

educate and enlist national African American organizations to focus on the motor vehicle problem. NHTSA also contracted with the Cambridge Institute for Applied Research to assess how best to reach the African American community. The Institute concluded that focusing on key metropolitan/urban areas with large African American populations would yield considerable results in increasing safety belt use and thereby reduce injuries and fatalities among this group.

Also leading the way in research relating to this issue was Meharry Medical College, a predominately African American Medical College, which released a report funded by General Motors Corporation entitled, *Achieving A Credible Health and Safety Approach to Increasing Seat Belt Use Among African Americans*. Meharry reported that by increasing safety belt use by African Americans to 100 percent, 1,300 lives could be saved, 26,000 injuries prevented and \$2.5 billion saved every year. This report helped galvanize the commitment of the African American community and Black legislators to address traffic safety issues, particularly safety belt and child safety seat use. One of the recommendations from the Meharry Report suggested that a panel of African American leaders periodically convene to identify additional strategies to increase safety belt use in their community.

In October 1999, NHTSA collaborated with Meharry Medical College on a second report entitled, *The Role of African-American National Organizations in Increasing Seat Belt Use Among African-Americans: A Health and Safety Forum & Student Practicum*. One of the Forum's principal recommendations was to convene a national body, under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Transportation, whose purpose would be, " * * * to inspire and excite all sectors of the American public to take action and address the public health crisis (by providing) strategies that could be implemented by all Americans to close the gap in safety belt use."

This led to significant efforts by several national African American leadership organizations, members of the Congressional Black Caucus, National Black Caucus of State Legislators, and most notably to the Blue Ribbon Panel to Increase Seat Belt Use Among African Americans. This Panel, which convened in June 2000 and consisted of African American leaders from civic, health and medicine, faith-based, academia, and law enforcement backgrounds, was charged

with developing recommendations and strategies for increasing safety belt use among African Americans. The Panel documented its findings in a December 2000 report entitled, *Blue Ribbon Panel To Increase Safety Belt Use Among African Americans: A Report to the Nation*. The report, which stressed the need to increase safety belt use among this population and recommended a number of specific strategies, was well received by the African American community and government officials. It can be viewed at [<http://www.bchle.org>]

Concurrent with these research activities, NHTSA began working with States to implement the successful Click It or Ticket/Operation ABC Mobilizations. The Click It or Ticket model consists of intensive, widespread enforcement of a State's safety belt law coupled with earned and paid media that publicizes enforcement efforts. Specifically, media activities inform the motoring public directly about the enforcement campaign and paid media employs the "Click It or Ticket" slogan. Click It or Ticket, which began in North Carolina in 1993, has a strong track record of increasing safety belt use. Focus group testing demonstrates that Click It or Ticket's message resonates well with the hard-core non-user of safety belts.

NHTSA's May 2002 Click It or Ticket Mobilization, involving ten "full implementation States," showed the effectiveness of the campaign's approach in raising safety belt use. Full participation involved a statewide coverage program employing the Click It or Ticket model of defined periods of earned media (5 weeks), paid media (2 weeks) and intensive enforcement (2 weeks). Paid media used "Click It or Ticket" or similar direct enforcement messages. During this mobilization, belt use increased 8.6 percentage points (on average) among the full implementation States, versus a 2.7 percentage point increase (on average) among partial implementation States. Partial implementation States had some variation of the full implementation, but not all of the elements, such as following the model's timeline but only conducted conducting modest paid media or covering only a portion of the State. There was a 0.5 percentage point increase (on average) in comparison States, which did not use direct paid advertisements.

Looking to the Future

Although the latest observational surveys of safety belt use for African Americans are positive, approximately one-quarter of this population still is not buckling up. The non-user segment of

this population remains the most difficult group to reach and warrants enhanced efforts.

NHTSA's mission is to ensure that everyone is buckled up, and to develop and implement national activities that will generate further positive change in safety belt and child safety seat use. NHTSA's programs are tailored to meet the unique needs of communities, use evidence-based and proven strategies, and rely on close collaborations and partnerships with community-based service providers.

As part of this on-going effort to define strategies that work best to increase safety belt use in African American communities, NHTSA announces this demonstration program to examine the premise, presented by the Cambridge Institute for Applied Research, that focusing on key metropolitan/urban areas with large African American populations will reduce injuries and fatalities among this group. Through the award of a Cooperative Agreement to a national organization that serves the African American community, NHTSA hopes to increase safety belt use in metropolitan/urban communities with large African American populations and to identify effective strategies that can be replicated in other African American communities across the Nation.

In June 2003, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Administrator of NHTSA, and the National Council of Negro Women, convened a Leadership Forum on Increasing Safety Belt Use in the African American Community. The Forum served to acknowledge the recent increases in African American safety belt use and to reaffirm the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel to Increase Seat Belt Use in the African American Community. In addition to acknowledging the success of the Blue Ribbon Panel, the Leadership Forum discussed next steps to further increase safety belt use among urban-based African American populations. The strategies identified by the Blue Ribbon Panel will be utilized in the demonstration program.

Objective

The objective of the demonstration program is to examine the impact of various strategies to increase safety belt use in key metropolitan/urban areas with large African American populations. NHTSA and the successful applicant will select sites in metropolitan/urban areas with diverse geographical distribution and with safety belt usage rates lower than the national average. By implementing different strategies in different selected