

Safe Kids North Carolina

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Every year in North Carolina, approximately 200 children die from unintentional injuries, according to the North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics [1]. Through education and outreach, Safe Kids North Carolina works to prevent these injuries, which are the leading killer of children aged 14 years and younger. The organization focuses on a wide variety of risk areas, including child passenger safety, burn prevention, prevention of falls, pedestrian safety, poisoning prevention, water safety, and more.

Safe Kids North Carolina, which is housed within and staffed by the North Carolina Department of Insurance, helps spread important messages about injury prevention through a network of volunteers across the state. Currently, there are 38 local Safe Kids coalitions covering 67 counties in North Carolina. Because of partnerships with these local Safe Kids coalitions and other child safety advocates, Safe Kids North Carolina has been able to deliver comprehensive injury prevention programs to communities statewide.

According to the North Carolina Division of Public Health, motor vehicle-related injuries continue to be the leading cause of death and the second leading cause of hospitalizations. Safe Kids is working to improve child passenger safety by educating people about the proper use of child safety seats and restraints. Through the leadership of Safe Kids North Carolina and the Governor's Highway Safety Program, there are now more than 130 permanent checking stations where parents and caregivers can go to learn how to choose an appropriate child safety seat for their child and how to use it properly. Each checking station is staffed by a technician who has been certified in child passenger safety. Leaders in the fire service are common partners in this effort, offering their fire stations for use as checking stations and allowing their firefighters to receive the training to become certified safety seat technicians. Additionally, Safe Kids North Carolina aims to make child safety seats widely available to the public by implementing the Buckle Up Kids program in communities around the state. Active in 83 North Carolina counties, Buckle Up Kids provides qualifying families with a limited number of low-cost child restraints and education about how to use them.

Safe Kids North Carolina has also emerged as a statewide leader in preventing unintentional poisonings through its Operation Medicine Drop events. With the goal of keeping medications out of the hands of children, Safe Kids North Carolina engaged partners such as the US Drug Enforcement Administration, the State Bureau of

Investigation, and North Carolina Riverkeepers to coordinate events across the state to which people can bring unneeded or expired medications for safe, secure disposal. The group of stakeholders involved in Operation Medicine Drop continues to grow and now includes substance abuse prevention groups, law enforcement, and environmental protection advocates, who see a shared benefit in the safe disposal of medications. Since its inception in 2010, Operation Medicine Drop has grown exponentially, and to date, the initiative has collected and destroyed more than 30 million doses of medications through hundreds of drug take-back events held each year.

In addition to bringing safety programs directly into our communities, Safe Kids North Carolina has a strong relationship with media outlets throughout the state to promote childhood safety initiatives. Safe Kids staff members are regular guests on television and radio shows, and every year they hold press conferences and media events about fire prevention, water safety, and the dangers of hot cars. Safe Kids North Carolina has also embraced social media and online outreach as ways of communicating safety messages on a round-the-clock basis.

The vast majority of childhood injuries and deaths are preventable. Through the efforts described here and many others, Safe Kids North Carolina is a proactive force in protecting our state's most valuable resource—our children—and helping to establish lifelong safety habits in North Carolina's families. NCMJ

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Acknowledgment

Potential conflicts of interest. W.G. has no relevant conflicts of interest.

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Electronically published February 8, 2013.

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N C Med J. 2013;74(1):54. ©2013 by the North Carolina Institute of Medicine and The Duke Endowment. All rights reserved. 0029-2559/2013/47111

important to begin the visit with an open-ended question designed to find out what concerns the parents and child have and to use the information contained in their answers to gauge their level of knowledge. A 2011 study found that in pediatric practices that offer family-centered care, parents

are more receptive to anticipatory guidance, and pediatric patients have fewer unmet needs for health services [5].

The asynchronous developmental progress seen in adolescents poses another challenge to providers. Although adolescents all follow the same developmental pathway, each