



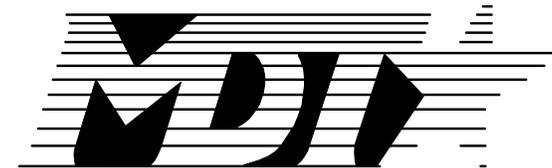
**State of Montana
Occupant Protection for Children Assessment
Final Report**

September 18 – 22, 2005

Technical Assessment Team

**Lt. Joel Bolton
William L. Hall
Kathryn E. Kruger**

Montana Department of Transportation



-serving you with pride

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
TABLE OF DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS	4
INTRODUCTION	5
SUMMARY OF MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS.....	6
A. MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP.....	9
FINDINGS.....	9
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	10
B. DATA.....	11
FINDINGS.....	11
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	12
C. EVALUATION.....	13
FINDINGS.....	13
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	13
D. TRAINING	14
FINDINGS.....	14
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	15
E. CHILD RESTRAINT INSPECTION AND DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM.....	16
FINDINGS.....	16
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	16
F. LEGISLATION/REGULATION/POLICY.....	18
FINDINGS.....	18
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	18
G. LAW ENFORCEMENT.....	19
FINDINGS.....	19
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	19
H. PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION	21
FINDINGS.....	21
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	22

I. COMMUNITY PROGRAMS24
 FINDINGS24
 RECOMMENDATIONS24

ASSESSMENT AGENDA26

OPC ASSESSMENT TEAM CREDENTIALS.....29

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Occupant Protection for Children (OPC) Technical Assistance Team acknowledges and thanks Priscilla Sinclair, Highway Traffic Safety Officer, State Highway Traffic Safety Office (SHTSO), and Audrey Allums, Training and Developing Officer, SHTSO, for their support in making this OPC Assessment possible. The Team also extends their appreciation to Pam Buckman, Program Specialist, SHTSO, who was responsible for all of the assessment logistics, briefing materials, assistance in identifying presenters, and scheduling their appearances before the Assessment Team. The Team also wishes to commend Belinda Goodwin, the Administrative Consultant, for her invaluable contributions in managing the production of the report.

In 2004, the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) facilitated the development of the OPC Assessment process. Shirley Wise, Regional Program Manager from the NHTSA Rocky Mountain Region Office, initiated Montana's interest. The Team thanks Shirley for her support of this project.

The Team also thanks each of the participants in the assessment for their time and energy invested in preparing and delivering presentations or completing a written survey forms. Their candor and thoroughness in presenting activities to address occupant protection for children in Montana greatly assisted the Team in conducting the most complete assessment possible.

The Team believes that this report will assist the State in developing a strategic plan to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of its OPC program to prevent injuries, save lives and reduce economic costs of motor vehicle crashes on Montana's roadways.

The Team wishes to commend the SHTSO for agreeing to have the OPC Assessment conducted, and their willingness to make the assessment a meaningful and comprehensive product for use throughout Montana. The Team also commends and encourages all who are involved in the day-to-day functions of improving the OPC program in Montana, especially the OPC advocates, educators, technicians and instructors working in their communities to protect Montana's children.

TABLE OF DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Definition</u>
CPS	Child passenger safety
GHSA	Governor's Highway Safety Association
HMHB	Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies
HSP	Highway Safety Plan
MDT	Montana Department of Transportation
MVC	Motor vehicle crash
NHTSA	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
OP	Occupant protection
OPC	Occupant protection for children
SHTSO	State Highway Traffic Safety Office
SKSC	Safe Kids Safe Communities

INTRODUCTION

The Governor's Highway Safety Association (GHSA) through a grant from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) developed an Occupant Protection for Children (OPC) Assessment for use by state highway safety offices. Because the Assessment is designed to address issues relating to both younger and older children, it is identified as Occupant Protection for Children. The Assessment is designed to help states examine their OPC Program and create a strategic plan for the future.

The OPC Assessment will allow states to comprehensively evaluate all aspects of their OPC program and assist them in determining how to best use limited resources in the most effective and strategic manner. Assessments traditionally utilize multi-disciplinary teams of national experts to assist states in conducting administrative reviews of their programs. To encourage states to use this new tool, the OPC Assessment has been designed in a more flexible manner to address the diverse needs, skills and abilities of the various states.

As part of the OPC Assessment, the GHSA has developed the key elements of a comprehensive OPC program. This project provides states with a decision-making tool in the form of benchmark guidance for each of the key program elements. This guidance is based on an examination of best practices by a panel of experts in the OPC area. As with other traffic safety programs, however, it is understood that due to funding and staff limitations, each state must make its own decision about how to maximize its existing resources.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Major recommendations are “**bolded**” within individual sections.

- The State of Montana should establish a state occupant protection for children (OPC) task force to monitor, review, plan, and promote occupant protection for children activities through recommendations to SHTSO. This OPC task force should be composed of representatives from SHTSO, HMHB, SKSC, state and local law enforcement, certified instructors and technicians, tribal representatives, and other stakeholders from all regions of the State.
- While fatalities and injuries among children represent a relatively small percentage overall, OPC should continue to be a priority so as to shape future behavior. The State of Montana should assess whether the level of state highway safety funding is sufficient to keep the numbers small and to assure that sufficient local programs and services are in place to provide services to the young children and expand programs to older children (through age 15) as well.
- SHTSO should review whether their mandates and directives constrain local programs’ ability to meet their individual communities’ needs.
- Designate an agency or individual with the responsibility of developing and maintaining a current and accurate list of certified technicians, instructors, inspection stations, and other programs. Designate an agency or individual with the responsibility of communicating with the technicians, instructors and program coordinators on a regular basis.
- Assure that SHTSO makes use of fatality and injury rates or rankings, in addition to raw numbers, in developing highway safety plans.
- Conduct annual or bi-annual observational studies to monitor restraint use for children.
- SHTSO should require grantees to include not just a process evaluation but an outcome evaluation, such as pre and post-program observational surveys of child restraint, booster seat, and seat belt use, whenever possible.
- The State needs to develop a process for using the list from NHTSA containing the names of those persons who have been certified to identify technicians needing recertification and geographic locations needing technicians or instructors.
- The State should provide the State Lead Instructor with the tools, resources, funding and authority to assure that all training classes are conducted in accordance with NHTSA, Safe Kids Certification Program, and Montana policies and guidelines. The State Lead Instructor should also be used to identify, mentor, and assist potential instructors in achieving their goals.

- CPS Awareness classes should be considered as a means to promote interest in the certification classes in the State, particularly in underserved areas and special populations. Existing short courses should also be used to reach professions, such as law enforcement, first responders, child care providers, school transportation providers, and health care providers.
- In preparation for the 2007 legislative session, traffic safety advocates should continue building grass roots support through local programs and other avenues to achieve primary enforcement for both safety belt and child restraint laws.
- In addition, to better protect Montana's children, the State's legislative agenda should include the elements of model occupant protection laws:
 - Prohibitions against children riding in the cargo area of pickup trucks;
 - Increasing the child restraint requirements to include children through, and including, 8 years of age
 - Requiring children 12 and under be properly restrained in the rear seat when a rear seat position is available;
 - Making the driver responsible for restraint violations by passengers under the age of 16;
 - Adding the assignment of driver's license points as penalties for violations of occupant and child restraint laws; and
 - Remove all exceptions for riding without appropriate restraint when restraints are available.
- SHTSO should develop a document to clarify the current occupant protection laws and a side-by-side comparison with best practice recommendations. This document should be used for public education purposes.
- SHTSO should move immediately to deal with law enforcement concerns over the child passenger safety certification and recertification processes.
- SHTSO, through the Law Enforcement Liaison position, should solicit increased local law enforcement involvement in OPC enforcement and education; determine and respond to police traffic safety training needs; and share innovative methods of enforcing the State's secondary OP laws.
- Initiate a needs assessment to determine the best form of communication tools to reach Montana's underserved and under represented populations. Assure that the assessment involves representatives from the targeted population such, as ranchers and tribal educators and that draft materials are tested with the targeted population.
- Review the standard materials packet to assure materials are well written, relevant, understandable and accurate.
- Make it a priority to develop a stand-alone, centralized, easy to remember, occupant protection/child passenger safety website, e.g., www.buckleupmontana.org, with a

corresponding toll-free telephone number. The goal of the website and toll-free line is to serve as a centralized source for Montana-specific safe transportation information. Through these services parents, caregivers, transporters and advocates can access accurate information about Montana's occupant restraint laws; the correct use of restraint systems for children, youth, and adults; and the types and locations of services available.

- SHTSO should continue to evaluate and assess the level of outside funding available to local coalitions and develop short and long range strategies to continue the level of service being provided should other funding streams dry up.

A. MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Guideline: *Each State should have centralized OPC program planning, implementation, coordination and monitoring to achieve and sustain a high rate of use and correct use of child restraints.*

FINDINGS

- Leadership for Montana's Occupant Protection for Children (OPC) Program is shared between the State Highway Traffic Safety Office (SHTSO) and the local Safe Kids/Safe Communities (SKSC) Coalitions coordinated through Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies (HMHB).
- The State of Montana has accomplished their child passenger safety training, public information and outreach programs, fitting stations, and distribution programs using a significant portion of the funds obtained from the Safe Kids BuckleUp program grant funds available to state and local Safe Kids coalitions.
- A Highway Safety Planning Meeting was held during June 2005 allowing partners and sub-grantees to offer input during development of the Federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 *Highway Safety Plan (HSP)*.
- Based upon fatality data and the problem identification document, Occupant Protection (OP) is ranked as the second priority in the State's HSP FY2006.
- Montana's OP programs have increased seat belt use to 80.5 percent.
- It appears that the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) provides motor vehicle crash and injury data to local community programs for use in developing program strategies in collaboration with local decision makers.
- Partnerships exist at the state level and in local communities involving key stakeholders.
- The SHTSO has certified technicians on staff.
- The Team was unable to determine whether there was an agency or individual designated with the responsibility of developing and maintaining a current and accurate list of certified technicians, instructors, inspection stations, and other programs. Furthermore, we were unable to determine if there was any agency or individual designated with the responsibility of communicating with the technicians, instructors and program coordinators.
- Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies has a toll-free telephone number to facilitate the public's access to information and services regarding children's health and safety issues.

- Montana Safe Kids/Safe Communities programs are expanding their outreach to Native American tribes by inviting them to participate as coalition (or chapter) members and supporting efforts to develop culturally-appropriate OPC program materials.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **The State of Montana should establish a state occupant protection for children (OPC) task force to monitor, review, plan, and promote occupant protection for children activities through recommendations to SHTSO. This OPC task force should be composed of representatives from SHTSO, HMHB, SKSC, state and local law enforcement, certified instructors and technicians, tribal representatives, and other stakeholders from all regions of the State.**
- **While fatalities and injuries among children represent a relatively small percentage overall, OPC should continue to be a priority so as to shape future behavior. The State of Montana should assess whether the level of state highway safety funding is sufficient to keep the numbers small and to assure that sufficient local programs and services are in place to provide services to the young children and expand programs to older children (through age 15) as well.**
- **SHTSO should review whether their mandates and directives constrain local programs' ability to meet their individual communities' needs.**
- **Designate an agency or individual with the responsibility of developing and maintaining a current and accurate list of certified technicians, instructors, inspection stations, and other programs. Designate an agency or individual with the responsibility of communicating with the technicians, instructors and program coordinators on a regular basis.**
- Provide a OPC website and a toll-free telephone number to facilitate the public's and advocates' access to information and services regarding occupant protection for children issues. This would enhance communication among program coordinators, advocates, and technicians, as well as providing needed information to parents and caregivers.
- The State should sponsor or coordinate statewide or regional OPC/traffic safety meetings or conferences to enhance communication among program coordinators, law enforcement, and other key stakeholders and facilitate replication of successful local OPC programs.

B. DATA

Guideline: Each State should collect key data elements in order to enable the accurate measurement of the OPC program's progress.

FINDINGS

- Montana makes use of fatality and injury data from their crash reports in developing their annual highway safety plans. Most of the injury data reported is in the form of raw numbers. There appears to be very limited use of fatality and injury rates or rankings in developing highway safety plans.
- It was not clear to the Team if the injury numbers used in the problem identification document for OPC programs are limited to occupants of passenger motor vehicles or if pedestrians, cyclists, and passengers of other motor vehicles are also included in the counts.
- Goals for the highway safety plan include the reduction of death and injury to child passengers.
- Safety belt observational studies are conducted at least annually. It appears that observational data are collected for driver and front seat passengers only.
- The Montana State Highway Traffic Safety Office (SHTSO) does a good job of monitoring the geographic distribution of the State population.
- No observational studies to determine if children and other rear seat occupants are restrained and how they are restrained have been conducted in many years.
- The Team was not able to determine if motor vehicle crash injury data is routinely used at the city/county level to aid in problem identification.
- It does not appear that Montana has identified who and where their current technicians and, to a lesser degree, instructors are located.
- It does not appear that Montana maps the socioeconomic distribution of the State's population and identifies the areas where more resources are needed.
- SHTSO, through HMHB, currently collects the number of child restraints checked at Safe Kids/Safe Communities funded clinics and fitting stations, but it appears that no data exists for children assessed for proper safety belt fit.
- There is access to the total number of convictions for safety belt and CPS violations and the number of citations issued during seat belt/child restraint mobilizations are reported to the SHTSO.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Assure that motor vehicle crash (MVC) injury data used in program planning and evaluation differentiates between motor vehicle occupants and non-occupants (i.e., pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists).
- **Assure that SHTSO makes use of fatality and injury rates or rankings, in addition to raw numbers, in developing highway safety plans.**
- Assure that local programs include the total number of children assessed for proper safety belt fit in the collection of information on services provided, not just the number of child restraints checked.
- Encourage technicians and local programs to report information on one-on-one car seat checks conducted outside of designated permanent fitting stations for inclusion in reports.
- **Conduct annual or bi-annual observational studies to monitor restraint use for children.**
- Develop/adapt tools and methodologies for collection of safety belt and child restraint observational data by local groups and organizations for use in problem identification and evaluation of their programs.

C. EVALUATION

***Guideline:** Evaluation is important for determining progress, gauging program effectiveness, and, comparing results to those of other similar jurisdictions. Information obtained from program evaluation should be used to assist with identifying new program strategies and making resource allocation decisions.*

FINDINGS

- Montana has demonstrated their commitment to improving the quality of their occupant protection for children program by coordinating and supporting this assessment.
- Historical data exists in the motor vehicle crash data to identify trends such as the number and rates of injuries to children.
- Grantees are required to conduct evaluations of their programs and report findings to SHTSO.
- It appears that the majority of the evaluations are administrative/process oriented.
- No observational studies to measure the impact of programs on restraint use for children have been conducted in many years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **SHTSO should require grantees to include not just a process evaluation but an outcome evaluation, such as pre and post-program observational surveys of child restraint, booster seat, and seat belt use, whenever possible.**
- Use findings of this assessment/evaluation to aid the structure of future program planning.
- Conduct annual or bi-annual observational surveys of restraint use by children to evaluate OPC programs and the effects of legislative changes.
- SHTSO should use motor vehicle crash (MVC) injury data as a key component of evaluations whenever possible, but assure that injury data used in program planning and evaluation differentiates between motor vehicle occupants and non-occupants (i.e., pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists) and that fatality and injury rates or rankings, as well as raw numbers, are used in evaluations.

D. TRAINING

Guideline: *Each State should assure that it is providing adequate and accurate training to the professionals who deliver and enforce the occupant protection program to parents and caregivers.*

FINDINGS

- More than 300 technicians and instructors have been trained and certified in the Standardized Child Passenger Safety program.
- According to a list of Montana technicians and instructors provided to the Team by NHTSA, Montana currently has 142 certified technicians and 11 instructors. Of those trained and certified, 46 percent are current. This is in line with the national trend.
- The State receives and reviews a list from NHTSA containing the names of those persons who have been certified. It does not appear as if this information is being used to determine those needing recertification or geographic locations needing technicians or instructors.
- It does not appear that the State has a marketing tool describing and promoting the value of technician certification to individuals and agencies identified as potential CPS advocates and educators.
- The Team was not able to determine whether those interested in or registered for a certification course were made aware of the expectations for their involvement in local programs in return for receiving this training.
- Health Mothers, Healthy Babies/SKSC, SHTSO and the State Lead Instructor plan and schedule CPS certification training classes. Attempts are made to locate classes in areas of need or where instructors are available.
- Five certification training classes were conducted in different locations in the State in 2004. Three more will have been completed by the end of September 2005.
- There have not been any special needs courses conducted in the State.
- CPS Awareness classes have been conducted in the State by some local programs. The Assessment Team was unable to clearly determine the number of classes taught, curricula used, and the number of persons trained.
- The State has designated a State Lead Instructor to take the lead in planning and coordinating CPS certification classes and to assure that the classes are carried out in accordance with NHTSA and Safe Kids Certification Program policies and guidelines.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **The State needs to develop a process for using the list from NHTSA containing the names of those persons who have been certified to identify technicians needing recertification and geographic locations needing technicians or instructors.**
- The State should develop a marketing tool describing and promoting the value of technician certification to individuals and agencies identified as potential CPS advocates and educators.
- The State should develop a statement of expectations for those interested in or registered for a certification course.
- Utilize the task force to plan and schedule when and where CPS certification training classes are held and to find funding to allow instructors to travel where needed.
- The OPC task force should identify incentives to encourage all instructors and local programs to coordinate all CPS trainings with the task force and State Lead Instructor.
- **The State should provide the State Lead Instructor with the tools, resources, funding and authority to assure that all training classes are conducted in accordance with NHTSA, Safe Kids Certification Program, and Montana policies and guidelines. The State Lead Instructor should also be used to identify, mentor, and assist potential instructors in achieving their goals.**
- Conduct at least one *Safe Travel for All Children: Transporting Children with Special Health Care Needs* course in FY 2006.
- **CPS Awareness classes should be considered as a means to promote interest in the certification classes in the State, particularly in underserved areas and special populations. Existing short courses should also be used to reach professions, such as law enforcement, first responders, child care providers, school transportation providers, and health care providers.**

E. CHILD RESTRAINT INSPECTION AND DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM

Guideline: Each State should promote the use of child restraints and assure that a plan has been developed to provide an adequate number of inspection stations and clinics which meet minimum quality criteria.

FINDINGS

- Coalitions covering approximately 85 percent of the State's population have established 22 inspection stations in 16 communities. These inspection stations are funded jointly by highway safety funds, SKSC funds, and public, private and in-kind donations.
- More than 100 Child Restraint Clinics are conducted annually in the State.
- Media support provided by the State to advertise and promote Child Restraint Clinics increased attendance at these events.
- Local SKSC coalitions ensure that Child Restraint Clinics are staffed by capable and certified technicians.
- The State makes limited monies available, on a matching fund basis, to local coalitions to provide replacement restraints and restraints for under-represented and under-served families.
- Restraints are made available throughout the State and on tribal lands at no charge to families who cannot afford them. Some local coalitions also offer reduced-cost restraints to those who can afford to pay something. These funds are then used to supplement limited program funding, primarily to purchase additional restraints.
- Local coalitions actively pursue funding sources, including grants and donations, to supplement funding provided by SHTSO.
- Local service providers are perhaps over-focused on providing free or reduced charge restraints.
- SHTSO and local coalitions have successfully worked with retailers to negotiate discount pricing on restraints to be used for under-served families.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The State should use available data to determine where additional inspection stations are needed and identify programs that can provide those services.
- Continue the successful child restraint clinic partnership with Safe Kids and General Motors dealerships.

- Due to the extensive resources, staffing, and coordination required to conduct successful clinics, consider using clinics primarily in areas where inspections stations are not available or as media events to promote occupant protection for children issues and programs. This may also serve to reduce volunteer and technician burn-out.

F. LEGISLATION/REGULATION/POLICY

Guideline: Each State should enact and enforce strong occupant protection laws and policies for children and provide clear guidance to hospitals, pre-schools and day care providers on the safe transportation of children.

FINDINGS

- Montana's seat belt and child restraint are currently secondary enforcement laws.
- The Team commends the State of Montana for the successful increase in the CPS law to 6 years and 60 pounds and for their continued efforts to achieve primary enforcement seat belt and child passenger safety laws.
- Montana has published transportation standards for licensed child care facilities.
- There appears to be no standard hospital discharge policy adopted throughout the State.
- Montana's child restraint law does not prohibit children from riding in the cargo area of a pick-up truck as long as all designated seating positions are occupied.
- The penalty for violation of the seat belt law is a \$20 fine while a violation of the child passenger safety law results in a fine not to exceed \$100, with no points charged against the driver's license for either offense.
- There is confusion and conflicting information in the safety and law enforcement community on whether the current law requires 6 years *and* 60 pounds or 6 years *or* 60 pounds for an adult safety belt to constitute a legal restraint.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **In preparation for the 2007 legislative session, traffic safety advocates should continue building grass roots support through local programs and other avenues to achieve primary enforcement for both safety belt and child restraint laws.**
- **In addition, to better protect Montana's children, the State's legislative agenda should include the elements of model occupant protection laws:**
 - **Prohibitions against children riding in the cargo area of pickup trucks;**
 - **Increasing the child restraint requirements to include children through, and including, 8 years of age**
 - **Requiring children 12 and under be properly restrained in the rear seat when a rear seat position is available;**
 - **Making the driver responsible for restraint violations by passengers under the age of 16;**
 - **Adding the assignment of driver's license points as penalties for violations of occupant and child restraint laws; and**

- **Remove all exceptions for riding without appropriate restraint when restraints are available.**
- SHTSO should continue working with tribal nations to promote occupant protection and child passenger safety laws on the reservations.
- **SHTSO should develop a document to clarify the current occupant protection laws and a side-by-side comparison with best practice recommendations. This document should be used for public education purposes.**
- Creative ways to enforce both laws should be explored with law enforcement leadership, and encouraged among officers.

G. LAW ENFORCEMENT

***Guideline:** Each State should have a strong law enforcement program including vigorous enforcement of the OPC laws, assurance that officers are appropriately trained and periodic outreach by OPC advocates to the enforcement community to ensure they are updated and aware of any changes in the law.*

FINDINGS

- The Team commends SHTSO for their leadership and participation in Click It or Ticket and other national law enforcement mobilizations.
- The Team recognizes Montana's state, county, and municipal law enforcement for their participation in the high-visibility enforcement campaigns and for maintaining consistent levels of enforcement between mobilization waves.
- There appears to be limited engagement of the law enforcement community in the State's occupant protection for children efforts, although agencies are represented in the membership of the local SKSC coalitions.
- For CPS training hours, SHTSO pays POST certification fees.
- There is concern expressed by members of the law enforcement community regarding CPS Certification and Recertification fees. In addition, the skills verification requirements and the 100 question test were major impediments to recertification. These issues were identified as barriers to their continued participation in the State's occupant protection for children program.
- SHTSO intends to fund a Law Enforcement Liaison (LEL) position.
- There appears to be no or very little discussion of occupant protection for children issues in the State's basic law enforcement training academy, nor was there any indication of on-going training through roll call or other recurrent training venues.
- The Team was unable to determine if the State has sponsored any traffic safety summits or conferences to initiate a dialogue with the law enforcement community on Montana's OPC issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **SHTSO should move immediately to deal with law enforcement concerns over the child passenger safety certification and recertification processes.**
- **SHTSO, through the Law Enforcement Liaison position, should solicit increased local law enforcement involvement in OPC enforcement and education; determine**

and respond to police traffic safety training needs; and share innovative methods of enforcing the State's secondary OP laws.

- Efforts should be made to convince the Justice Department to incorporate traffic safety training to include OPC issues in the basic law enforcement academy.

H. PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

***Guideline:** The State should enlist the support of a variety of media to improve public awareness and knowledge about OPC laws and the use of child restraints. The program must be designed to reach under-represented and under-served groups including the provision of accurate information for assisting children with special needs.*

FINDINGS

- The Montana State Highway Traffic Safety Office (SHTSO) has demonstrated a commitment to educate parents and caregivers about the safety risks to young children, the benefits of child restraints and safety belts, and the requirements of the Montana occupant restraint laws.
- It appears that there are limited efforts to educate parents and caregivers about the benefits of correct restraint use for children six through 15.
- SHTSO has contracted with a media agency to provide creative and artistic products for support of Safe Kids/Safe Communities programs and events.
- The PI&E campaigns have conveyed OPC messages and educational information through a variety of media: radio, billboard, and print.
- It was not clear if Montana conducts special events during National Child Passenger Safety Week and, if so, if activities and events involve local grantees and programs.
- The “Saved By The Belt” program coordinated through HMHB is a commendable program that has generated positive media coverage for both local programs and the enforcement community.
- There appears to be limited expertise and few, if any, resource materials in Montana to guide medical personnel, safety advocates, and parents regarding the safe transportation of children with special medical needs.
- There is no stand-alone, centralized, easy to remember, occupant protection/child passenger safety website to serve as a centralized source for Montana-specific information.
- There appears to be no commonly advertised dedicated toll-free phone line that serves as a centralized source for Montana specific OPC information.
- HMHB serves as a centralized source of information for brochures and other educational materials. Packets of information are sent to local programs, parents and caregivers upon request.

- It appears to the Team that the standard packet of information sent to local programs and individual parents and caregivers contains materials that are written at a reading level beyond that recommended for general public consumption. Some contain inaccuracies, hard to understand information, are redundant, and address too many subjects at once. Several could benefit from improvements in design and simplification of content.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Initiate a needs assessment to determine the best form of communication tools to reach Montana's underserved and under represented populations. Assure that the assessment involves representatives from the targeted population such, as ranchers and tribal educators and that draft materials are tested with the targeted population.**
- Determine how local coalitions can most efficiently and economically arrange media coverage for their own local events.
- **Review the standard materials packet to assure materials are well written, relevant, understandable and accurate.**
- Consider obtaining existing culturally-sensitive educational materials and programs for use on tribal nations.
- **Make it a priority to develop a stand-alone, centralized, easy to remember, occupant protection/child passenger safety website, e.g., www.buckleupmontana.org, with a corresponding toll-free telephone number. The goal of the website and toll-free line is to serve as a centralized source for Montana-specific safe transportation information. Through these services parents, caregivers, transporters and advocates can access accurate information about Montana's occupant restraint laws; the correct use of restraint systems for children, youth, and adults; and the types and locations of services available.**
- Assure that materials and resource contact information are available for parents of children with special medical needs and for hospital and medical care providers.

I. COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Guideline: Each State should assure that OPC programs at the local level are periodically assessed and that the programs are designed to meet the unique demographic needs of their community.

FINDINGS

- It appears to the Team that local programs are doing a commendable job of developing and implementing OPC programs in their communities.
- Safe Kids Coalitions/Chapters and Safe Kids Safe Communities Programs exist in 16 counties and their catchment areas covering 85 percent of the State's population. These programs are coordinated through HMHB.
- Child passenger safety is identified by SHTSO as a priority area for SKSC programs. However, it appears that other mandated activities leave little time or money to support OPC activities. In addition to responsibilities for OPC, OP, and DUI activities, SKSC coalitions are also mandated to provide Responsible Server trainings, coordinate law enforcement mobilizations, and promote the "Saved By The Belt" program.
- Sub-grantees may use up to \$1,000 of their grant funding each year to purchase child restraints for distribution to low-income underserved population as long as the amount is matched by an equal sum of money raised at the local level.
- In addition to the limited funds provided by SHTSO for OPC, local SKSC involvement in OPC programs during FY2005 was supported by other grants, donations, and in-kind contributions.
- It appears to the Team that if the local SKSC programs were not able to secure these other grants, donations, and in-kind contributions, OPC programs and activities in Montana would be greatly reduced.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- SKSC Programs cover over 85 percent of the State's population. The SHTSO should explore avenues for reaching the remaining population areas with public information and education.
- SHTSO should review the workload directed to the SKSC coalitions to evaluate if sufficient resources are able to be dedicated to OPC activities based on assessments of community needs.
- SHTSO should determine if their mandates and directives constrain local programs' ability to meet their individual communities' needs.

- **SHTSO should continue to evaluate and assess the level of outside funding available to local coalitions and develop short and long range strategies to continue the level of service being provided should other funding streams dry up.**

ASSESSMENT AGENDA

Montana Occupant Protection for Children Assessment September 18 - 22, 2005 Wingate Inn 2007 North Oakes, Helena, MT

Sunday September 18, 2005

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Informal Icebreaker Dinner – Overland Express

Monday September 19, 2005

8:00 – 8:20 *Introductions, Priscilla Sinclair – Highway Traffic Safety Officer*

8:20 – 10:00 *Montana State Highway Traffic Safety Office Grant Management Process*

- **Overview of Occupant Protection for Children Grant Management Process**, Priscilla Sinclair, State Highway Traffic Safety Officer, Helena
- **Overview of Occupant Protection for Children Demographics:** Jack Williams, Research and Evaluation Specialist, State Highway Traffic Safety Office, Helena
- **Overview of Highway Safety Program** – Priscilla Sinclair, State Highway Traffic Safety Officer, Helena
- **Trainings**, – Lonie Hutchison, State Highway Traffic Safety Office contractor for training, Helena

10:00 – 10:15 Break

10:15 – 10:30 Questions from the Panel

10:30 – 11:00 **COMMUNITY PARTNERS:**

- Kelly Nathe, Traffic Safety Manager, Malmstrom Air Force Base, Great Falls; Shawn Rice, Ground Safety Technician, Malmstrom Air Force Base

11:00 – 11:15 Questions from the Panel

11:15 – 11:45 **Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies/Safe Kids, Safe Communities,**

- Mike Cooney, Executive Director/State Legislator – Helena

11:45 – 12:00 Questions from the Panel

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch

1:00 – 3:00 **COMMUNITY PARTNERS** (*continued*):

Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies/Safe Kids, Safe Communities

- **MT SKSC Coordinator, Chapter Director**, Patty Carrell
- **4-Day Trainings**, Lonie Hutchinson, Safe Kids Safe Communities (SKSC) – Missoula;
- **Checkup Events**, Wendy Olson, Safe Kids Safe Communities (SKSC) – Kalispell;
- **Inspection Stations** Maggie Virag, Safe Kids Safe Communities (SKSC) 475-9462 – Helena
- **Saved by the Belt**, Patty Carrell
- **SKSC Coalition Representative**, Stephanie Dills, Yellowstone County SKSC, Billings
- **Community Outreach Activities**, Maggie Virag, (via telecon); Lonie Hutchison, Patty Carrell

3:00 – 3:15 Break

3:15 – 3:45 Questions from the Panel

3:45 – 4:30 **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

- Sergeant Mitch Tuttle, Training & Research Section Supervisor, Montana Highway Patrol, Helena;
- Assistant Chief of Police Mike Benson, Glendive Police Department - Glendive

4:30 – 6:00 Questions from the Panel

6:00 – Adjourn

Tuesday September 20, 2005

8:00 – 9:00 **Department of Public Health & Human Services**

- Thom Danenhower – Emergency Medical Services, - Helena

9:00 – 9:30 Questions from the Panel

9:30 – 10:00 **MEDIA CAMPAIGNS:**

- Ronda Banik, Sr. Vice-President Banik Communications, Great Falls: - Overview of the State Highway Traffic Safety Office Occupant Protection for Children media program

10:00 – 10:15 Break

10:15 – 11:00 **RETAIL PARTNERS:**

- Virginia Cupp, Manager, K-Mart

11:00 – 11:15 Questions from the Panel

11:15 – 11:45 **COMMUNITY PARTNERS (continued):**

- Captain Bryan Cetraro, Firefighter EMT Intermediate, Butte Fire Department
- Christy Hill-Larson, Director, Montana Head Start Association, Helena; Leslie Cochran-Olson, RMDC Head Start Transportation Supervisor, Helena

11:45 – 12:00 Questions from the Panel

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch

1:00 – 2:30 **TRIBAL PARTNERS:**

- Presentation sent from Jodee Dennison, Area Injury Prevention Specialist, Indian Health Services – Billings (given by Audrey Allums – Jodee in Louisiana)
- Emily Colomeda, Lake County Native American Outreach – Polson

2:30 – 3:00 Questions from the Panel

3:00 – 3:15 Break

3:15 – 4:15 **HOSPITAL PARTNERS:**

- Sally Habets, CPS Technician, Shelby Hospital (via telecon) 406-278-3380

4:15 – 4:45 Questions from the Panel

4:45 – 5:00 Staff Wrap-Up

5:00 Adjourn

Wednesday, September 21, 2005

Team develops 2005 Montana OPC Assessment

Thursday, September 22, 2005

10:00 – 12:00 Assessment Team Report Out

12:00 – Adjourn

OPC ASSESSMENT TEAM CREDENTIALS

LIEUTANT JOEL BOLTON

Lt Bolton is a 24 year veteran of the Lake Charles, Louisiana Police Department. He is currently assigned as the Administrative Officer. In this capacity, he has overseen special projects including technology deployment, grants management, and the department's accreditation process.

He has served as a Patrol Officer, Detective, and Director of the Department's traffic safety programs. During his tenure, the department's traffic safety efforts received national recognition for work in the areas of impaired driving prevention; and underage alcohol education and enforcement.

In 1991 and 1992, Lieutenant Bolton was temporarily assigned to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Office of Police Traffic Services working with the Operation Buckledown program and other projects.

CONSULTING ACTIVITIES:

- Traffic Safety Consultant to the International Association of Chiefs of Police
- Working with projects such as the National Law Enforcement Challenge and publishing traffic safety newsletters for law enforcement professionals
- Written or co-authored police training programs on investigating belt use in collisions, emergency response to airbag-involved crashes, and child passenger safety.
- Currently writes a monthly column on traffic safety issues for Police Chief Magazine.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:

- Success by Six
- Leadership Southwest Louisiana
- Children and Youth Planning Board
- PPG Community Advisory Panel
- Family and Youth Counseling Agency
- Truancy Advisory Board
- Child Death Review Team

WILLIAM L. HALL

EDUCATION: B.A. Sociology and Psychology, Catawba College, May 1975
M.A. Sociology, Duke University, December 1977

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

1974 – 1975 Teaching Assistant, Department of Sociology, Catawba College

1975 – 1977 Research Assistant, Department of Sociology, Duke University

1977 – 1991 Research Associate, Highway Safety Research Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

1991 – 2002 Staff Associate, Highway Safety Research Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

2002 – Present Manager, Occupant Restraint Program, Highway Safety Research Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

CURRENT DUTIES AND POSITIONS:

- Responsible for the management of the UNC Highway Safety Research Center (HSRC) Occupant Protection Program area.
- Direct project to establish and manage the NC Child Passenger Safety Resource Center established to serve as a central source of consumer information for the general public of North Carolina, provide program and technical assistance to CPS advocates and program administrators, and coordinate and monitor State-of-NC-sponsored CPS training activities and programs.
- Direct project to collect, compile, and analyze data collected through statewide safety belt observational surveys.
- Direct projects responsible for collecting, compiling, and/or analyzing data collected through statewide or local child restraint observational surveys.
- Chair of the NC Child Passenger Safety Training Committee which sets and implements policies and procedures to be followed for all CPS training programs sponsored in whole or in part by the State of North Carolina.
- Direct and/or provide technical consulting assistance to projects that measure child restraint and safety belt use of North Carolina Child, youth, and adults through observational surveys.
- Serve as a primary source of child passenger safety and safety belt technical information for parents, educators, and health care providers through an in-state toll-free phone line and Internet web site.
- Conduct child passenger safety technical training and certification workshops in North Carolina. Nationally certified Child Passenger Safety Technician and Technician Instructor.

KATHRYN KRUGER

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Executive Director, Safety Restraint Coalition, non-profit corporation, Kirkland, Washington, 1996 – Present

- Development of grassroots community occupant protection programs
- Grassroots lobby group for implementation of Washington's safety belt law
- Primary media contact, development and implementation of all child passenger safety programs for highway safety office

Regional Mentor, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to answer child car seat inquiries on their Auto Safety Hotline

1998 – 2001

Instructor

- Standardized Child Passenger Safety Technician Training Course since 2/1998
- NHTSA Child Passenger Safety Advocacy Skills Workshop
- National Safety Council, Chicago, Illinois
- General Motors/NHTSA Child Car Seat Distribution Program, Child Passenger Safety Training Workshops, Hawaii
- National SAFEKIDS Campaign, Washington, D.C.
- Child Passenger Safety Campaign Kick-Off, Orlando, Florida
- General Motors/NHTSA Child Car Seat Distribution Program, Child Passenger Safety Training Workshops, Alaska and Hawaii
- Traffic Occupant Protection Strategies (TOPS) Law Enforcement Curriculum

State Coordinator

- Washington State, NHTSA *Misuse of Child Restraints* Study, 2002
- Washington State, NHTSA *CPS Observational Misuse* Survey, 1994

EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

- KARS and Special KARS Program, National Easter Seals, Portland, Oregon
- Instructor, Facilitator Training, Transportation Safety Institute, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

- Basic Collision Investigation, Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, Burien
- Advanced Program Management, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
- Business Administration classes, Bellevue Community College
- Early Childhood Education classes, Shoreline Community College

EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

- Member of ISO/WIGI 1 Task Force Developing Usability Criteria, 1999 in British Columbia
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Public Service Award, 1998
- Governor's Excellence in Traffic Safety, Lifetime Achievement Award, 1991
- Development of Child Car Seat Bounty Program, DOT Innovative Program Award
- Member Occupant Protection Law Enforcement Advisory Committee, Washington State
- Charter Member National Child Passenger Safety Board, Washington, D.C.
- Member, Washington State SAFE KIDS Coalition
- Member, Pacific Interagency Child Restraint Advisory Committee, British Columbia
- Past-Member, National Advisory Board, SafetyBeltSafe USA, Los Angeles, California