BIKE HELMET SAFETY AWARENESS

A program of the
Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Legislative Outreach Toolkit
January 28, 2016

Dear Ohio Legislator and Staff,

The Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics urges you to become educated on legislation introduced in May 2015 that will enhance bicycle helmet safety requirements in Ohio. This legislation will require any person less than 16 years of age to wear a helmet while on a bicycle. It will also require bicycle rental businesses to inform any person less than 16 years of age who rents a bicycle of this requirement and provide helmet rentals.

During all the bicycle activities that will occur this summer, only 10-20% of Ohio children will be wearing bicycle helmets. Without a properly-fitted bicycle helmet, these children are vulnerable to injury. In 2011, more than 50,000 children were injured while riding a bike without a helmet, ranging from head injuries to even death. Bicycle helmets can reduce the risk of traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) by up to 88%. Helmets are the single most effective way to reduce head injuries and fatalities resulting from bike crashes. Every year from 2002 to 2009, more than five Ohioans under the age of 18 died from bicycle-related TBIs. No parent should experience the loss of a child due to a preventable bicycle injury this summer.

This legislation not only addresses an important safety issue in Ohio, but also a financial one. Between 2002 and 2009, emergency department visits and hospitalizations for youth-bicycle related TBIs cost Ohioans more than $28 million in direct medical costs. A bicycle helmet requirement will not only protect the brains of many Ohio children, but will also protect the finances of many Ohio families.

Since 2011, the Ohio AAP has managed the “Put a Lid on It!” Bike Helmet Safety Awareness program, including Bike Helmet Safety Awareness Week. Our results have been astonishing – over 26 million media impressions in 2015 alone, and nearly 20,000 bike helmets provided for Ohio’s children in 5 years. The Ohio AAP is also proud to partner with legislators to raise awareness of the importance of bike helmet use for children in their districts. I would like the opportunity to discuss the Ohio AAP’s program, your opportunities for involvement, and the introduced legislation with you this spring; please contact me at (614) 846-6258 or hsouthworth@ohioaap.org to set up a meeting time. Some basic information on our campaign, including the prevalence, importance, and impact of local and state bike helmet laws, is included in this packet for your review.

The proposed legislation will be instrumental in protecting Ohio’s children, and your support is instrumental in passing it. I hope to speak with you soon to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely,

Hayley Southworth, MS
Ohio AAP Bike Helmet Safety Awareness Program Manager
## Local Bike Helmet Laws in Ohio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Age/Conditions</th>
<th>Date Enacted</th>
<th>Population Covered²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akron</td>
<td>Under 16</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>49,784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beachwood</td>
<td>Under 16</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2,101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bexley</td>
<td>Under 16</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>3,133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Ash</td>
<td>Under 16</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2,728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brecksville</td>
<td>Under 18*</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>3,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>Under 14</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1,653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centerville</td>
<td>Under 16</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>4,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
<td>Under 16*</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>72,896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>Under 18*</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>171,762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayton</td>
<td>Under 13</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>31,106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Cleveland</td>
<td>Under 18*</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>8,051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enon</td>
<td>Under 16*</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euclid</td>
<td>Under 14</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>9,182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glendale</td>
<td>Under 19*</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>429 (Under 18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kettering</td>
<td>Under 16*</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>11,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakewood</td>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>11,945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madeira</td>
<td>Under 17*</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2,298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marietta</td>
<td>Under 16*</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange Village</td>
<td>Ages 6 – 15</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepper Pike</td>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaker Heights</td>
<td>All ages over 5, inc. passengers</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>19,865 (Ages 6-17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Euclid</td>
<td>Under 14</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4,612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongsville</td>
<td>Under 12</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>7,577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waynesville</td>
<td>Under 17*</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Youth Population Covered by Helmet Ordinance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>430,841 (~15%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Ohio Population under 18</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2,888,339</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Also covers one or more non-bicycle wheeled vehicles: in-line skates, roller skates, skateboarders, non-motorized scooters.
³US Census 2000
Statewide Bike Helmet Laws, by Age*

*Bike helmet laws are currently in effect in 21 states and the District of Columbia.
Ohio AAP Put a Lid on It! Partners

Over 300 organizations and individuals are participants and supporters of the Put a Lid on It! Program, including representatives from:

- Police and Sherriff Departments
- County and City Health Districts/Departments
- Community Pediatric Providers
  - Children’s Hospitals
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Local Hospitals
- Community Service Organizations
  - Bike Enthusiast Groups
  - Local School Districts
- City Councils and Local Government
  - Faith-based Organizations
  - And others!

Helmets were provided in 45 counties in 2015 alone, including:

- Allen
- Ashtabula
- Athens
- Auglaize
- Clinton
- Columbiana
- Cuyahoga
- Delaware
- Erie
- Fairfield
- Franklin
- Fulton
- Geauga
- Greene
- Hamilton
- Hancock
- Hocking
- Jefferson
- Knox
- Lake
- Lawrence
- Licking
- Logan
- Lorain
- Lucas
- Mahoning
- Medina
- Miami
- Montgomery
- Muskingum
- Pickaway
- Pike
- Portage
- Richland
- Sandusky
- Shelby
- Stark
- Summit
- Trumbull
- Tuscarawas
- Union
- Vinton
- Washington
- Wayne
- Wood
I was still under the impression that it was a normal beautiful Thursday Spring night. The kids were all out playing, and it was only days away from son’s 13th birthday. Bailey was on his bike as always. Neighbors all knew him as the sweet red head on the bike that will talk to anyone. It was only minutes before I was going to call him in for the evening when I got a call from his phone. "Bailey had an accident on his bike and there is a lot of blood, 911 is on their way", stated an unfamiliar voice. A sense of panic swallowed me, as my stomach dropped to the floor. I threw on my clothes and jumped in my car to fly through the apartment complex parking lot to the adjacent lot. All the while, telling myself to calm down and that it was only a bicycle accident. Really.... How bad can it be? The blood is probably a leg or knee injury that will require some stitches. As I approached the parking lot, my vision was blurred by all the red and blue lights. A police officer met me at my car as I jumped out. He stated that the ambulance had already been there and had taken him to the hospital. "It doesn't look good Ma'am" is a phrase that will haunt me for the rest of my life. For the past two years, we have driven or walked by that blue ramp (technically a portable loading dock located behind Lumber Liquidator). I never dreamed that my son would try to jump the ramp as he had never tried something so bold or daring. I guess I underestimated the power of boys' adrenaline or level of curiosity.

That night was the beginning of the worst time of my life, and a time that would change my life forever. That week in the hospital was full of the most intense emotions that I have ever experienced. It began with the biggest devastation the first night when the doctor told me that he was probably going to make it through the night. Really??? From a bicycle accident??? He did make it through that night, and several more. There were many tears, laughter, hope, despair, anticipation for the next sign. As the doctor’s started removing some of the medicines to do a brain death exam, a term I wish I never knew, he started to take a significant turn for the worse. I could never bring myself to believe that I might actually lose my son. He is an amazing person, and he will be spared. Miracles happen all the time! The night finally came that I could not have any more faith that Bailey was going to come home with me. His blood pressure continued to climb, his heart rate maintained at a rapid pace, and the brain pressure monitor was off the charts. The doctor’s finally turned it off as it was not showing any signs of coming down. Bailey was surrounded by his family and good friends. I held onto his hand and rubbed his leg like I had done through the whole week. I saw something come out of his nose, and I was informed that his brain was hemorrhaging. It was too late. All hope was gone. It was up to me as I had the final decision of what to do. My family announced that they believed he was holding on for me. I finally told Bailey to go be with his Nana that is in Heaven. My blood curdling screams could be heard throughout the floor. My son was and is my life. I never dreamed that I would be a mom that is lying with her son, holding him in her arms for one last time before they turn off the machines that were keeping him alive. Leaving the hospital room that night, letting go, and then having to tell Bailey’s 6 year old sister that he went to Heaven, are the worst things I will ever have to do in my life. I do not wish this pain on any parent any where.

I recognize that Bailey had an accident and that there is no one to blame or hold accountable. The one thing that I ask is that we help parents and kids recognize the importance of wearing bike helmets. I never thought that my son really needed one; he just took leisurely rides around the neighborhood. The times that I did tell him to wear one, I got the response, “Mom, I’m fine” Well, he wasn’t fine, even though I believed he would be as well. It is a proven fact that children’s brain’s are not fully developed, and they are not able to make completely informed decisions about the risk and safety. To a kid, they are invincible as nothing can ever happen to them. Yes, safety, and rules and guidelines are the responsibility of a parent. However, as parents letting our teens out of the driveway and out of our sight, we have the ability, if all else fails, to say “You have to buckle up because it is the law.” I wish I could have said to my son, Bailey, “you have to wear a helmet because it is the law.” It would have saved my son’s life, and the lives of many others, but it still can.
Injury Prevention Policy Brief
Bicycle Helmet Laws: Protecting Young Minds

SUMMARY

- Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is the leading type of serious bicycle-related injury.¹
- Nearly 60% of all bicycle-related deaths are due to head injuries.²
- Bicycle helmets can reduce the risk of TBI in a crash by up to 88%.¹
- Bicycle helmet laws are an effective method of increasing bicycle helmet usage among youth, especially when paired with educational interventions.³⁴

BICYCLE AND WHEELED SPORTS HEAD INJURIES

Bicycling is an excellent form of exercise for people of all ages, however, it is important to remember that it is not without risk of injury, especially for children. Fortunately, many serious bicycle-related injuries can be prevented by simply wearing a helmet. Bicycle helmets are highly effective at preventing injuries to the head and face and can keep children cycling for many years to come.

OHIO FACTS

- More than 5 Ohioans under the age of 18 died each year from bicycle-related TBIs from 1999 to 2007.⁵
- From 2002 to 2009, 7,629 young Ohioans were treated in emergency departments and 723 were hospitalized for bicycle-related TBIs.⁴
- Emergency department visits and hospitalizations for youth bicycle-related TBIs cost Ohioans more than $28 million dollars in direct medical costs between 2002 and 2009.⁶

DID YOU KNOW?

Although an estimated 70% of Ohio children ages 5-14 years ride a bicycle regularly, only 10-20% wear a helmet when they ride.⁹

Bicycles are associated with more injuries to children than any other consumer product except motor vehicles.⁷

Each year in the US, an estimated 389,000 children and teens 18 years of age and younger are treated in hospital emergency departments (EDs) for bicycle-related injuries. One-third (33.8%) of these injuries are to the face or head.⁸

The majority (68.4%) of bicycle-related head injuries to children are diagnosed as concussions, contusions, or internal organ injuries.⁸

Children with bicycle-related head injuries are over 3 times as likely to require hospitalization and nearly 6 times more likely to die from their injuries than children with injuries to other body parts.⁸

Skateboards, non-motorized scooters and skates are also significant sources of injury, resulting in a total of more than 167,000 injuries annually among children younger than 15 years.⁷
EFFECTIVENESS OF BICYCLE HELMET LAWS

Bicycle helmet laws for children have been found to be highly effective in promoting helmet use and reducing head injuries. At least 15 published peer-reviewed studies have shown that bicycle helmet laws increase helmet usage, and at least 6 studies have shown that bicycle-related TBIs decreased following the enactment of a bicycle helmet law. One study found that the presence of a bicycle helmet law increased helmet usage by approximately 18% among children younger than 16 years of age. Other studies have shown much higher increases, in some cases greater than 55%.

Bicycle-related head injury rates among children have decreased by up to 45% following the passage of bicycle helmet legislation.

Bicycle helmet laws alone are effective at increasing helmet usage rates, even with minimal enforcement, but the effect is broader when paired with community education and support by law enforcement. The impact of a bicycle helmet law is most pronounced in communities with lower baseline helmet rates and in low income areas.

CURRENT BICYCLE HELMET LAWS

OHIO: Does not have a state law requiring the use of bicycle helmets, however, 24 local jurisdictions in the state have ordinances requiring their use by children. Although these jurisdiction include 4 of the state’s 10 largest cities, only 15% of Ohio children live in communities covered by such laws. Among Ohio communities with a bicycle helmet ordinance, 42% also require the use of helmets for other wheeled sports, such as in-line skates, skateboards and non-motorized scooters.

Universal bicycle helmet use by children 4 to 15 would prevent 39,000 to 45,000 head injuries, and 18,000 to 55,000 scalp and face injuries annually.

NATIONALLY: Currently 21 states and the District of Columbia have state-wide bicycle helmet laws. Although most cover only children, a few cover adults as well. In addition, there are more than 200 local bicycle helmet ordinances in the US. This means that half of the children in the US live in communities with youth bicycle helmet laws. Eight states and the District of Columbia also require helmet use for children participating in other wheeled sports.

OHIO PARENTS SUPPORT BICYCLE HELMET LEGISLATION

Ohio parents support youth bicycle helmet legislation. Statewide data from two Ohio Polls found that more than 75% of parents support a mandatory bicycle helmet law for children younger than 18 years. This included a significant majority of the respondents in all subpopulation groups, regardless of age, race, education, income, and other demographics. These polls are consistent with results from other parts of the U.S.

21 STATES AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HAVE STATE-WIDE BICYCLE HELMET LAWS

[Map of the United States showing states with and without state-wide bicycle helmet laws]

SOURCE: IIHS

STATE WITHOUT A STATE-WIDE LAW

STATE WITH A STATE-WIDE LAW
BICYCLE HELMET MODEL LEGISLATION

Although bicycle helmet laws are relatively common throughout the country, they vary widely in their parameters. Many differences exist with regard to where, when and to whom the laws apply. The following best practice recommendations were developed by leaders in the injury prevention field:

- **AGE:** Youth helmet laws should apply to all minors under the age of 18 years. This allows for maximum protection for teens as well as younger children.

- **PASSENGERS:** Passengers should be required to wear helmets too. (Note: infants younger than 1 year of age do not have the neck strength to support the added weight of a bicycle helmet and cannot safely ride as passengers on bicycles.)

- **OTHER WHEELED SPORTS:** It is important to consider including other wheeled sports such as skateboarding, skating, or using a non-powered scooter in any proposed bicycle helmet legislation. Children can sustain serious brain injuries or even die from crashes while riding on these items as well, even at slow speeds.

- **BICYCLE HELMETS:** Helmets should meet US Consumer Product Safety Commission standards, fit properly, and be fastened under the chin.

- **FINES:** Many jurisdictions place collected fines in a bicycle helmet fund to be used to purchase helmets for children who cannot afford one. Fines are often waived in lieu of proof of purchase or procurement of a bicycle helmet.

CONCLUSION

- Bicycle helmets are the single most effective way to reduce head injuries and fatalities resulting from bicycle crashes.

- Bicycle and wheeled sport helmet laws can significantly increase helmets use among children and thereby prevent life-altering TBIs and even death.

- Many local jurisdictions in Ohio have helmet laws currently on record, but these laws cover only 15% of Ohio’s children.

- Expanding bicycle helmet law coverage to all children in Ohio would result in substantial increases in helmet usage and lower rates of bicycle-related fatalities and TBIs.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The purchase of a $10 bicycle helmet saves Ohioans approximately $50 in direct medical costs. In addition, every helmet saves health insurers $57 and auto insurers $17.7

**Disclaimer:** The policies featured in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the Ohio Department of Health or any other state agency. Allowable activities related to contact with public policy makers vary by state; therefore it is important to consult internal agency rules, state laws, and (where applicable) federal laws to ensure full compliance.
HELMET FIT IS IMPORTANT

Make sure the helmet fits and your child knows how to put it on correctly. A helmet should sit on top of the head in a level position, and should not rock forward, backward or side to side. The helmet straps must always be buckled but not too tightly. To ensure a proper fit, try the eyes, ears and mouth test:

EYES CHECK: Position the helmet on your head. Look up and you should see the bottom rim on the helmet. The rim should be one to two finger-widths above the eyebrows.

EARS CHECK: Make sure the straps of the helmet form a “V” under your ears when buckled. The strap should be snug but comfortable.

MOUTH CHECK: Open your mouth as wide as you can. Do you feel the helmet hug your head? If not tighten those straps and make sure the buckle is flat against your skin.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BICYCLE AND WHEELED RECREATION INJURY

OIPP, Child Injury Action Group
www.healthyohioprogram.org/vipp/ciag/ciag.aspx

Ohio Department of Health
www.healthyohioprogram.org/vipp/child/tbi.aspx

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
hww.nhtsa.gov/Bicycles/

American Academy of Pediatrics
www.healthychildren.org

Safe Kids USA
www.safekids.org

Center for Injury Research and Policy of the Research Institute at Nationwide Children’s Hospital
www.nationwidechildrens.org/injury-research-and-policy

Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute
www.bhsi.org

OHIO INJURY PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP
CHILD INJURY ACTION GROUP

References

www.healthyohioprogram.org/vipp/oipp/oipp.aspx