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Tuscarawas County
Health Department

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Tuscarawas County Health Department Releases Traffic Safety Survey Report

DOVER—During the first quarter of 2022, the Tuscarawas County Health Department (TCHD) conducted an online traffic safety survey of people who reported driving in Tuscarawas County on a regular basis. A total of 308 people responded to the survey. The responses were combined with traffic statistics from the Ohio State Highway Patrol to generate a comprehensive report which is being released today. The report will be used to assist TCHD and the Safe Communities Coalition in generating new ideas for improving safety for Tuscarawas County travelers.

Key Findings: The majority of survey respondents (71%) reported that traffic safety was a concern to them and “distracted driving” was identified as the biggest safety concern by 27% of surveyed drivers, with “driving under the influence” and “speeding” selected as the next highest concerns by 14% of survey participants for each. When asked to select the most serious driving distraction, 82% of the survey respondents reported “texting while driving.” Sadly, 38% of applicable surveyed drivers admitted that they made a driving mistake while texting.

An analysis of crash report data from the Ohio State Highway Patrol covering 2017 through 2021 showed that while there were less overall vehicle crashes in 2020 due to COVID-19 lockdowns, there was not a reduction in crash fatalities which rose from nine fatalities in 2019 to 11 in 2020 and 11 in 2021. During the same time period of 2017-2021, 40% of fatal crashes involved persons who were not wearing their seatbelts. Between January 2020 and April 6, 2022, 80% of Tuscarawas County’s fatal crashes occurred on rural roads, and 70% of fatalities included OVI and speed as contributing factors.

Finally, Tuscarawas County drivers reported the following county roadways and intersections as most concerning to them: State Route 39, State Route 250, Interstate 77, the intersection of Broadway and Mill at New Philadelphia, and McCauley Drive at Uhrichsville.

“We are thankful to everyone who completed our online traffic safety survey earlier this year,” noted Katie Seward, Tuscarawas County Health Commissioner. “Together, we will utilize this valuable data to work with our Safe Communities Coalition partners to continue promoting traffic safety messages with the goal of ultimately reducing traffic fatalities in Tuscarawas County.”

The Tuscarawas County Health Department thanks the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Foundation for funding an epidemiologist who assisted with the completion of this report.

To view the entire 2022 Tuscarawas County Traffic Safety Report, visit <https://www.tchdnow.org/safe-communities.html>. To learn more about the Safe Communities Coalition, visit their table at the Tuscarawas Valley Farmers Market (located at the Dover fairgrounds, 259 South Tuscarawas Ave) today from 3 to 7 pm, email healthed@tchdnow.org, or call 330-343-5555, ext. 153.

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