

# Birmingham Regional Coalition

Distracted Driving & Young Drivers Task Force Webinar  
1:00 PM

## MEETING SUMMARY

### Attendees

Name	Organization/Agency
Alex Maistros	Cambridge Systematics
Becky Malenke	Neel-Shaffer, Inc. ALSITE
Danena Gaines	Cambridge Systematics
David Schwebel	UAB
Despina Stavrinou	UAB
Eric Tang	Cambridge Systematics
Folashade Ayanwale	ADPH
Harry He	RPCGB
Jim Meads	SAIN
Julie Farmer	Children's Hospital
Luana Ozelim	University of Alabama
Marie Crew	Children's Hospital
Sam Meriwether	ADECA
Stephanie Vereen	University of Alabama
Steven Jones	University of Alabama
Willy Giron	University of Alabama

### Agenda

- Welcome and introductions
- Regional Safety Plan
- Distracted driver emphasis area
  - » Data review
  - » Effective countermeasures
  - » Speed planning

## 🔗 Young Driver emphasis area

- » Data review
- » Effective countermeasures
- » Speed planning

## 🔗 Next steps

### **Welcome & Introductions**

Danena Gaines, Ph.D. (Cambridge Systematics) welcomed meeting attendees and had participants to introduce themselves.

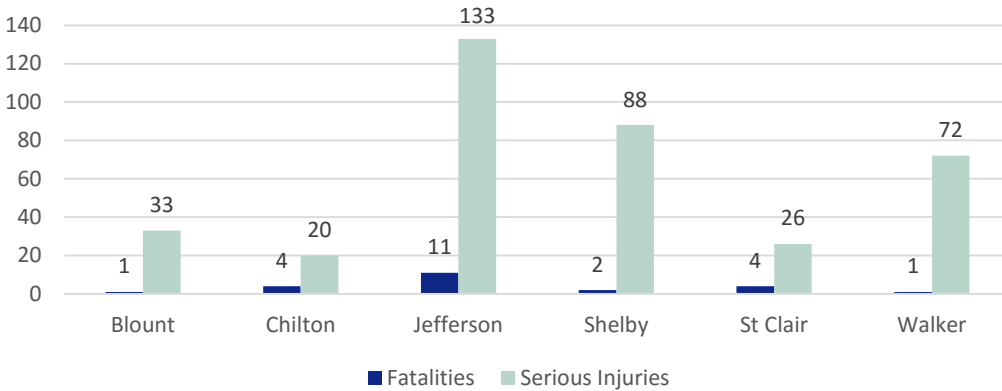
### **Regional Safety Plan**

Danena Gaines reviewed the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) update process and provided a summary of the activities completed to date. A bottom up approach will be used to update Alabama's SHSP based on the regional safety plans developed as a part of the pilot project. In the first meeting, the group reviewed high-level crash data and discussed potential programs and countermeasures. In the second meeting, the group selected emphasis areas and discussed potential countermeasures specific to the selected emphasis areas. The purpose of this meeting is to identify potential action steps to be included in the Birmingham Regional Safety Action Plan.

### **Distracted Driver Emphasis Area- Data Review**

Danena Gaines gave a brief overview of the distracted driving related fatalities and serious injuries by county as depicted in Figure 1. The data review for this meeting is only intended to depict the differences between counties, and is not intended to be extensive. Additional data may be made available through the project team. It was noted that the distracted driving fatalities and serious injuries in each county reflect the overall fatality and serious injury crash trends in each county.

Figure 1- Birmingham Region Distracted Driving Fatalities & Serious Injuries by County (2010-2014)



### **Distracted Driving- Effective Countermeasures**

Danena Gaines presented a list of effective countermeasures to reduce distracted driving crashes. These countermeasures included:

- Installation of centerline rumble strips
- Roadway infrastructure improvements to reduce the likelihood and severity of run-off-road and/or head-on collisions
- High visibility cell phone/ text messaging enforcement
- Communication and outreach on distracted driving

### **Distracted Driving Speed Planning**

Danena Gaines facilitated a speed planning session to develop countermeasures and action items for the Birmingham Regional Plan. When possible countermeasures should cover the Four E's, engineering, education, enforcement and emergency services. The following agencies/organizations offered potential countermeasures and exiting programs that may be expanded:

UAB- David Schwebel

- Two ways to be effective: One way is to change the acceptable norm while the other is to increase the perception of vulnerability through simulators. Simulators have been used at high schools, YMCAs, colleges and universities, and faith based organizations.
- Can involve drivers outside of young drivers by locating simulators in malls, hospitals, state fairs, or any other eight-foot by eight-foot area.
- There may be policy issues, which may be altered to allow for promotion/ exposure of safety messages.

UAB- Despina Stavrinos

- The simulators are typically effective after one session.
- There is a general misconception that hands free means safer.
- Distracted driving messages may be promoted while people wait in line at the DMV.
- Have talked with UAB and they are willing to consider incorporating safe driving as a workplace priority. Consider reaching out to other employers and using resources found at <http://trafficsafety.org/safety/risk/distracted-driving-resources>.

#### ADECA- Sam Merriweather

- STEP enforcements grants include speeding, occupant protection, and general traffics safety enforcement. Regional regrouping has caused the agency to restart programs in many ways, but in the future, there will be additional funds made available for specific enforcement or additional agencies requesting traffic safety enforcement funds.
- There is no NHTSA funding specifically for distracted driving enforcement.

#### SAIN- Jim Meads

- It is critically important to get people of all ages involved and to have parents keep kids accountable for good driving behaviors.
- A local high school did an outreach to parents of student's regarding issues facing teenagers. Incorporating distracted driving messages may be a way to keep parents aware of safe driving and distracted driving issues.
- As a parent, it would be easier to connect to message from children's school than a canned DMV message.

#### Children's Hospital- Julie Farmer

- Many kids take a driving course, which grants a yellow slip allowing the course participant to get a license without a driving test. This limits time in the DMV.

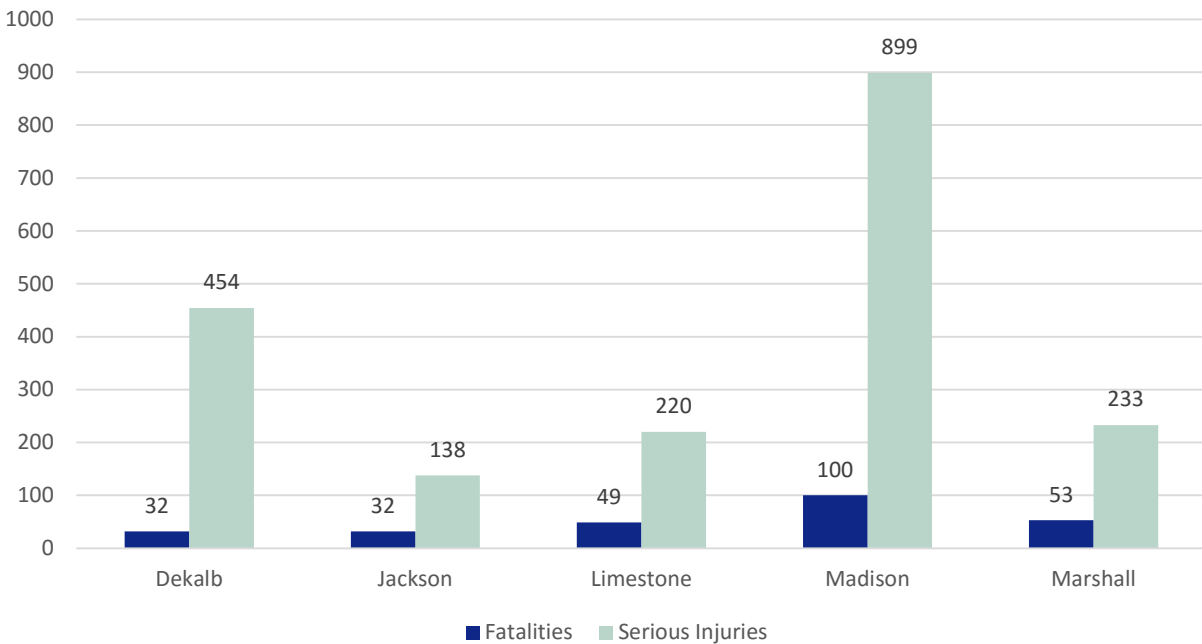
#### Cambridge Systematics- Danena Gaines

- Policy change itself may not be possible at the regional level, but the group should consider informing those who can change policy.
- There are several potential infrastructure countermeasures that the team will present at the next in person meeting.
- Consider reaching out to local employers to engage their employees in safe driving practices including distracted driving.

#### **Young Driver Emphasis Area- Data Review**

Eric Tang (Cambridge Systematics) gave a brief overview of the young driver related fatalities and serious injuries by county as depicted in Figure 2. The data review for this meeting is only intended to depict the differences between counties, and is not intended to be extensive. Additional data may be made available through the project team. It was noted that the young driver related fatalities and serious injuries in each county reflect the overall fatality and serious injury crash trends in each county.

Figure 2- Birmingham Region Aggressive Driving Fatalities and Serious Injuries by County (2010-2014)



### Young Driver- Effective Countermeasures

Eric Tang presented a list of effective countermeasures to reduce young driver related crashes. These countermeasures included:

- Publicize and enforce laws pertaining to underage drinking and driving
- Publicize and enforce safety belt laws
- Motivational interviewing
- Class action
- Graduated Driver’s License (GDL)

### Young Driver Speed Planning

Eric Tang facilitated a speed planning session to develop countermeasures and action items for the Birmingham Regional Plan concerning young drivers. When possible countermeasures should cover the Four E’s, engineering, education, enforcement and emergency services. The following agencies/organizations offered potential countermeasures and exiting programs that may be expanded:

ADPH- Folashade Ayanwale

- SADD is heavily involved with driver's education teachers. They are the great way to get programs into schools. There are teen driving programs in the hospitals and the "Your Keys to Drive" program.
- Driver's education programs, and maybe even SADD, could do a full week of teen specific driving education, similar to rock the belt, during Teen Safe Driver Week. It would be easy to use a kit or other information from NHTSA or GHSA.

#### Children's Hospital - Marie Crew

- Driver's education is a good partner, especially for those schools that do not have a SADD program. Another club to collaborate with is the Anchor Clubs.
- Parents are unaware of what GDL is and what it means for their young drivers. Educating parents on GDL is a huge component. Children's hospital has a GDL video on their website, which may be distributed in more places.
- Countdown to Drive program aims to get parents and their pre-teens to work together on safe passenger behaviors and the transition to safe drivers. It is very difficult to get pre-teens and parents together at the same time to discuss safe driving.
- Look into working with insurance agents to invite clients to bring pre-teens and parents together in a public setting. Motivated insurance agents are critical.
- ALDOT, SADD, MADD, and Children's Hospital will be hosting a teen safe driving program and all day training session. This event is geared towards drivers ages 16 and 17 and will be a yearly event which will change locations around the state.

#### UAB- David Schwebel

- There is a lot of overlap among the emphasis areas, including younger driver. If we can combine the message, we can also get messages to parents in a similar manner as was recommended for the distracted driver emphasis areas.
- Materials should be reviewed and updated where applicable.

#### ADECA- Sam Merriweather

- We are working with ALEA on commercials to educate parents on GDL. This is going to be an initiative across the state and will include radio advertisements.

#### Children's Hospital- Julie Farmer

- Think First is a brain and spinal cord injury prevention program, which includes information about the behaviors of a good passenger and looking forward to becoming a good driver.

#### UAB- Despina Stavrinos

- All countermeasures should consider evaluation methods.

### **Next Steps**

- The project team will distribute a meeting summary and the presentation for the meeting.
- The project team will take the action steps recommended in this meeting and develop them into a formal action step plan that will be presented at the next meeting for inclusion into the regional plan.
- The next coalition meeting will be held in February 2016 (date TBD) to finalize action plans.