

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

FACT SHEET

Advancing Drugged Driving Data at the State Level: Synthesis of Barriers and Expert Panel Recommendations

Background

- While drugged driving is commonly defined as driving under the influence of or impaired by drugs other than alcohol, for this effort, it refers generally to driving with any detectable amount of illegal or potentially impairing amounts of prescription or over-the-counter medications in one's system, which includes driving while impaired by any of these drugs
- While drugged driving is receiving increasing national attention, most state data on drugged driving in its current form is of limited use for measuring and tracking drugged driving incidents, evaluating the effects of changing laws regarding drug use and driving, or improving our knowledge about drug use and driving impairment
- Drugged driving data of interest include data on the prevalence of drugged and drug-impaired driving, drug-impaired driving citation and adjudication data, and toxicology data for drivers arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs and/or involved in serious injury and fatal crashes

Objective

- The objective of this project was to identify and recommend strategies for improving state-level data on the nature and extent of drugged driving in the United States by addressing the most significant barriers that impede state efforts to collect and compile such data

Methods

- A literature synthesis was conducted to identify barriers to state efforts to collect and compile data on drugged driving sufficient to quantify the nature and extent of the problem at the state level, and recommendations to address those barriers
- The synthesis was shared with an expert panel, who met to discuss the barriers and to evaluate, refine, and prioritize recommendations
- The resulting report presents the revised synthesis of barriers and prioritized recommendations based on the discussion and voting by the expert panel

Key Findings

Barrier categories:

- Barriers to toxicological data
- Barriers to drugged driving arrest, adjudication, and crash data
- Barriers to data on the prevalence of drugged driving



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Key Findings

Expert Panel Recommendations – High and Medium Priority (selected)

High

- All law enforcement officers should be trained in administering the Standardized Field Sobriety Tests (SFST) and should be trained in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) “Drugs that Impair Driving” curriculum
- States should authorize and encourage law enforcement to collect and test samples for drugs and alcohol for all Driving Under the Influence (DUI) arrestees
- National model specifications should be developed for oral fluid drug test devices
- Law enforcement use of point of contact oral fluid drug test technology should be optimized
- States should update their data collection and reporting systems to distinguish among impaired-driving offenses in all relevant data
- Implied consent laws should extend to drugs other than alcohol and support collection of blood or oral fluid for drug testing, law enforcement should be authorized to collect multiple tests from suspected-impaired drivers, and suspects should not be permitted to choose the test(s)

Medium

- Congress should reauthorize use of federal funds for roadside surveys
- NHTSA should endorse and encourage the use of the National Safety Council’s recommendations for toxicology testing in drug-impaired driving and crash investigations
- Research to develop additional, more sensitive behavioral tests for identifying drug-impaired drivers should be supported and conducted
- States should authorize and encourage alcohol and drug testing for all surviving drivers involved in fatal and serious injury crashes
- States should enact laws and/or the appropriate agencies should implement policies mandating alcohol and other drug testing and reporting of the results for all fatally injured drivers
- Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria Guideline (MMUCC) and Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) data elements pertaining to drug tests should be revised to indicate each specific drug for which a test was performed and the result of each test, including quantitative results and the type of specimen tested
- Improve implementation and utilization of Drug Evaluation and Classification programs, including testing surviving drivers in fatal crash investigations
- Sanctions for refusing to provide a sample for alcohol and/or drug testing, whether criminal or administrative, should be at least as severe as those for testing positive

For more information on this study and the AAA Foundation’s other traffic safety research and materials, please visit AAAFoundation.org.

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