

IMPACT ON INJURIES

Manitoba's Injury Prevention Newsletter

January / February 2006

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• Howard Skrypnyk joins IMPACT

We are pleased to announce that Howard Skrypnyk has joined the IMPACT team as project coordinator. Howard will use his 20 years of health promotion experience to address the key areas of water safety, bicycle helmets and farm safety.

In August 2004, Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures Task Force asked Manitobans for ideas on helping children and young people make healthy choices now with the goal of increasing the likelihood of them becoming healthier adults. Areas of particular concern were nutrition, physical activity and injury prevention.

The task force recommended that the provincial government work to reduce unintentional injury while ensuring and promoting growth in activity levels among Manitoba youth.

Howard will coordinate these efforts including a spring Healthy Schools project that encourages schools to undertake injury prevention projects.

Howard also will work with key stakeholders in the three focus areas to help coordinate and promote the effective delivery of resources and programs for the safety of Manitoba's young.

• First Nations Community IP Project

IMPACT has been contracted by First Nations & Inuit Health Branch to help facilitate a community-level injury prevention project in four First Nations communities by providing co-ordination, resources and technical support. The Manitoba First Nations Community Wellness Working Group selected the communities of Fox Lake, Grand Rapids, Sandy Bay and Tootinawaziibeeng to participate in this first of a kind project.

Following an orientation session, each community will organize a community advisory committee; participate in a training session; pilot an injury surveillance system; and select, deliver and evaluate injury prevention programming. The chosen priorities will be based on available injury data, community knowledge and the needs of the individual community.

Shawn Feely, IMPACT's Program Director, has already met with the communities to discuss the expectations, roles and responsibilities. By the end of March 2006, each community is expected to have completed a Community Action Plan that includes goals, objectives and activities. It is expected that these plans will integrate injury prevention into current community programs. Implementation of the plans will start in April.

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch will provide support piloting the injury surveillance system and IMPACT will provide technical advice on injury prevention issues.

Since 1999, IMPACT has provided guidance and expertise to the First Nations & Inuit Health Branch, Health Canada and the Manitoba First Nations Community Wellness Working Group to help address the burden of injuries in First Nations Communities.

• Congratulations to Dr. Warda and Family

IMPACT's Medical Director, Lynne Warda's family got a bit bigger this past December, with the birth of baby Zachary. Zach joins older brother, Alex and proud parents, Lynne and Jeff. We wish them all the best.

• Humboldt Designated Safe Community

On December 2, 2005, Humboldt & Area Safe Community Coalition became Canada's newest and Saskatchewan's second designated Safe Community. The Safe Communities Foundation awarded the coalition \$6,000 to help them get established and for injury reduction programming.

Over the next three years, the Humboldt & Area Coalition will focus on seniors' falls prevention; risks and prevention of substance abuse, interpersonal violence and fires; reducing transportation-related injuries and deaths to passengers, cyclists, ATV users and those crossing railways.

Humboldt and Area has a population of 18,183 and is a well-established manufacturing, agriculture and service centre. It is home to many large and small industries whose products are sold nationally and internationally.

The Safe Communities Foundation is a national not-for-profit charitable organization that is dedicated to making Canada the safest country in the world in which to live, learn, work and play. There are currently 46 Safe Communities in Canada covering approximately 21 per cent of the population.

To find out how your community can become a "Safe Community", contact Wendy French, Manitoba Regional Coordinator by calling (204) 787-1907 or e-mailing wfrench@exchange.hsc.mb.ca.

Information on the Safe Communities Foundation is available at [SAFE Communities Foundation - Fondation pour des collectivités SÉCURITAIRES](http://SAFECommunitiesFoundation.org)



• How well are Infants and Toddlers supervised at Manitoba Beaches?

During July and August of 2005, IMPACT staff conducted a field research project exploring 'Parent and Caregiver Levels of Child Supervision and Attention to Signage At Beach Areas'. The project involved paired observations of a young child (infant <1 year of age, toddler 12-48 months of age) and their caregiver(s) to determine whether the caregiver was within arm's reach, levels of visual supervision, caregiver and child activities, group composition, use of a personal flotation device (PFD), and weather conditions.

Following each observation, an interview was requested with the caregiver to assess their self-reported water safety practices, water safety knowledge, attention to park signage, risk ratings, prior injuries to the main child or accompanying children, and demographical information. 88% of caregivers agreed to participate in a brief interview. Key findings included the low prevalence of PFD use, the high prevalence of inattentive caregivers (25%), poor visual supervision in 17% of cases, and the fact that 93% of infants and only 49% of toddlers were within arm's reach. The child's age and the presence of beach staff were predictive of being within arm's reach. These findings will be used to inform waterfront safety programming and signage aimed at improving parental supervision practices.

This project was funded by the Manitoba Coalition for Safer Waters through a grant from Manitoba Conservation.

• New research could see toddlers staying longer in rear-facing car seats

Child passengers who remain rear facing may be at less risk in a crash than children who are moved to forward facing car seats. A soon-to-be-published study conducted by Chris Sherwood, a research scientist from the University of Virginia Automobile Safety Laboratory, shows that there is a strong case for keeping children rear facing longer. Sherwood studied 870 children under two years of age who had been in either rear-facing or forward-facing car seats at the time of an automobile crash. The children in forward-facing seats were over four times as likely to be injured in side crashes as the children in rear facing seats.

In Scandinavian countries, it is common for children to remain rear facing until 3-4 years of age. One study by the Volvo Car Corporation found that while all child restraint systems were effective in reducing injuries, the highest injury reducing effect was found in rear-facing restraints for children up to 3-4 years of age. Here the injury reducing effect was 90% compared to an unrestrained child passenger.

Small children are anatomically different than adults. Their heads are proportionally larger compared to their body size and their necks and backs are significantly weaker. Rear-facing seats are safer for infants and young children because they support the head, neck and spine in the event of a crash.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that...

"If a car safety seat accommodates children rear-facing to higher weights, for optimal protection, the child should remain rear facing until reaching the maximum weight for the car safety seat, as long as the top of the head is below the top of the seat back".

• ATVs cause severe pediatric trauma

A new Canadian study shows that although riding ATVs is often promoted as a recreational activity suitable for children, a crash can result in severe trauma, similar to motor vehicle injuries

ATVs: Motorized toys or vehicles for children? (Yanchar, Kennedy & Russell, 2006), compared the types of injuries sustained in ATV crashes to those resulting from bicycling, dirt bikes and motor vehicle crashes. Using CHIRPP data collected over a 10-year period, the study looked at 3145 cases including 2326 from bicycling, 790 from dirt bikes, 130 from ATVs, and 610 from motor vehicles.

The findings included:

- The nature of injury and the body parts more likely to be injured in child ATV riders are more severe and are closer to the type of injuries resulting from motor vehicles than those sustained in bicycle-related crash.
- Children injured on an ATV were more likely to be hospitalized and use in-hospital resources than children injured while cycling.

Based on these findings, the authors recommend that a policy regarding child use of ATVs be developed and supported by the public, industry and government.



The Canadian Paediatric Society recommends that provinces and territories harmonize off-road vehicle legislation, including: minimum operator age of 16 years; restricting passengers to the number for which the vehicle was designed; compulsory helmet use with no exemptions; mandatory training, licensing and registration; and banning the use of three-wheeled vehicles. It also recommends appropriate enforcement of such legislation.

• Nova Scotia Steps up on Safety



The Government of Nova Scotia has passed two new laws that will protect children from motor vehicle and all-terrain vehicle related injuries.

The ATV legislation was passed on December 8th, 2005 following the release of the government's Off-Highway Vehicle Action Plan and much public and political debate. The Plan was introduced on October 12, not long after ATV-related deaths of two Nova Scotia girls in their early teens. Under the new legislation...

- Children under 14 are only allowed to ride ATVs on closed courses under strict guidelines.
- Children under age 14 are no longer allowed to ride ATVs on private land.
- Youth aged 14-15 can operate an ATV with training and parental supervision.

Manitoba ATV regulations

The Manitoba Off Road Vehicle act specifies that *"No person under the age of 14 years shall operate an off-road vehicle unless supervised and accompanied by and at all times within clear view of the person's parent or a person who has attained the age of 18 years and is authorized by the parent."*

Safer child passengers

Starting January 1, 2007, child car passengers in Nova Scotia will be safer as new car restraint regulations take effect. Under the new rules, the appropriate car seat will be based on the age and size of the child.

- Infants must be secured in a rear-facing child seat.
- Children who weigh at least 10 kilograms (22lbs.) and are at least one year old may face forward
- Children who weigh less than 18 kilograms (40 lbs.) must be in child seats
- Children who weigh more than 18 kilograms must be in a booster seat if they are younger than 9 years of age and/or less than 145 centimetres (57 inches tall).



Manitoba Child car restraint regulations

In Manitoba, the Highway Traffic Act currently specifies that *"No person shall operate, or permit the operation of, a motor vehicle on a highway unless every passenger in the vehicle who has not yet attained the age of 5 years and who is under 50 pounds in weight is properly secured in a restraining device of a kind prescribed in the regulations and the device is properly secured to the motor vehicle"*.

• **Brandon & Area Safe Community Coalition Launches Passport to Safety**

"Passport to Safety" is an on-line training tool that strives to educate young workers about workplace safety. Tragically, each year approximately 60,000 young Canadians alone experience disabling and disfiguring injuries. Passport to Safety provides young people-or any worker, with the minimum they need to know before going to work.

Career & Employment Youth Services (CEYS) is a partner of the Young Worker Injury Prevention sub-committee of the Brandon & Area Safe Communities Coalition. In the fall of 2005, CEYS received funding from the Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation, Manitoba Advanced Education and Training to purchase 500 "Passport to Safety" passports to be distributed to their clients. The Brandon & Area Safe Community Coalition is supporting the marketing component of the grant, and an Assiniboine Community College student has been hired to market the program to employers and the community.

The 500 Passports will be issued free of charge to any youth between the ages of 16 to 29 currently looking for work. Interested youth must register with CEYS or with another partner agency, the Brandon Friendship Centre, who will then disperse the Passports to pre-registered youth. Youth that receive their passport can attend an orientation session provided by Safe Workers of Tomorrow who will introduce workplace health and safety information, or they can go directly to the "Passport to Safety" website and complete the online tutorial and test.

Successful participants are awarded a "passport" transcript and certificate that can be attached to resumes to demonstrate their basic awareness of health and safety issues. Employers must note that Passport to Safety does not constitute the job-specific health and safety training that is required of all employers under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

For more information on the Passport to Safety program, check out www.passporttosafety.com or call Marnie Groeneveld at Career & Employment Youth Services, (204) 571-8800.



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