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Maryland Kicks Off ‘Beautiful’ New Anti-Drunk Driving Campaign

*One-Third of Maryland Traffic Deaths Involve Impaired Drivers;
Motorists Urged to Have a Sober Ride Home*



(TV spot at <https://youtu.be/d4cSIPU1ogA>)

Glen Burnie, MD, Sept. 10 – The Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration’s Highway Safety Office (MHSO), in partnership with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Washington Regional Alcohol Program, recently kicked off a new Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign for 2015 called “Beautiful Faces.” The campaign to combat impaired driving uses statewide Driving Under the Influence (DUI) patrols and public awareness messages such as, “do yourself a favor and have a ‘beautiful,’ sober ride home” as tools to help prevent, deter and reduce the incidences of impaired driving.

In Maryland, impaired drivers kill more than 170 people each year and more than 23,000 people were arrested for drunk or drugged driving last year.

“Our goal is to help people understand that they can go out and make the responsible decision to have a safe ride home at the end of the night,” said Administrator Christine Nizer, Maryland Department of Transportation’s Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA). “Make a plan before you go out and stick to that plan at the end of the night. Cabs, rideshare services, public transportation, or designated drivers are all options to get home safe.”

The campaign urges personal responsibility at the end of a night through messages that are broadcast on cable television, radio, and social media. Additional messages are in Maryland's liquor stores, bars and restaurants and a social media campaign with the hashtag #BeautifulRide, encourages the notification of designated sober drivers. Designated sober drivers will also be thanked for providing a safe ride home in Annapolis, Baltimore, Frederick, and Hagerstown, and other locations.

In Maryland, men in their 20s were involved in nearly 35 percent of all crashes resulting in injury or death. The most recent statistics are from 2009 to 2013. In August 2015, a public opinion survey in Maryland and Virginia of 800 licensed male drivers (21-35) found drunk drivers are considered a leading "serious danger." Over half of the men surveyed had either driven after having a few drinks or been driven by someone who had a few drinks.

"Getting home safely starts before you even step foot out the door," said Tom Gianni, the MHSO's Chief. "A cab costs \$20 or so on average and a DUI can cost tens of thousands of dollars – that's an easy choice. Even worse, impaired drivers take people's lives every day – children, parents, friends. That's not something anyone wants to live with, especially when it is so easily avoided. Do yourself a favor and have that "beautiful" sober ride home."

The Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign is supported by a grant from the MHSO to the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program. To view the full "Beautiful Faces" video, please visit <https://youtu.be/d4cSIPU1ogA>.

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Note: Maryland's Toward Zero Deaths campaign focuses on preventing impaired driving, aggressive driving, and distracted driving, while also promoting seat belt use and pedestrian safety. For more information on the Toward Zero Deaths campaign or for additional resources, please visit www.towardzerodeathsmd.com.

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