



Brenda Fitzgerald, M.D., Commissioner

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **The Georgia Department of Public Health and Georgia State Patrol are Partnering to Give Kids a Boost** *New State Law Requires Booster Seats up to Age 8*

**ATLANTA** – The Georgia Department of Public Health and the Georgia State Patrol are partnering to “Give Kids a Boost.” This statewide campaign is aimed at educating parents of the new state law effective July 1 that requires children up to 8-years-old to be properly secured in an approved car or booster seat.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children across the country, and booster seats can reduce fatal injuries by nearly 60 percent.

“The innovative partnership between Public Health and the Georgia State Patrol allows us to educate more parents on this simple yet effective safety measure that could save their child’s life,” said Brenda Fitzgerald, M.D., DPH Commissioner. “Thanks to the support of our statewide and local partners, we can better protect Georgia’s children with a strong booster seat law.”

The new law brings Georgia in line with the age recommendations of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration by raising the mandatory booster seat age to 8. Georgia is already one of 47 states that require booster seats or other appropriate devices for children who have outgrown their car seats but are still too small to use an adult seat belt safely.

Colonel Bill Hitchens, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Public Safety, said Georgia State Troopers routinely conduct safety checks and other public outreach efforts to inform drivers of the need to properly restrain children while they travel. “A traffic crash can occur at any time and under any travel conditions, so it is vital that children are properly restrained at all times in a motor vehicle to prevent serious injuries,” he said. “Children do not know they are at risk and adults must take the proper steps to keep them safe. Give Kids a Boost is a unique partnership between two state agencies with the common goal of protecting children.”

The Give Kids a Boost Campaign is kicking off events around the state to help make sure children are protected by using the proper car or booster seat. Contact your local county health department or local state patrol post for more information about *Give Kids a Boost* activities in your area.

#### About the Georgia Department of Public Health

The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) is the lead agency responsible for the health of Georgia's communities and the entire population. In 2011, the General Assembly restored DPH to its own state agency after more than 30 years consolidated under other departments. At the state level, DPH is divided into numerous divisions, sections, programs and offices, and at the local level, DPH functions via 18 health districts and 159 county health departments. Through the changes, the mission has remained constant – to protect the lives of all Georgians. Today, DPH's main functions include: Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Maternal and Child Health, Infectious Disease and Immunization, Environmental Health, Epidemiology, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Emergency Medical Services, Pharmacy, Nursing, Volunteer Health Care, the Office of Health Equity, Vital Records and the State Public Health Laboratory. For more information on DPH, visit [www.health.state.ga.us](http://www.health.state.ga.us).