

Ontario Injury spotlight

A newsletter for injury prevention practitioners in Ontario

JULY-AUGUST 2008

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From the Centre

Resource Centre: what's coming up

Join us after a brief summer break for the Aug. 26 session of the SMARTRISK Learning Series with Robb MacDonald of The Health Communication Unit. This session on evaluation will focus on building internal capacity for conducting evaluation and the usefulness of participatory evaluation. Register online at www.oninjuryresources.ca

Also consider registering for the two-day Canadian Falls Prevention Curriculum on seniors falls and fall-related injury prevention. The Resource Centre has scheduled sessions for Sept. 8-9 in North Bay, Sept. 10-11 in Sudbury and Oct. 23-24 in Brockville. Sessions are also being planned for Windsor and for a French-language session in Niagara, and a facilitator training workshop for late fall. Contact Claude Meurehg at the Resource Centre for information at 416-596-2705 or cmeurehg@smartrisk.ca

SMARTRISK founder steps down

After 17 years as its chief executive officer, SMARTRISK founder Dr. Robert Conn has moved on to new challenges, effective at the end of June 2008. Dr. Conn explained that his plan from the organization's inception in 1991 was to build and develop it to the point

where he could eventually depart, confident that SMARTRISK was thriving and in great shape for an incoming CEO.

"It has been a great pleasure working with all those who have demonstrated such commitment to helping to reduce the tragedy of preventable injury," Dr. Conn said. "I am grateful that so many people in Canada and around the world have embraced the concept of smart risk and I look forward with anticipation to watching SMARTRISK and other injury prevention initiatives continue to take hold in society."

From the Field

Bikes, Blades and Boards evaluated

We know that bicycling is a top cause of sports and recreational injury hospitalizations in Ontario and that wearing a bike helmet can reduce the risk of head injury in a collision by up to 88%. Helmets must be in good condition, however, and worn properly to achieve these benefits. The Bikes, Blades and Boards program at Hamilton Health Sciences educates Grade 2 children about the importance of wearing a helmet and teaches them how to wear one correctly, through interactive multi-media discussions and individual demonstrations, followed by practice fitting and wearing helmets and individual feedback. More than 11,700 Grade 2 students in Hamilton took the program between 2000-2005.

An evaluation of the in-school program features in Vol. 22, Issue 6 of the the journal [Brain Injury](#). The evaluation sought to find out whether child participants improved their ability to demonstrate proper helmet wearing, and to determine if their skills were retained one year after participating in the program. Results showed that program participants scored higher on the helmet checklist than those who did not participate and that they retained the skills, demonstrating the same ability a year later.

Aging driver forum: looking ahead

The May 8-9 Aging Driver Mobility Forum in Toronto attracted stakeholders from across Canada to continue building the best possible aging driver strategy at a community, provincial and national level.

While collision rates for drivers 55-70 are the lowest in Canada, the onset of medically-limiting conditions rises substantially above 75 years of age. Drivers of this age or older have much higher collision rates, similar to young, novice drivers. As Canada's over-80 age group continues to grow rapidly, this issue becomes increasingly important.

Stakeholders and experts at the Forum sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, Insurance Bureau of Canada, Ontario Seniors' Secretariat and the Ontario Safety League, discussed the priorities identified by



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the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators' Aging Driver Task Force in their *Aging Driver Strategy 2006-2010*. The Forum was developed along the themes of medical reporting, driver licensing and social issues and mobility. A final report describing the perspectives, new approaches and new ideas for positive changes will be released in the next year.

Research

Alcohol sales linked to assault risk

A new study by researchers at Toronto's St. Michael's Hospital and the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences links higher sales at Liquor Control Board of Ontario outlets with an increased risk of assault. The researchers found that with every 1,000 more litres a given LCBO outlet sells on a given day, there's an increase in the risk of being a victim of assault of about 13%. They suggest this underestimates the relationship between alcohol and violence because alcohol is sold in places besides the LCBO. The full paper, *Alcohol Sales and Risk of Serious Assault* is available online at the [Public Library of Science Medicine](#) open access journal. In addition, the Alcohol Policy Network will host a learning teleconference with Dr. Joel Ray, lead author of this paper, on Sept. 9. Find details at [Apolnet](#).

Youth traffic resource

The [Traffic Injury Research Foundation](#) has launched an online [Young and New Driver Resource Centre](#), designed for young and new drivers, parents, researchers and policy makers. It contains information on graduated driver licensing and driver education programs, research and other young driver safety initiatives in Canada. TIRF launched a new report to coincide with the web launch, also available online: [Youth and Road Crashes: Magnitude, Characteristics, and Trends](#).

Our Partners in Action

Safe Kids seeing pool fencing success

Safe Kids Week recently wrapped up. But the close of the annual Week doesn't mean work on that issue is complete. Daniel Tiburcio of Safe Kids Canada provides this report on initiatives resulting from last year's campaign:

In 2007, Safe Kids Canada's annual public awareness campaign, Safe Kids Week, included a successful advocacy component. Together with its partners, Safe Kids Canada advocated for improvements to swimming pool safety in the City of Toronto. The campaign was instrumental in leading to amendments to the City's fencing bylaw regarding home pools. The new bylaw requires all newly constructed outdoor home swimming pools to have four-sided fences with self-closing and self-latching gates.

After the new bylaw passed, the Pool and Spa Council of Canada and associated organizations lobbied City Council to allow pool covers, screen doors, manual door latches and similar products as alternative measures in the new bylaw. Safe Kids Canada and its partners again pressed the City to support the bylaw without amendments, reiterating that four-sided fencing is the only proven strategy to help reduce unintentional child drowning in home swimming pools.

This effort was successful and in May 2008, the City of Toronto's Licensing and Standards Committee voted against allowing the use of alternative devices, such as pool alarms, pool covers or manual door latches, instead of a four-sided pool fence. Additional recommendations are:

- The four-sided standard be applied to any existing pool fences that are fully or substantially replaced or repaired.
- Development of an awareness and education campaign respecting pool fencing standards and pool safety.
- Provisions for an exemption to accommodate people with disabilities as defined in the Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

As expected, on May 26, 2008, Toronto City Council adopted the staff report and the Committee recommendations.

Partners from across Canada are working to improve local pool fencing bylaws. For example, partners are working with the City of Ottawa to introduce a four-sided pool fencing motion. Quebec has passed province-wide pool safety legislation (Bill 18) and is developing regulations for minimum pool fencing and pool safety standards.

Safe Kids Canada congratulates its partners for their hard work advocating for safer environments for children. Tools and templates for advocating for safer pool fencing are available at www.safekidscanada.ca; choose the "Public Policy and Advocacy" tab and click on "Safer Pool Fencing Laws".

Calendar

Not by Accident Conference, London, Oct. 9

The theme is Knowledge...Acting with Confidence Emerging Trends in Injury Prevention, featuring the latest data, hot topics, street racing legislation and the program, Parents Against Road Tragedies.

Contact Kim Ross-Jones, 1-877-837-6143, kross@huroncounty.ca or Pamela Longworth, 519-663-5317, x 2252, pam.longworth@mlhu.on.ca

Ontario Public Health Association 2008 Annual Conference, Niagara Falls, Oct. 26-29

The theme is Making Health Communities Count, with the goal of profiling leading developments and topical issues facing public and community health.

See the [conference website](#)

Ontario Injury Prevention Conference, Toronto, Nov. 16-18, 2008

This year's conference will have a greater focus on skills development, leading to enhanced professional development opportunities.

Contact Nadja Gale at ngale@smartrisk.ca

Highlights from the Ontario Injury Compass

May: Violence among children

Violence-related injuries among children under 15 years of age in Ontario led to 2,208 emergency department visits in 2005-2006 and 98 hospitalizations. Highest rates were reported in Northern Ontario and head injuries were most common. For emergency department visits, violent injuries among children increased with age. For hospitalizations, nearly half occurred to infants under one year of age. Prevention tips involve examining the root causes with a multi-faceted approach.

June: Boating related injuries

Boating-related injuries in 2005-2006 resulted in 1,866 visits to emergency departments and 130 hospitalizations in 2005-2006 in Ontario. Close to twice as many males as females were hurt and injury rates were highest in the North. Risk can be managed by wearing a PFD, avoiding alcohol and getting trained.

Each month, the Ontario Injury Compass provides statistics and prevention tips on specific injury topics to practitioners in Ontario. To subscribe to the Ontario Injury Compass electronically, or to read back issues, visit www.oninjuryresources.ca