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State Launches Campaign to Boost Awareness of Child Passenger Safety Law; Survey Reveals Lack of Understanding

Waterbury, VT – Most Vermonters do not know that a 7-year-old riding in a car should be in a booster seat.

That finding was among results revealed in a state survey conducted by Macro International for the Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP). The study, conducted in June, polled 400 Vermonters about their awareness and understanding of Vermont's child passenger safety law.

The Vermont GHSP is today launching a statewide public education campaign to raise awareness of the law, which was passed in 2004.

The campaign, "Be Seat Smart," aims to raise Vermonters' awareness of when children are old enough and tall enough to move from a booster seat to using a seat belt alone. Children, as they grow, progress through four stages of safe seating in a car: from rear-facing car seats for infants, to front-facing car seats for toddlers, to booster seats for children until they are tall enough to be buckled up safely using only the vehicle's adult seat belts.

Children may need to sit in a booster seat until they reach age 13 and 4'9", depending on the child's weight and measurements and what vehicle they're in. Children have the least risk of injury in an auto accident if they sit in the back seat until they reach the age of 13. Tweens can take the 5 Step Test to see if they're ready for a seat belt at www.BeSeatSmart.org.

The GHSP runs regular Child Safety Seat Check events around the state and has nationally certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians in every county available by appointment. Technicians check each seat to make sure it fits the child, is properly installed, and for recalls and missing parts. Financial help is available to help purchase booster seats, as well as seats for younger children. For more information visit www.BeSeatSmart.org or call 1-888-VMT-SEAT.

Other survey findings can be found at www.BeSeatSmart.org.

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