



Governors Highway Safety Association

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2020 to JUNE 30, 2021



 **GHS**A

Letter from the Chair

Fellow Members and Friends:

The past year presented extreme challenges and unique opportunities that reinforce the importance of our critical mission to work toward zero deaths on our nation's roadways. I'm pleased to report that, despite the many uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governors Highway Safety Association had another successful year leading efforts in highway safety.

GHSA was an important voice in support of the role of equitable and fair enforcement of traffic safety laws throughout the year. Amid a national discussion about social justice and the role of law enforcement in community safety, we led the way by issuing recommendations on how to fight racism in traffic enforcement and standing up for the critical role law enforcement plays in traffic safety. We also issued a report that examines data on traffic fatalities to provide a better picture of historic racial inequities and offers solutions to encourage equity in traffic safety. I'm looking forward to additional steps GHSA will take to further advance our work in this critical area over the next 12 months.

With the COVID-19 pandemic scuttling plans for in-person events in 2020, the GHSA staff worked to provide a series of engaging webinars that allowed members and the public to stay involved and updated on the latest in highway safety. I'm excited the public health situation has improved, enabling us to hold our 2021 Annual Meeting in Denver, and I'm eager to reconnect with you face-to-face after more than a year of video calls and virtual meetings.

GHSA was able to obtain the renewal of congressional authority for NHTSA to grant waivers for states unable to fulfill certain traffic safety administrative obligations during the pandemic. With Congress working on a transportation reauthorization bill, we testified before the Senate on ways to improve highway safety programs and worked closely with NHTSA and other safety organizations to present a strong voice on behalf of the State Highway Safety Offices on Capitol Hill.

We also continued our work with the Transportation Research Board and NHTSA to provide a robust traffic safety research program. Results of recent research projects provide states with best practices for advancing and enforcing distracted driving laws, an evaluation of oral fluid testing devices and strategies for increasing law enforcement participation in high visibility initiatives, building on the library of information that SHSOs can use to improve their programs and activities.

The association continued to produce impressive publications to educate members and the public on key safety issues including micromobility, teens and speeding, and pedestrian safety. We warned of an uptick in risky driving — excessive speeding, impairment and not buckling up — during the pandemic, garnering significant media attention.

I'm extremely proud of GHSA's accomplishments during the past 12 months, which were achieved despite the financial uncertainty caused by the pandemic and without an increase in member dues for yet another year. I'm eager to watch the association's

continued growth and successes in FY 2022. GHSA's mission is as important now as it has ever been, and I'm honored to lead such a dedicated group of professionals committed to improving traffic safety for all road users.

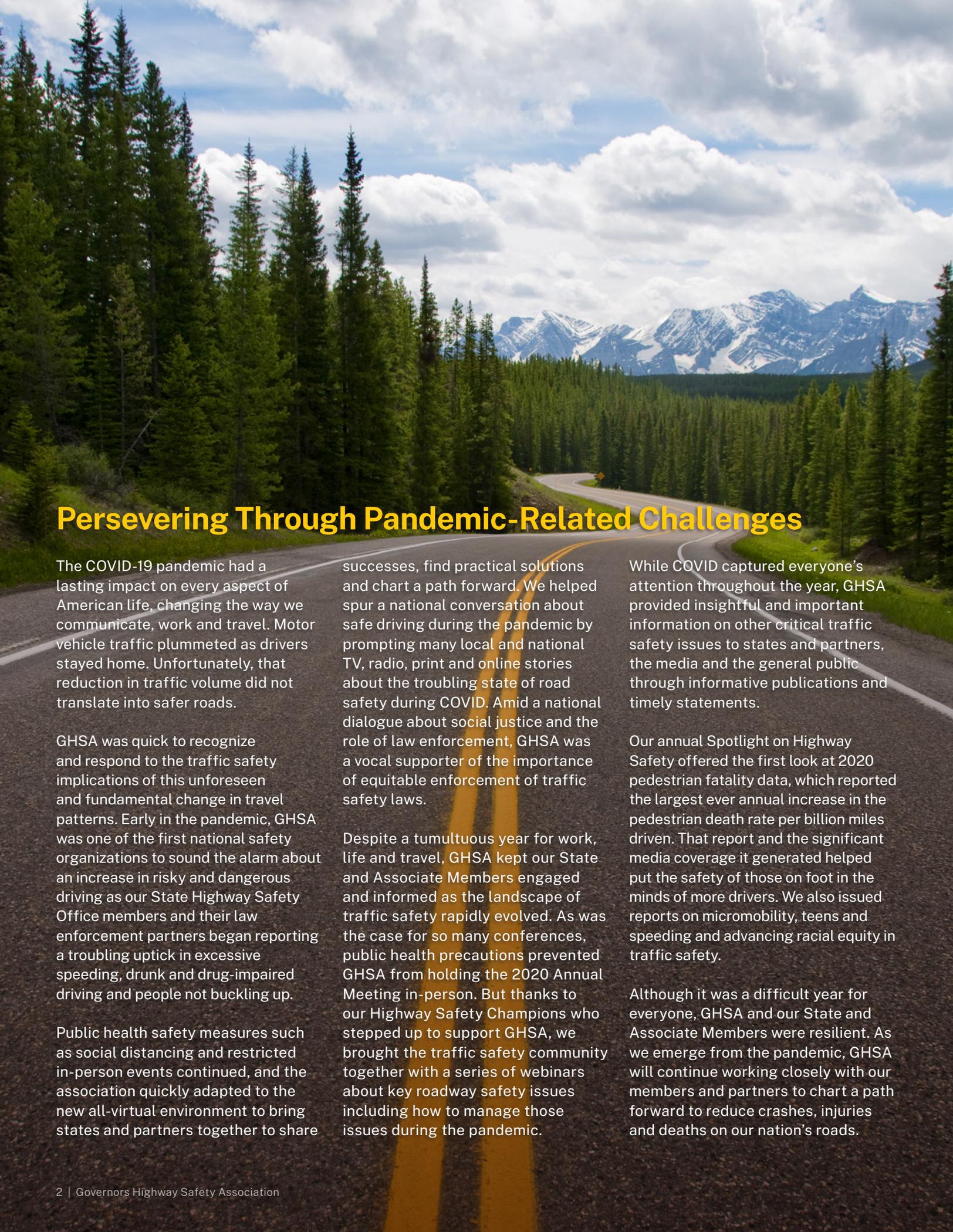
I want to give special thanks to the GHSA staff, the GHSA Executive Board and our consultants for all their hard work during a trying time in our nation's history. I am honored and humbled to have served as Chair during this past year and wish to thank each and every one of you for your support, dedication and friendship.



Chuck DeWeese

GHSA Chair

Assistant Commissioner
New York Governor's Traffic
Safety Committee



Persevering Through Pandemic-Related Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic had a lasting impact on every aspect of American life, changing the way we communicate, work and travel. Motor vehicle traffic plummeted as drivers stayed home. Unfortunately, that reduction in traffic volume did not translate into safer roads.

GHSA was quick to recognize and respond to the traffic safety implications of this unforeseen and fundamental change in travel patterns. Early in the pandemic, GHSA was one of the first national safety organizations to sound the alarm about an increase in risky and dangerous driving as our State Highway Safety Office members and their law enforcement partners began reporting a troubling uptick in excessive speeding, drunk and drug-impaired driving and people not buckling up.

Public health safety measures such as social distancing and restricted in-person events continued, and the association quickly adapted to the new all-virtual environment to bring states and partners together to share

successes, find practical solutions and chart a path forward. We helped spur a national conversation about safe driving during the pandemic by prompting many local and national TV, radio, print and online stories about the troubling state of road safety during COVID. Amid a national dialogue about social justice and the role of law enforcement, GHSA was a vocal supporter of the importance of equitable enforcement of traffic safety laws.

Despite a tumultuous year for work, life and travel, GHSA kept our State and Associate Members engaged and informed as the landscape of traffic safety rapidly evolved. As was the case for so many conferences, public health precautions prevented GHSA from holding the 2020 Annual Meeting in-person. But thanks to our Highway Safety Champions who stepped up to support GHSA, we brought the traffic safety community together with a series of webinars about key roadway safety issues including how to manage those issues during the pandemic.

While COVID captured everyone's attention throughout the year, GHSA provided insightful and important information on other critical traffic safety issues to states and partners, the media and the general public through informative publications and timely statements.

Our annual Spotlight on Highway Safety offered the first look at 2020 pedestrian fatality data, which reported the largest ever annual increase in the pedestrian death rate per billion miles driven. That report and the significant media coverage it generated helped put the safety of those on foot in the minds of more drivers. We also issued reports on micromobility, teens and speeding and advancing racial equity in traffic safety.

Although it was a difficult year for everyone, GHSA and our State and Associate Members were resilient. As we emerge from the pandemic, GHSA will continue working closely with our members and partners to chart a path forward to reduce crashes, injuries and deaths on our nation's roads.

Collaborating with Congress and Federal Agencies

Reauthorization Advocacy

With the FAST Act one-year extension set to expire on September 30, 2021, GHSA continued its strategy to ensure the next transportation reauthorization prioritizes a comprehensive approach to highway safety and reduces administrative burdens for states.

- In the summer of 2020, GHSA testified in the Senate on how Congress can improve NHTSA's grant programs. GHSA secured many of its recommendations in reauthorization legislation considered by Congress in spring 2021.
- GHSA collaborated with NHTSA, congressional staff and other national highway safety organizations to further refine its congressional recommendations. GHSA also established contacts within the offices of new members of the 117th Congress.
- GHSA advocated for renewal of NHTSA authority to grant COVID-19 related waivers for state programs during FFY 2021.



John Saunders, Virginia Highway Safety Office Director, testifies before the Senate Commerce Committee's Transportation and Safety Subcommittee.



Dr. Steven Cliff,
NHTSA Acting Administrator

NHTSA Partnership

In late 2020, GHSA met with the Biden administration's transition team for the U.S. Department of Transportation, solidifying relationships with NHTSA's new leadership and appointees in the Office of Secretary Pete Buttigieg. GHSA's leadership has met several times with the new NHTSA Acting Administrator Dr. Steven Cliff.

- During the past 12 months, GHSA and NHTSA worked together to identify and provide general COVID-19 related waivers under congressional authority, giving states the flexibility needed to respond to pandemic-related impacts.
- GHSA and NHTSA collaborated to develop new tools to help states better measure program performance. GHSA updated state resources to reflect new NHTSA guidance on virtual procedures, a revision of 2 CFR Part 200 and Management Reviews.
- In April, GHSA hosted a webinar to reintroduce state members to the Federal Relations Committee and their advocacy activities.
- GHSA submitted comments to U.S. DOT on how NHTSA can reduce paperwork burdens within its programs and how the latest revision of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices can better promote the use of changeable messaging signs for traffic safety campaigns.

Research

GHSA selects and monitors projects under a highway safety research program chartered by Congress. The National Cooperative Research and Evaluation Program (NCREP) began in federal fiscal year 2014 and currently receives \$2.5 million annually. During FY 2021:

- The program produced final reports on the implications of legislation and enforcement on electronic device use while driving, the state of knowledge and practice for automated license plate readers, an evaluation of oral fluid testing devices for drugs, and a study to determine changes in law enforcement support for high visibility traffic safety enforcement.
- Research continued on 37 projects addressing pressing issues such as ensuring child safety in for-hire rideshare vehicles, measuring the effectiveness of traffic safety public awareness efforts and communicating safe behaviors to vulnerable road users.
- Under the Behavioral Traffic Safety Cooperative Research Project, GHSA selected four new projects for FY 2022: understanding the underreporting of impaired and distracted driving in crash reporting, documenting racial bias and advancing alternative approaches to safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, studying the effectiveness of innovative messaging, and examining the effect of how distraction changes as teens gain driving experience.



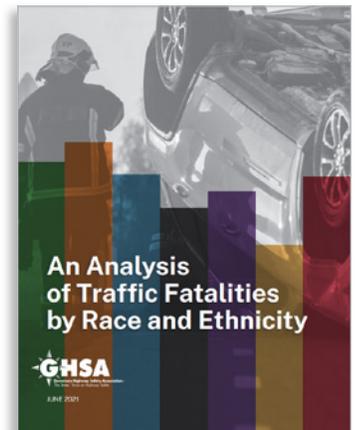
Advancing Traffic Safety Issues

GHSA addresses the most pressing traffic safety challenges through leadership, partnerships and advocacy and by offering programs and publications, sharing best practices and providing funding opportunities for states.

Equity and Law Enforcement

GHSA responded to the national discussions about equity and traffic enforcement by forming a working group in June 2020 led by GHSA's Executive Board Chair, Chuck DeWeese. During FY 2021:

- The working group oversaw development of a [statement](#) and recommendations for advancing equity in traffic enforcement.
- GHSA contracted with Sam Schwartz Consulting to review relevant research and data to provide a better understanding of the impact of fatal traffic crashes on Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). The resulting report, [An Analysis of Traffic Fatalities by Race and Ethnicity](#), received national media coverage. GHSA also contracted with Kimley-Horn to review state practices and promising approaches to advancing equity in traffic enforcement.
- GHSA has been concerned about unfair rhetoric and distortions spread within the wider safety community that unfairly criticize the role of behavioral countermeasures to advance safety. GHSA joined with MADD, the National Safety Council and AAA to send a joint letter to U.S. DOT Secretary Buttigieg expressing our shared support for a comprehensive approach to highway safety, equitable enforcement and the value of high-visibility enforcement mobilizations.



Teens

Teens are the riskiest age group on the road. GHSA remains a national leader in spotlighting teen driver safety and working with partners to educate both teens and parents about how to keep our nation's youngest drivers safe on the road.

- GHSA continued its long-term partnership with Ford Motor Company Fund to sponsor and promote initiatives designed to help teen drivers, the riskiest age group on the road, develop safe driving skills that last a lifetime. All FY 2020-21 Ford Driving Skills for Life ride and drive events were cancelled due to the pandemic, requiring GHSA and Ford to find new ways to shine the spotlight on this issue and deliver education to teens and their parents.
- In January, GHSA and Ford Motor Company Fund released the report, [Teens and Speeding: Breaking the Deadly Cycle](#), which highlights the significant role speeding plays in teen driver fatalities and offers practical tools to help states, stakeholders, parents, educators and others address this persistent and deadly problem. State highway safety offices were invited to apply for grants of up to \$25,000 to implement a recommendation(s) in the report.



GHSA's Pam Shadel Fischer and Richard Retting, formerly of Sam Schwartz Consulting, appeared on The Daily Drive, a podcast from Ford Driving Skills for Life.

- “The Daily Drive,” Ford Driving Skills for Life’s Facebook Live and podcast series, engaged teens, parents and stakeholders by showcasing programs, policies and initiatives designed to help keep novice drivers safe on the road and hosting conversations with safety experts. GHSA staff, consultants and partners were regular guests on the series offering input on speeding; drowsy, impaired and distracted driving; sharing the road with pedestrians and bicyclists; and other topics.
- GHSA partnered with Michelin North America to conduct a first of its kind national survey of parents of teen drivers to learn how the pandemic was impacting their teens’ driver education and licensing. The findings, along with recommendations to help parents fill the gaps in their teens’ formal training, were announced via a nationwide radio tour during National Teen Driver Safety Week held annually in October.

Automated Vehicle Technology

GHSA continues to provide national thought leadership on this rapidly evolving issue, working to ensure that behavioral safety remains a critical part of planning as automated vehicle technology expands on our nation’s roadways.

- GHSA, with funding from State Farm®, is working with researchers at the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute to produce a forthcoming report that will identify the training law enforcement, first responders and crash investigators will need to prepare for the future of automated vehicle technology.
- GHSA is partnering with Waymo to educate key stakeholders and the public about Waymo’s [Let’s Talk Autonomous Driving campaign](#). In conjunction with the first national observance of Pedestrian Safety Month in October 2020, GHSA worked with Waymo to develop a video to call attention to the pedestrian safety problem and how autonomous vehicle technology can help make our roadways safer for people on foot.

Non-Motorized Road User Safety

Recognizing that all non-motorized road users have a right to the road, GHSA continues to call for a comprehensive approach to pedestrian and bicyclist safety and, beginning in 2020, the safety of micromobility users. The latter includes pedal powered and electric bicycles, scooters, skateboards, skates and other personally owned or shared devices that are typically low speed, lightweight and partially or fully motorized.

- GHSA, with funding from State Farm®, published [Understanding and Tackling Micromobility: Transportation’s New Disruptor](#) in August 2020. The report provided an overview of this evolving transportation mode and explored six challenges – oversight, funding, data collection, enforcement, infrastructure and education – and the role states and their partners can play to address them.
- GHSA’s annual spotlight report, [Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State: 2020 Preliminary Data](#), and a subsequent [Addendum](#), offered the first comprehensive look at state and national trends in pedestrian deaths for the first six months and full year, respectively. The Addendum projected that the U.S. pedestrian fatality rate per billion vehicle miles traveled (VMT) jumped to 2.3 deaths in 2020 – an unprecedented 21% increase from 1.9 in 2019. Both reports call for a comprehensive approach that leverages engineering, public education, emergency response and equitable enforcement to reduce crashes and save lives.
- GHSA partnered with Uber to develop co-branded safety education modules for bicycle couriers and drivers in California. The driver module reinforces safe driving practices designed to protect drivers and their riders as well as people on foot, bicycles and scooters.



Impaired Driving

Alcohol and drugs are major factors in traffic crashes and fatalities. GHSA's commitment to eliminate impaired driving is stronger than ever as we work with states and partners to combat drunk and drugged driving.

- Ride-hailing company Lyft and GHSA partnered for a third consecutive year to award more than \$100,000 in ride credits and grant funds to five states. They used this funding to raise awareness of and prevent impaired driving during the winter holiday season and on Super Bowl Sunday.
- In partnership with Responsibility.org, GHSA provided \$245,000 to seven states to implement strategies to address high-risk impaired drivers and train law enforcement officers to detect drug-impaired drivers.
- At 430 attendees, GHSA's webinar, *Drug-Impaired Driving: An Update on Trends and Tools*, was one of the best attended of the year. Speakers with Responsibility.org and the Traffic Injury Research Foundation provided critical insights and tactics to help states address this growing problem exacerbated by the uptick in marijuana legalization.
- Ahead of Cinco de Mayo, GHSA participated in a press conference hosted by the Washington Regional Alcohol Program to promote the SoberRide designated driver program that operates throughout the D.C. area. GHSA highlighted the critical role of law enforcement in detecting and removing impaired drivers from our roadways.

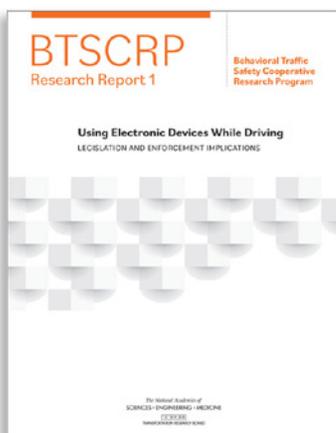


GHSA Executive Director Jonathan Adkins speaks at a press conference about the Washington Regional Alcohol Program's SoberRide designated driver promotion ahead of Cinco de Mayo.

Distracted Driving

Driver distraction is a major roadway concern, and the impact of these preventable crashes are felt every day across the country. Every state has restrictions in place to address the problem, but the laws vary in scope and rigor.

- GHSA partnered with the TRB and the NHTSA to release *Examining the Implications of Legislation and Enforcement on Electronic Device Use While Driving*, the first report from the Behavioral Traffic Safety Cooperative Research Program. The publication identifies elements shared by the most effective laws and state safety efforts and includes customized tools for legislators, law enforcement, researchers and practitioners.
- During National Distracted Driving Month, GHSA teamed with StopDistractions.org to issue a national [news release](#) encouraging states to implement a comprehensive strategy that includes high visibility enforcement of texting and cellphone bans, coupled with extensive public outreach that explains the danger for drivers and all road users.



Law Enforcement Engagement

Law enforcement faced some of its greatest challenges during the past year. As a result, there were new opportunities to look at how law enforcement can be improved and GHSA was at the forefront of that conversation. The National Law Enforcement Liaison Program (NLELP), managed by GHSA and funded by NHTSA, provided resources and guidance to help the more than 210 Law Enforcement Liaisons (LEL) working in the states and territories.

- To foster LEL engagement, information sharing and collaboration, the NLELP produced and disseminated a weekly e-newsletter, quarterly newsletter, monthly webinars and podcasts. A listserv also generated hundreds of posts, while law enforcement activities, best practices and educational events were promoted via the NLELP website and social media channels.
- In response to requests from SHSOs and LELs, the NLELP developed an onboarding document set for release in FY 2022. The document is designed to supplement SHSO orientation and training programs by outlining the roles and responsibilities of an LEL and available resources.
- GHSA and the National Safety Council continue to promote the “Check To Protect” program by providing law enforcement agencies resources they can use to raise public awareness about open vehicle recalls and foster positive community engagement.



Speeding

The U.S. has a speeding problem. Driving at high rates of speed or too fast for conditions contributes to a third of our nation’s roadway fatalities. GHSA is committed to changing the culture, so drivers slow down and save lives.

- As states began reporting an uptick in speeding and other unsafe driving behaviors at the start of the pandemic, GHSA was the first national safety organization to sound the alarm via a national [news release](#). Later in the year, NHTSA data analysis and research subsequently confirmed GHSA’s concerns. As a result, the association was invited to participate in several national webinars to discuss strategies for combating the problem.
- GHSA hosted [Speeding: Diverse Approaches to Achieving Culture Change](#) as part of a four-part webinar summer series held in lieu of the Annual Meeting. A record 510 attendees participated. In November, GHSA continued the discussion with a virtual roundtable that highlighted state and local efforts to address speeding and the opportunities and challenges presented by automated speed enforcement.
- GHSA, in partnership with the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and the National Road Safety Foundation, awarded \$100,000 grants each to Maryland and Virginia to develop, implement and evaluate comprehensive speed management pilot programs. The pandemic, however, delayed the start of these programs, which will begin in July and December 2021.

Occupant Protection

Almost half of the people killed in car crashes were not restrained at the time of the crash. GHSA supports funding for increased enforcement and works with law enforcement agencies and other partners to educate drivers and their passengers about the importance of seat belt and car seat use.

- GHSA once again partnered with Uber to promote the second National Seat Belt Day on November 14 to raise awareness of the importance of buckling up – in every seating position and on every trip.
- Memorial Day marks the unofficial start of the summer travel season and what is referred to as the “100 Deadliest Days” due to a historic increase in traffic fatalities between late May and the Labor Day weekend. [GHSA highlighted state initiatives](#) to reinforce the lifesaving importance of buckling up every trip and ensuring that children are properly restrained in the appropriate child seat.

Expanding and Delivering Member Services

Consulting Services Initiative (CSI)

GHSA's CSI continued to provide expert assistance on a variety of projects. Consultants worked with six states on projects to update FARS or policy and procedure manuals; develop employee performance and development planning documents, a child passenger safety memorandum of understanding, an impaired driving state of practice document, and monitoring procedures; and provided planning guidance and technical hosting support for a newly formed statewide traffic safety council.

Directions in Highway Safety

GHSA's quarterly newsletter provided members timely news and updates on pressing highway safety issues. This year the format was changed from a PDF to an interactive online edition allowing GHSA to share links to resources, materials and videos in a user-friendly format. Each newsletter was distributed to more than 1,200 SHSO and Associate Members.

Website

The GHSA website provides valuable and timely resources to the traffic safety community, members of the media and the public. More than 370,000 people visited the GHSA website to access information about state traffic safety laws, behavioral safety issues and GHSA events, news and publications. In addition, GHSA redesigned the state laws website to enhance user friendliness, making the vast amount of information easier to use.

Webinars

GHSA was able to quickly respond to breaking news and provide guidance and resources by providing a series of webinars, including those which were offered as part of the Annual Meeting. Through webinars, GHSA provided avenues for discussion and direct communication with highway safety experts. GHSA hosted 9 webinars, focusing on topics such as the detrimental effects of speeding, micromobility, drug-impaired driving and more. Featured speakers included GHSA members, researchers, advocates, partners and senior NHTSA staff.

Executive Seminar

In the virtual 2021 environment, GHSA pivoted from an in-person Executive Seminar format to an online training series covering key highway safety management topics. The virtual platform allowed 43 senior SHSO staff to participate. GHSA is also launching an initiative to develop a new seminar for mid-level state highway safety office managers in the coming year.

2020 Annual Meeting

The global pandemic forced the cancellation of GHSA's 2020 Annual Meeting, scheduled to be held in Pittsburgh. Instead, GHSA pivoted to offer a series of virtual events featuring content that had been in development for the in-person meeting. More than 1,400 people participated in virtual events that included state member trainings and webinars on a variety of topics including:

- **Understanding Micromobility: Transportation's New Disruptor**
- **Speeding: Diverse Approaches to Achieving Culture Change**
- **Drug-Impaired Driving: An Update on Trends and Tools**
- **Quarantined! Managing Highway Safety Programs During a Public Health Emergency**

State Members

Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

Alaska Highway Safety Office

American Samoa Department of Public Safety

Arizona Governor's Office of Highway Safety

Arkansas Highway Safety Office

California Office of Traffic Safety

Colorado Office of Transportation Safety

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South Carolina Office of Highway Safety and Justice Programs

South Dakota Office of Highway Safety

Tennessee Highway Safety Office

Texas Department of Transportation

U.S. Virgin Islands Police Department

Utah Highway Safety Office

Vermont State Highway Safety Office - Behavioral Safety Unit

Virginia DMV Highway Safety Office

Washington Traffic Safety Commission

West Virginia Governor's Highway Safety Program

Wisconsin Bureau of Transportation Safety

Wyoming Department of Transportation

Associate Members

GHSA appreciates the contributions of these nearly 160 individuals and organizations that support the association's mission.

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Acusensus Inc.

ADEPT Driver

Adult Driver Services/Driver Safety Consultants, Inc.

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Alliance for Automotive Innovation

Alliance Highway Safety

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