

WASHINGTON STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: C-16
(A-17)

Subject: Reduce Repeat Drunk Driving

Introduced by: Dave Krueger, MD, Delegate
WSMA Board of Trustees

Referred to: Reference Committee C

1 WHEREAS, every day 28 people in America are killed by drunk driving (one every 51 minutes),
2 and every two minutes someone is injured in a drunk driving crash; and

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4 WHEREAS, each day the FBI says over 300,000 people drive drunk, yet usually only one arrest
5 is made for 88 instances of driving over the legal blood alcohol (BAC) limit; and

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7 WHEREAS, people who have previous drunk driving convictions make up over 43% of new
8 drunk driving arrests; and

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10 WHEREAS, 30 states including Washington have passed some type of all offender ignition
11 interlock laws, but the interlock must be mandatory because less than 10% of offenders
12 nationally offered a choice between interlock or license suspension chose the interlock; and

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14 WHEREAS, the CDC reports ignition interlock devices can reduce repeat drunk driving
15 offenses by 67% compared to license suspensions (because 50-75% of convicted drunk drivers
16 continue to drive despite a suspended license), but only approximately 20% of those arrested
17 for DWI have ignition interlock devices installed; and

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19 WHEREAS, effective enforcement of these interlock devices is often suboptimal, the National
20 Highway Traffic Safety Administration found eight interlock processes reduced drunk driving,
21 including the following: 1) requiring or incentivizing use, 2) monitoring installation and use, 3)
22 implementing uniformly, 4) strong, swift penalties for violations of use, 5) coordinating across
23 agencies, and 6) using data for action; and

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25 WHEREAS, the CDC did a comprehensive study of cities/counties/states and found that well-
26 publicized sobriety checkpoints decreased alcohol-related crashes and fatalities consistently by
27 more than 20% yet these sobriety checkpoints are not allowed in Washington and Oregon; and

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29 WHEREAS, 29% of all drivers involved in fatal crashes over the weekend are legally drunk
30 (versus 16% during the week), and 34% of all drivers involved in fatal crashes at night are
31 legally drunk (versus 9% during the day); and

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33 WHEREAS, Washington state's "click-it" enforcements often find improper child restraints,
34 and drunk drivers themselves are 40% less likely to properly restrain children, and many
35 consider this child endangerment a form of child abuse; and

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37 WHEREAS, incorporating alcohol abuse treatment programs for repeat DWI offenders has
38 worked in other states (Florida, for example, had a 32% reduction in recidivism during 30
39 months after interlock removal) and such treatment programs are also effective in decreasing
40 violations during interlock use; THEREFORE BE IT

WSMA Policy

ALCOHOL AND ALCOHOLISM

Drinking and Driving

The WSMA supports lowering the minimum blood alcohol content which drivers are considered to be legally drunk from 0.10mg% to 0.08mg% for adults and 0.04mg% for children.
(Res 41, C-89; EC 11/91)

Reporting of Blood Alcohol Content

The WSMA opposes any legislation or regulation which would require physicians who are diagnosing, treating and caring for patients involved in motor vehicle accidents to report blood alcohol levels to law enforcement agencies. (Res A-10, A-99)