

## Regional Booster Seat Promotion Activities – 2011

This report provides an overview of regional booster seat promoting activities that were either led or supported by the WRHA Injury Prevention Program IMPACT in 2011.

### **WRHA Staff Awareness and Orientation**

Efforts were made to increase staff awareness regarding booster seats through postings on Insite (Intranet), email reminders to staff, and presentations to WRHA leadership committees and practice councils. Fifteen 30 minute orientations were delivered to approximately 200 public health nurses (PHNs) and Family First Home Visitors (FFHV) in their community area offices. December 2011 staff development sessions included an update in child occupant protection, including booster seats. This presentation is now available on Insite.

### **Free Booster Seats**

Fifty booster seats were purchased and distributed to low-income families by public health nurses and Family First Home Visitors. Twenty booster seats were provided to Healthy Start for Mom and Me, whose outreach workers identified specific families for the booster seats. They reviewed booster seat information with families, and had each recipient answer four questions about the age of child who will use the seat, whether or not they had planned to use a booster seat, their understanding of booster seat use, and a more open ended question about whether or not it was helpful to receive the information and the seat.

Five forward facing car seats were also purchased and distributed. There is a high and ongoing demand for these seats.

### **WRHA Booster Seat Resources**

- The Prescription pad was updated and printed: 500 100-page pads in English and 50 in French, for distribution to family physicians and pediatricians. Also used at public events.
- 7000 Kids That Click pamphlets were ordered with approximately 2,000 distributed, mostly through public events.
- The Booster Seat Consumer Guide was updated and electronically circulated to PHN and FFHV. This was also distributed to all elementary schools in Manitoba through Healthy Schools.
- 2 scales and 2 stadiometers were purchased and used at public weigh and measure events.
- 2 easels were purchased for displaying large Kids That Click poster display boards.
- The booster seat table-top display graphics are being updated with focus testing in progress.

### **Interactive Weigh/Measure Events**

An interactive booth was hosted at Winnipeg shopping centers, the Children's Hospital Teddy Bears' Picnic, River East/Transcona Growing and Learning Kindergarten registration/orientation events, and the Winnipeg Baby and Kids Show. At these events children were weighed and measured to determine their eligibility for a booster seat and booster seat recommendations were discussed with parents. These events were staffed by IMPACT, Pediatric Residents, with some in partnership with MPI.

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## Advocacy

University of Manitoba Pediatric Residents advocated for booster seat legislation in Manitoba culminating with a meeting with the Honourable Jim Rondeau, Minister of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors. The Manitoba Pediatric Society also advocated for legislation.

## Booster Seat Observational Study

Observational data on booster seat use were collected in June 2011 by trained observers at 27 sites across Winnipeg (traffic intersections and shopping centres) using Transport Canada's methods for periodic child restraint surveillance and using the Transport Canada Roadside Site Observation Form and Site Administration Form. The number of *vehicles* rather than the number of *children* that did or did not use booster seats was documented. Vehicles were classified as "booster users" (all children 4 to 8 years old were in booster seats), "booster non-users" (no children 4 to 8 years old were in booster seats), and "some booster users" (some children 4 to 8 years old were in booster seats while others were not). Data were analyzed using both descriptive statistics and chi-square tests.

A total of 1,541 vehicles transporting 2,026 children were observed during the data collection period. 20.8% of vehicles were classified as booster users (all children 5 to 8 years in the vehicle were restrained in a booster seat). 77.0% of vehicles were classified as booster seat non-users. Only 1.5% of vehicles had booster seats for some, but not all, of the 5 to 8 year old children in the vehicle. An additional 0.7% of vehicles could not be definitively classified. Driver gender and driver restraint use were not significantly related to booster seat usage.

## Teddy Bears' Picnic parent survey

A survey was conducted at the Children's Hospital Annual Teddy Bears' Picnic. Parents were asked to provide the age and sex of their child (or children), along with information regarding their child's restraint use. We also requested that parents estimate their child's height/weight, and determine whether they are big enough to use a seat belt without a child safety seat. Children were then weighed and measured to ascertain if they were using the correct restraint according to height/weight requirements. Parents were provided a booster seat "prescription" and pamphlet. Parents were also asked whether or not they believe there is currently booster seat legislation in place in Manitoba, Data analyses included descriptive statistics and chi-square tests.

A total of 166 parents/guardians responded to the survey, 120 of which had children in the booster seat age range (4 to 8 years). 68.3% (n = 82) of respondents with booster seat age children were using a booster seat. Booster seat use increased by age - 57.1% at 4 years, 68.4% by 5 years, 87.0% at 6 years, 85.7% at 7 years - and declined sharply at age 8 (33.3%). In this sample, forward-facing car seats were appropriately used by many 4 and 5 year old children (42.9%, 31.6%). The majority of children in seatbelts (92.9%, n = 13) should have been using a booster seat, given their weight and height. Parents who used incorrect restraints were unaware of car safety seat requirements for their child's size. Finally, most parents (64.1%) mistakenly believed there was a booster seat law in Manitoba; this included the majority of booster seat users (71.3%). Results were limited by recall and social desirability bias.

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## Telephone Survey

Self-report data were collected using a random digit dial telephone survey conducted by a Winnipeg telephone survey research firm, Prairie Research Associates (PRA). All surveyed adults were over the age of 18, English-speaking, and had at least one child living in their home between 4 to 8 years of age.

A total of 136 respondents agreed to participate. Child age was significantly associated with the frequency of booster seat use and non-use ( $\chi^2 = 33.126, p < .001$ ). As child age increased, booster seat usage tended to decline. While booster seat use was relatively high among 4 to 6 year old children (approximately 90% “Always” using a booster seat), only 63% of 7 year old children and 41% of 8 year old children were “Always” restrained in a booster seat.

The most cited reason for “Never” or “Rarely” using a booster seat centered around the belief that the child was either too big (30.6%) or too small (20.4%) for a booster seat. These parents also reported that they would be more likely to increase booster seat use if it was required by law (81.0%), if they had more information about why booster seats were safer (66.7%), and if everyone used them (42.9%).

Respondents who believed that Manitoba had a law or who were unsure of Manitoba legislation were significantly more likely to report “Always” using a booster seat (71% and 65% booster seat use, respectively) than respondents who were aware of the current lack of booster seat legislation in Manitoba (44% booster seat use).

## Recommendations

- Develop with partners a communication strategy to ensure repeated exposure to consistent booster seat information and recommendations, particularly age/size requirements.
- Change parental knowledge and beliefs around the use of booster seats through behaviour change motivation techniques, as well as awareness and education strategies.
- Explore the feasibility of establishing a provincial low cost booster seat purchase program through schools, similar to the bicycle helmet program. This program would also provide an opportunity to share with parents current guidelines and rationale for booster seats.
- Explore the feasibility of establishing a Winnipeg booster seat loan program, including the potential to use/recycle gently-used booster seats (not car seats/combination seats).
- Explore issues related to children’s resistance to booster seat use (e.g., social pressure), particularly older children’s resistance (7 and 8 year-olds).
- Continue efforts toward advocating for booster seat legislation in Manitoba.
- Continue to explore opportunities to encourage healthcare providers to promote the use of booster seats.

## Next Steps

- Conduct focus testing on new campaign materials/branding
- Develop a plan with partners for a multi-faceted booster seat campaign in 2012, including social marketing, and potentially low-cost booster seat and loan programs.