

**Remarks prepared for
David Strickland, Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
For the
Hyperthermia Roundtable
Washington, D.C.
July 26, 2011**

Good morning. Thank you all for accepting my invitation to be here on such short notice. Hyperthermia is not a new danger – everybody around this table knows too well the serious and potentially deadly threat it poses to young children in warm weather. You have each made, and continue to make efforts to prevent injuries and death from hyperthermia in vehicles and we thank you for your leadership.

I've asked you to come here because in spite of those efforts, the number of deaths from hyperthermia is on the rise. I've asked you here, because it's time to join forces and work to galvanize the public about this tragic threat to a very vulnerable population. We have the collective expertise, data, and ideas sitting around this table to make a difference on this issue and prevent these horrific deaths from devastating families.

I am convinced that this is the right group of people. We need to propose immediate next steps to raise awareness of the dangers of hyperthermia and to reach the most at-risk families.

Any parent can unintentionally expose a child to hyperthermia. But I am particularly alarmed because several states have witnessed especially high incidences of very young children dying. These states include Texas, Florida, California, Arizona, and the Carolinas.

In addition to today's meeting, NHTSA will be hosting listening sessions in several of these key states in the coming weeks and months. We want to hear from concerned parents, advocacy groups, health professionals, and local communities. We want to

discuss with them the best ways to raise awareness in their communities about the threat of hyperthermia so that we can prevent unnecessary tragedies.

To set the stage for the discussion, I'd like to share some key points from the agency's research in this area. Based on a review of NHTSA's Special Crash Investigations and other data, we know that a majority of hyperthermia deaths occurred because the driver's routine changed. We also know that almost all of the victims were under 3 years old.

So where does NHTSA stand on current efforts to prevent hyperthermia deaths? We've conducted several investigations to better understand the real world circumstances behind these incidents. We've highlighted the risks of child hyperthermia on our "Keeping Kids Safe" website. Secretary LaHood has blogged about this

issue and we've issued at least 3 consumer advisories to caution parents on the risks associated with hyperthermia. While these efforts are useful, there is much more that we can do.

With respect to technology, NHTSA is in the early stages of evaluating countermeasures. At this time, our research is limited to investigating the effectiveness of aftermarket countermeasures that can be installed on or are available (?) in child restraint systems designed for children 0 to 24 months of age. Research of the type needed to support potential regulatory action, complete with human factors findings and solid effectiveness estimates is years away from being completed.

Which brings us back to the point of this meeting – how do we prevent these deaths from happening now? And what about next year, and the next several years after

that? We need to come together and find the right combination of advocacy, leadership, outreach, and best practices to bring awareness of the serious and deadly danger that could result of something as simple as a change in who drops the child off at daycare.

Thank you again for being here and for all the work you are doing on this critical issue. I am looking forward to productive discussion and moving forward cooperatively to make a difference in this area and prevent these tragedies. Thank you.

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