

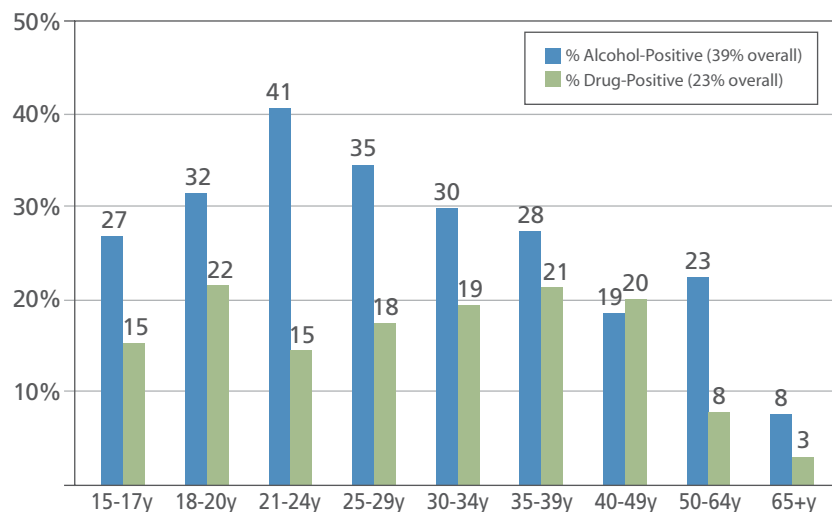
COMBATING IMPAIRED DRIVING

The Challenge: Lower the number of alcohol- and drug-related traffic crashes in Hawaii.

BACKGROUND

Hawaii ranks ninth in the nation in the percentage of traffic fatalities that involved impaired driving. Almost half (48 percent) of all fatal traffic crashes in Hawaii over the period 2001-2005 involved a driver who tested positive for alcohol or drugs, with a resulting average of 63 fatalities in Hawaii each year. Alcohol was involved in 36 percent of the crashes and 39 percent of the fatalities, while 22 percent of the crashes and 23 percent of the fatalities involved a drug-positive driver. Compared to other drivers, alcohol-positive drivers were younger, less likely to use protective devices, and had more severe injuries.

FIGURE 5
Drivers Involved in Fatal Traffic Crashes in Hawaii, 2001-2005
Proportion of Drivers Who Tested Positive for Alcohol or Drugs, by Age Group



Since 1971, Hawaii has passed major legislation to reduce impaired driving. Legislation established 21 as the minimum age for legal consumption of alcohol; established zero alcohol tolerance for drivers under 21; and established .08 blood alcohol content as the legal definition of impaired driving. Hawaii experienced moderate improvement between 2000 and 2002, with an average of 33 percent traffic fatalities involving alcohol impaired driving; however, over the next three years (2003-2005), the proportion of traffic fatalities related to alcohol-impaired driving rose to 42 percent; a 27 percent increase. Despite these measures, a high incident of alcohol related accidents continue to be experienced. The challenge persists.



STRATEGIES



LEGISLATION AND FUNDING

- Set up special courts within the Judiciary to provide a systematic and coordinated approach to prosecuting, sentencing, monitoring and treating DUI offenders.
- Establish Ignition Interlock option that would allow offenders to install an in-vehicle device that would block ignition when their blood alcohol level is over a preset limit.
- Improve Administrative Driver License Revocation Office documentation and communication.
- Tap into available funding sources for alcohol- and drug-abuse programs.
- Return at least 90 percent of surcharges assessed against DUI offenses to communities with comprehensive impaired-driving programs to support program funding.

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ACTION

- Expand mandatory server trainer program to cover all retail outlets statewide that sell liquor, including bars, restaurants, caterers and retailers.
- Develop programs and best practices to educate teen drivers, families and at-risk groups, that emphasize the practice of model behavior to deter drunk driving, speeding and non-seat belt use.
- Provide specialized training for police, prosecutors, and the Judiciary to keep up with latest trends and legal issues.
- Include focus on DUI issues in driver education programs and establish mandatory parent meetings for teen drivers.
- Provide training to help medical staff, emergency medical services technicians, teachers, and driver's education instructors recognize impairment.
- Promote proactive good driver insurance programs.

- Expand UMADD, the college-based chapters of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, to all college campuses in Hawaii in order to increase peer pressure aimed at curbing underage drinking, high-risk drinking, and impaired driving.
- Develop a Statewide DUI Task Force to increase focus on alcohol and drug strategies from implementation to evaluation.
- Support statewide court monitoring program to provide data on DUI trial results.
- Support expansion of alcohol-intervention program to all hospital emergency room cases in order to affect thousands of drivers who may be alcohol-dependent.

ENFORCEMENT

- Urge police departments to adopt a mandatory blood draw policy for serious vehicle crashes.
- Require county liquor commissions to expand compliance checks to include "off premise" locations such as small liquor stores and convenience outlets.
- Continue high-visibility sobriety checkpoints and media campaigns.

ENGINEERING

- Install milled rumble strips at centerline and roadway shoulders because drinking and driving can cause drowsiness, especially in rural areas where long distances are a factor.

DATA NEEDS

- Develop a standardized motor vehicle accident report form, coordinated data collection methods, and an accessible crash database.