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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Give kids a boost. It's the new law! ***Child passenger safety partners spread the word***

Booster seats are nothing new, and experts have long recommended their use up to age eight, but beginning July 1 a new Michigan law mandates that all children be in a booster seat until they are 8 years old or 4'9" tall. Children must be in a seat until they reach the age requirement or the height requirement, whichever comes first.

"This law is a real win for Michigan's children," said Michigan Department of Community Health Director Janet Olszewski. "The combined use of booster seats and seat belts will save lives and decrease injuries."

Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death of children. In many cases these deaths could have been prevented by properly using a child passenger safety seat.

When used correctly, child safety seats are 71 percent effective in reducing fatalities and 50 percent effective in preventing minor injuries.

"Research has shown that child safety seats do save lives," Office of Highway Safety Planning Director Michael L. Prince said. "These seats are designed to lift children up and make safety belts fit their smaller bodies better. We want all parents to recognize the importance of child safety seats and use them correctly and consistently."

To raise awareness about the new law, television and radio public service announcements are airing across the state. Statewide partners, including Meijer stores, Celebration Cinemas and Goodrich Quality Cinemas, have agreed to air the spot in their businesses and the ad will run in all Michigan Welcome Centers and Secretary of State offices.

Eye-catching billboards will dot Michigan's highways this summer thanks to donated space from the Outdoor Advertising Association.

An informational flyer is being distributed to licensed day care centers, hospitals, WIC offices and many other organizations who are involved with families and children.

"It is vital to reach as many people as possible with this message and we thank our many partners for their support and work to help keep kids safe." Prince said.

This is a primary enforcement law so a police officer can stop a vehicle if the officer sees an improperly restrained child and issue a citation which could end up costing parents \$65 to \$165 in fines and fees for each unrestrained child in the vehicle.

The legislation, which was introduced by Sen. Michelle McManus, R-Lake Leelanau, was signed by Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm on March 27.

For more information about child passenger safety seats and the new law, please visit <http://www.michigansafekids.org/>.

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