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CDC Report Shows about 112 Million Annual Incidents of People Drinking and Driving

Adults drank too much and got behind the wheel about 112 million times in 2010—that is almost 300,000 incidents of drinking and driving each day—according to a CDC *Vital Signs* study released this week by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“The four million adults who drink and drive each year put everyone on the road at risk,” CDC Director Thomas R. Frieden said in a news release. “In fact, nearly 11,000 people are killed every year in crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver.”

For the study, CDC analyzed data from the 2010 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey. The study also found that:

- Men were responsible for 81 percent of drinking and driving in 2010.
- Young men, ages 21–34, made up only 11 percent of the U.S. population in 2010, yet were responsible for 32 percent of all episodes of drinking and driving.
- Eighty-five percent of drinking and driving episodes were reported by people who also reported binge drinking. Binge drinking means five or more drinks for men or four or more drinks for women during a short period of time. Linda C. Degutis, director of CDC’s National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, recommended the following coalition strategies to prevent alcohol-impaired driving:
 - Sobriety checkpoints: At sobriety checkpoints drivers are stopped to assess their level of alcohol impairment. According to the Transportation Research Board, more widespread, frequent use of these checkpoints could save about 1,500 to 3,000 lives on the road each year.
 - Minimum legal drinking age laws: These laws prohibit selling alcohol to people under age 21 in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Keeping 21 as the minimum legal drinking age helps keep young, inexperienced drivers from drinking and driving.
 - Ignition interlocks: These devices prevent drivers who were convicted of alcohol-impaired driving from operating their vehicles if they have been drinking. Interlocks are effective in reducing re-arrest rates from drinking and driving by about two-thirds while the device is on the vehicle.

A policy issue brief, "Policy Impact: Alcohol-Impaired Driving," features more information on state policies to prevent alcohol-impaired driving. For a copy of this data brief, visit

www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/alcoholbrief.