1 About the Curriculum

The two-day curriculum offers four interactive stations: driving while distracted, walking while distracted, driving while drowsy and a speak up station.

**Distracted Driving.** Several USDOT-approved driving simulators ¹ mimic realistic road conditions while participants engage in distracting activities.

**Distracted Walking.** Participants walk through an obstacle course three times²: first while walking without a cell phone, second while walking with a cell phone to the ear and mentally subtracting from a given number by two (to simulate concentration involved in talking on the phone), and third while texting a nursery rhyme into a cell phone. Time to walk the obstacles and errors are recorded and participants reflect on their performance under the three conditions. Students are made aware of the consequences of distracted walking and driving.

**Drowsy Driving.** The effects of sleep deprivation on physical and cognitive function and the dangers associated with driving while drowsy are presented along with guidelines for healthy sleep behaviors. Participants complete an individual sleepiness questionnaire (Epworth, 1994), view a short video portraying the effects of drowsy driving³, engage in group discussion and reflection and play a Q & A drowsy driving game.

**Speak Up Station:** Participants learn assertiveness skills and practice speaking up when they are in a vehicle with a distracted driver.

As a bonus, students learn about the diverse health professions that are involved in the aftermath of auto accidents, such as paramedics, physicians, nurse, physician assistants, social workers, respiratory, occupational, physical, and speech therapists.

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¹ State of the art distracted driving simulators provided through generous grants from State Farm Insurance for 2013-2015.
³ Drowsy Driving Puts Teens at Risk (Today Show). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gMS0M_KcsOE
2 Our Reach
In 2014 and 2015 our curriculum was presented to 2,420 students in the Amityville, Brentwood, William Floyd and Wyandanch School Districts.

3 Our Research
In April 2014, students in four school districts completed pre-and post-tests designed by our research team with three aims: (1) to understand high school students’ driving and sleep habits, (2) to compare pre-and post-program likelihood of students speaking up when they are a passenger in a car being driven by a distracted driver, and (3) to measure high school students’ satisfaction with the Prevention of Distracted Driving program.

In all, 292 students from four high-need high schools in Suffolk County participated in the study. Students represented grade 9 (4%), grade 10 (26%), grade 11 (28%) and grade 12 (46%). Student ages ranged from 14 to 20.

Most student participants were between 16 and 18 years old and nearly half were in grade 12. Half were female. Nearly half of students had a NYS Learners Permit and approximately 1 in 5 had either a NYS Class D license or a Junior Driver’s license. Nearly one out of 10 reported driving 7 or more hours per week and one out of 5 drive between 1 and 6 hours per week at night.

Over three-quarters of student participants indicated that the Prevention of Distracted Driving program increased their interest in distracted driving, over two-thirds stated that the program increased their understanding of distracted driving awareness and nearly two out of 3 indicated that they were exposed to new information through the program. Nearly three-quarters of students said that they would definitely recommend the program to others and over one-quarter might recommend the program.

For More Information Please Contact:
Mr. Erik Flynn
HCARE Education Specialist
631-444-2770
erik.flynn@stonybrook.edu