characteristics, multiple health outcomes are simultaneously improved.

In March 2020, Safe States launched the *Driver Behavior Change Seed Grant Program (Seed Grant Program)* to enhance state and local motor vehicle safety efforts by addressing shared risk and protective factors, focusing on evidence-based behavior change strategies. Four multidisciplinary Safety Teams were funded to develop and implement activities based on evidence-based strategies identified in the resource document *Strategies to Address Shared Risk and Protective Factors for Driver Safety*, developed in partnership with Safe States Alliance and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The emphasis on shared risk and protective factors provides public health and traffic safety agencies opportunities to work collaboratively across multiple sectors to maximize impact and leverage funds efficiently. Shared risk and protective factor approaches also emphasize the social determinants of health, recognizing that individuals' behaviors and environments influence their decision-making across the lifespan.

SHARED RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS ADDRESSED

SHARED RISK FACTORS



Low-Risk Perception



Driving After Consuming Alcohol



Negative Social Norms On Alcohol Consumption And Driving

SHARED PROTECTIVE FACTORS



Education



Policy Enforcement



NORTH CAROLINA SAFETY TEAM'S DRIVER SAFETY INTERVENTION

The North Carolina (NC) Safety Team set out to accomplish two key objectives when they applied to the Driver Behavior Change Seed Grant Program:

1. Collaborate on a social norms campaign to address the shared risk factors of low-risk perception as an intervention to reduce impaired driving and increase adult use of seat belts; and
2. Strengthen policies on Ignition Interlock use.

However, due to circumstances resulting from the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, their programmatic capacity shifted, and their efforts were altered to focus solely on strengthening policies on ignition interlock use. The team conducted key informant discussions with subject matter experts to determine necessary legislative changes to implement an improved ignition interlock program in North Carolina. They summarized and refined these recommendations with input from a workgroup

created by the Impaired Driving Task Force of the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program and the Unintentional Death Prevention Committee of the North Carolina Child Fatality Task Force. The subsequent policy recommendations were aligned with goals established in the 2019 NC Strategic Highway Safety Plan to reduce fatalities and injuries and the NC Vision Zero initiative to implement data-driven prevention strategies to eliminate roadway deaths and injuries across the state.

Based on recommendations from the Impaired Driving Task Force, the NC Safety Team continued their work on advancing ignition interlock policy by dividing into two groups: one focused on creating legislation and the other focused on public education and advocacy. The legislation team distilled the expert recommendations and best available research evidence and narrowed their approach down to a manageable and achievable set of changes within the ignition interlock law for North Carolina. These changes are directly linked to increasing ignition interlock usage, reducing alcohol-impaired driving recidivism, preventing subsequent injuries and fatalities, and influencing adult behavior change to improve safety for children.

The NC Safety Team successfully drafted [*Senate Bill 183: Begin Modernizing Ignition Interlock Laws \(SB 183\)*](#). New recommendations included modifying the legal limit for blood alcohol concentration while operating a motor vehicle, creating an indigent fund so that individuals aren't economically penalized for needing an ignition interlock, and removing the 45-day lockout period. Data from the Epidemiology and Prevention teams of the Injury and Violence Prevention Branch of the state health department provided evidence-based support for the recommendations. The Child Fatality Task Force and the Unintentional Death Prevention Committee reviewed the draft bill and approved the legislation for the next steps. The team conducted outreach to secure North Carolina legislators to champion and

guide the bill through the legislative process. While awaiting passage of the bill, a public education team, spearheaded by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, designed a website to educate the public about ignition interlock provisions. In April 2021, *Senate Bill 183: Begin Modernizing Ignition Interlock Laws* was unanimously approved by the North Carolina State Senate, and the bill was passed into law in November 2021.



KEY PARTNERS

Child Fatality Task Force

Duke University Hospital

Epidemiology and Prevention teams of the North Carolina Injury and Violence Prevention Branch

MADD

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

North Carolina Department of Insurance

North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles

North Carolina Department of Transportation

SafeKids NC

Unintentional Death Prevention Committee

CHALLENGES & SUCCESSES

One of the biggest challenges that the NC Safety Team experienced was the significant turnover within their internal team, which caused unintended delays in their intervention process. Another resulted from fiduciary challenges, impacting the full fund utilization to support intervention activities. However, the transition of team members and the consequences of those transitions did not stop the NC Safety Team as they were able to find new members and continue efforts to advance the legislation. *Senate Bill 183: Begin Modernizing Ignition Interlock Laws* passed into North Carolina law on November 4, 2021. The NC Safety Team also noted the benefits of having a shared language and common SRPF framework approach while working with their various partners as an achievement in their policy intervention. The use of the SRPF framework can be applied to other work, allowing for efficient and smooth collaboration among the different agencies as they work together to address root causes that affect issues of interest across the various partner portfolios.

SHORT TERM OUTCOMES & NEXT STEPS

Senate Bill 183: Begin Modernizing Ignition Interlock Laws, was passed in North Carolina on November 4, 2021. With the law in place, there are now changes in the system for ignition interlock practices and the state automated driver's license system. The NC Safety Team is currently working with several ignition interlock service providers (Smart Start, Monitech, Alka Locks) to support the indigent changes to the ignition interlock system. Finally, the team is looking for additional funding from the Department of Motor Vehicle Services to support the additional changes to the statewide ignition interlock system.



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