

Approved 2-7-91
Date

MINUTES OF THE Senate COMMITTEE ON Federal and State Affairs

The meeting was called to order by Sen. Edward F. Reilly, Jr. at
Chairperson

11:00 a.m./~~p.m.~~ on January 31, 1991 in room 254-E of the Capitol.

All members were present ~~except~~:

Committee staff present:

Deanna Willard, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Becky Andrews, EN-CARE, Ft. Leavenworth, Ks.

The minutes of the January 24 and January 29, 1991, meetings were approved.

A 30-minute slide presentation was made to the committee by Becky Andrews, RN, representing the Emergency Nurses Cancel Alcohol Related Emergencies Program, an alcohol awareness program developed and presented by professional emergency room nurses on a volunteer basis. As trained, medical professionals who work daily with the tragic consequences of drinking and driving, they feel a special responsibility to educate the public about the effects of alcohol and how it can cause accidents by impairing judgment and driving abilities.

The script of the slide presentation is attached. (Attachment 1.)

An EN-CARE handout was distributed which listed statistics and copies of surveys used in the program. A copy of the handout is on file in the office of the Chairman of the Federal and State Affairs Committee, along with the EN-CARE handbook and brochures which are used in the program.

The chairman thanked Mrs. Andrews for making the presentation and said that it was important to educate both young people and adults to the dangers of drinking and driving.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Emergency Nurses C.A.R.E., Inc.
Cancel Alcohol Related Emergencies

PRESENTATION: SLIDES

#1 INTRODUCTION

The Emergency Nurses C.A.R.E. program was created by Pamela Bell and Barbara Foley, two emergency room nurses from Massachusetts. EN C.A.R.E. was conceived as a result of yet another hectic weekend, treating broken bones, cuts, head injuries, etc., resulting from drinking and driving accidents - and after suffering the anguish of having to tell parents of the senseless slaughter of their son or daughter.

#2 C.A.R.E. stands for : Cancel Alcohol Related Emergencies.

(Tell why you joined EN C.A.R.E.. Include where you work, etc.)

We all want to share our experiences with you, the driver or passenger - to show you what has happened to others and can happen to you.

#3 Drinking is not only accepted, but it is very much a part of today's life style. You are encouraged to drink! You can buy booze anywhere, usually with little trouble. Friends, older brothers, sisters and even a stranger on the street will help you buy that six-pack. We don't believe you should drink at all. We can show you how a single drink can avalanche into grief and suffering that touches countless lives forever.

#4 Our busiest time at the Emergency Department is between the hours of 9 p.m. and 4 a.m. On holidays, graduation, prom-time and weekends, we add more supplies and extra nursing staff to help care for the increase in accident victims.

#5 America's youth are the only group whose life expectancy is decreasing. After as little as one drink, teenaged drivers are seven (7) times more likely (than older drivers) to be involved in a fatal crash. Fourteen (14) teenagers die every day, in fact the 17 year old group it is 1 in 3 males and 1 in 5 females who suffer serious enough injuries to be treated in an emergency room in a trauma related setting.

This is a slide of a poster given to us by a 21 year old who was involved in a drinking and driving crash. He spent 3 months in the hospital and left wearing a body cast from his armpits down to his ankle on one side and to his knee on the other. He also had a speech impediment due to brain damage from the crash. He wanted his message told to all.
"Party tonight - Don't get carried away to the emergency

Senate F&SA
1-31-91
Att. 1

department" like he was or carried away to the morgue like his best friend was. His best friend died that night. To this day, the 21 year old doesn't remember who was driving the car.

#6 25,000 people are killed every year and another 650,000 are injured, many permanently, due to drinking and driving.

We call trauma a disease of the young. It kills more people between the ages of 15 and 24 than all other diseases combined. Although 16-24 year old drivers constitute 17% of the drivers, this age group is involved in 45% of all highway fatalities. There are 3.3 million teenaged alcohol abusers across the nation, starting with age 12 or younger.

(Optional) National reports in medical journals show 50-60% of motor vehicle crashes are alcohol-related. An emergency medical annual stated that we spend \$88 billion a year on unnecessary alcohol-related traumas.

#7 Although our topic is drinking and driving, it is important to mention the dangers of alcohol itself. What is important is the amount consumed, not the type. A 12 oz. beer is the same as 4 ozs. of wine or 1 1/2 oz. of whiskey.

Other factors involved are: amount of rest, when you last ate, your weight, how fast you drink and if you take medication. Even your mood can effect how alcohol reacts in your body. Also, your body chemistry is always changing; for example; if you go out on Friday night and have a few beers, and do the same on Saturday, having the same amount of beers, these beers can effect you in a completely different way. The liver gets rid of 1 drink (1 oz.) per hour. Alcohol works immediately on the brain, acting as a depressant. Depressing your judgment, coordination and inhibitions (three things you need to have in order to drive a car safely). Alcohol also depresses the respiratory center (the part of the brain that controls breathing). In the emergency room, we all, too frequently, see young people brought in because of drinking too much too fast. The alcohol has caused them to pass out and stop breathing.

Suggestion of a Story:

A man from Gardner, MA got drunk with his friends and his brother while playing cards. When he passed out, they laid him on the couch. His friends left and when the man's brother went to check on him - he was dead.

#8 Although the damage to this car is relatively minor, we are going to show you that the human body is more fragile. We're going to show you what our job is in the emergency department and why we have become active in the fight against drinking and driving. From here on, you may be

shocked, angry and we hope, concerned. We want you to hurt in the safety of this room - so that you can talk to your families and friends and maybe you or they will not hurt in the emergency trauma setting some other time.

#9 This 40 year old female hit her head on the windshield. She came to us with a broken nose and a fractured skull.
B.A.C. = .10%

#10 This patient's blood alcohol was only .05%, but he fell asleep at the wheel after stopping for a few beers after work. Even though his B.A.C. level was lower than legally drunk, it did not keep him alert or awake at 8 p.m. when he started home. (Legally drunk = .10%)

#11 Because of the severe facial injuries here, this patient needed a tracheostomy to breathe (the metal tube you see in the throat).

This was taken about a week after surgery. Sometimes you have to wait about a year for healing and then you may return for reconstructive surgery.
B.A.C. = .15%

#12 This patient, a 17 year old basketball player, after drinking with friends, caught his leg on a broken car door after hitting a tree. He will always walk with a limp and never play basketball again.
B.A.C. = .10%

#13 This 18 year old female was a passenger in a car returning home, with friends, from a school prom. The driver (her friend) while going around a corner, lost control - causing the car to flip over. Because of this, she faces many times in surgery and many days in pain. The driver broke his collar bone and was released that night.
B.A.C. of Both = .09%

#14 This is a 40 year old male whose car hit a tree at 55 m.p.h. His nose hit the steering wheel.

This patient was abusive and restless. We had to hold him down to check for other injuries. He went from the emergency department to the operating room to release a blood clot on his brain. There can be a problem with agitation from alcohol and/or other drugs since the combination can confuse the picture. We have to distinguish between the affects of alcohol/drugs and head injury confusion.
B.A.C. = .20%

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#15 This lady hit some median posts. She suffered a fractured skull and spent one month in the hospital. Her friend - the passenger - wore no seat belt. She went through the windshield, suffered a fractured skull, her brain hemorrhaged and she died.
B.A.C. = .15% (Driver)
B.A.C. = .05% (Passenger)

Many times it is the passenger who is injured worse.

#16 I would like to take a minute to show you what happens inside a car on impact.

DESCRIBE: Head hits windshield - causing fractured skull and facial cuts. The forward and backward motion of the neck is often enough to break the neck. The chest hits the steering wheel causing broken ribs which can puncture the lungs. The lower part of the steering wheel hits the upper abdomen causing ruptured spleen and a lacerated liver. (Most common injuries we see in the emergency department.)

#17 This is the relationship between the steering wheel, breastbone and backbone to the heart. Normally the breastbone and backbone are protective mechanisms, but when the steering wheel causes the breastbone to crack or splinter it becomes a deadly weapon. The #1 fatality is a torn or ruptured aorta; which is the main vessel away from the heart.

#18 This is a 19 year old in what we call cervical traction to treat a broken neck. Those tongs are screwed into the skull to keep his neck extended and both head and neck still.

#19 This is the type of bed any patient with a broken neck will stay on for at least 3 months. This is called a traction bed. It immobilizes the head and neck along with the tongs. The rope that you see is attached to the tongs at one end and weights of water or sandbags at the other end. This only heals the broken neck, not the paralysis.

#20 This patient's neck was so badly broken that he will need a breathing aid the rest of his life. Here you will see him being prepared for a tracheostomy (the metal tube we talked about).
B.A.C. = .30%

#21 We would like to point out the value of safety belts. They can cut down on that forward impact. It takes a minute to buckle up - and that minute could save you an injury - or your life.

(Tell story -- I tell about the patient who had lacerations on the upper and lower lip - because he wore no seatbelt.)

#22 This is a neck x-ray. There are 7 bones in the neck- if you count down to C-6 - you will note it is very uneven. This is what can paralyze you for life or, at best, put you in traction for 7 months.

#23 This is a 65 year old male that was hit by a drunk driver. He suffered massive facial and abdominal injuries. He spent 8 hours in surgery; 1 month in ICU and 3 months in the hospital. The driver of the car was a 17 year old uninjured woman. Not only will she be punished by law, but she has to live with what happened for the rest of her life.
B.A.C. = .20%

#24 This is a 17 year old after a Thanksgiving Day football game. He was driving home to have dinner with his family but, because of speed and alcohol, he lost control of his car and hit a bridge abutment. The steering wheel broke on impact and caused these injuries.
B.A.C. = .24%

#25 This slide (can be replaced with your hospital's helicopter and team) is a picture of our Lifelight team receiving a patient from another hospital via helicopter.

#26 Here is a trauma team working on a patient involved in a motor vehicle accident. Note the number of personnel surrounding the patient. That isn't even half of the amount it takes to attempt to save one live.
B.A.C. = .30%

#27 THINGS YOU CAN DO:

1. In high schools or junior high schools you can join the S.A.D.D. organization. There you will learn more about alcohol and other drugs and also ways to avoid drinking and driving - such as: PARENT-TEEN CONTRACT; S.A.D.D. contract for a safe ride.

2. EN C.A.R.E. DIAL-A-RIDE CARD; small enough to fit in your wallet. There is a space for three phone numbers. The first two numbers should be someone you trust - who is over 21 - who will promise to pick you up when you call if there is any situation where you feel unsafe. The third number should be a taxi.

This is a difficult subject to discuss with your parents - but - think about this: Which phone call would they prefer to get - one from you saying "Mom, I need your help, can you pick me up?" or "Mrs. Smith, this is the emergency department, your child has been in an accident - can you come to the hospital?"

Omit for \ Kids /

3. DESIGNATED DRIVER; one person in a group promises to stay sober: drink no alcohol or do other drugs - and get everyone home safely.

4. COMMUNICATION; THE PROBLEM

Talking about it is one way to make drinking and driving socially unacceptable.

Many people think we are giving young people a license to drink when we discuss alternatives to drinking and driving. We all know that it is illegal for anyone under the age of 21 to drink, but, we deal in realities - and the reality is some young people do drink - and as emergency room nurses, we want to keep you safe.

The most important thing Emergency Nurses C.A.R.E. about is keeping you safe.

#28

(RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HOST:)

Do not put pressure on non-drinkers.

(Remember - you make the final choice - no one can really force that beer down your throat.)

I would like to ask you how you would feel if you were at a party or giving a party where alcohol was being served. That night you went to bed after your friends had left; the next day you found out that a friend (that had attended the party) was seriously injured or killed?

The bottom line is don't let people who have been drinking drive.

#29

(Discuss the agony and suffering of loved one while waiting in the quiet room.)

You have seen what happens in the trauma room when there is a motor vehicle crash.

I would like to talk to you about another part of the Emergency Room - one that is set apart from the main waiting room - called the family room, quiet room or bereavement room. This is where the nurse takes the family and loved ones of the trauma victim - to wait.....

Sometimes they wait for hours, praying and crying, hoping their loved ones will be all right.

The agony and the suffering of this family is incredible and sometimes for the emergency nurse - unbearable. There are questions always asked by loved ones - questions like - "Why did he drive?", "Why didn't she call?" , "What could I have done to prevent this?" - There are no answers

Life Isn't The Same Without You

Coming home is a tough time of day. It signals the end of the occupational work day, the beginning of the personal work evening. - But, my homecoming blues have often been softened by seeing my oldest son Brian's familiar Chevy parked in the driveway.

Brian, a certified scuba diver, always enjoyed studying all kinds of biological-related subjects. After coming home from a diving expedition, he would tell us how beautiful, how peaceful the experience was. But winter was at hand and the hot summer days seemed far behind us. Brian sat snacking at the kitchen table. "Hey, Mom, what's up?"

"Not much." I replied, ruffling his thick blond hair that has made people downright jealous for all of his 19 years Brian was, as many people said, "movie star handsome".

Being the oldest in the family, he was the role model for his sister and brother. They didn't have to look far to find someone to look up to, because Brian always stood up for what he believed in. He didn't drink, smoke, or have anything to do with drugs of any kind. He was often ridiculed and made fun of by his peers because he refused to succumb to the pressures of what he felt was wrong. He was my perfect son.

Darkness began to fill the kitchen. "Gotta run, Mom." He said.

"Why so soon?" I knew my disappointment was showing. We hugged and kissed goodbye. As my head left his broad shoulder, I couldn't help feeling the years went too quickly. How could he have become a man so fast?

I kept the door open as I watched him leave. "Thanks, Mom. I love you." He said.

"I love you, too. Always know we're here." I said.

The next time I saw Brian, he lay dying in the intensive care unit at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center in Worcester. He was transported there by Life Flight helicopter after a car accident caused by a drunken driver. Brian, stone cold sober at the time, never regained consciousness. Shortly before he died, a tear rolled from his eye. I wiped it with my handkerchief--a handkerchief I will always treasure. Brian's pure heart was stilled forever. WE BURIED BRIAN ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

Brian, barely 19, a sophomore in college, had such great promise for a successful life ahead of him.

More than a year has passed now since our last meeting.* As I sit here and write this, I still cannot believe the tragedy that has happened to Brian and this family. We never think we're going to be part of grim statistics. It's always supposed to happen to the "other guy". I am hoping my pen will make the difference for others.

For the past year, I have felt total frustration --because the pain has been immeasurable, incomprehensible and, at times, unbearable to cope with. I have not been sure I could deal with the subject.

The emptiness and grief of having lost a son, a brother, a grandson, a nephew, a friend, goes on forever and ever for us, his survivors. A part of us has died, never to be seen, touched, or heard from again in this life as we know it. Brian, this wonderful young man who impressed so many in such a short span of years, is deeply missed.

Know this great person lived and will continue to live as long as I have a breath to say how lucky we were to have him - how much the world has lost - all because of a drunken driver. Can my pen save another family from such tragedy and pain? Listen to me - a bereaved mother. Listen to me - a million tears cannot bring Brian back. Listen to me - take the time to tell others Brian's story. Make them listen. Make them pay attention. You can make a difference if you don't drink and drive. You can make a difference if you don't let others drink and drive. I can only hope that wherever Brian is - it is as beautiful and peaceful as what he described after his scuba diving experiences.

GOD BLESS YOU, BRIAN. LIFE ISN'T THE SAME WITHOUT YOU.

Excerpts taken from an article published in the Worcester Sunday Telegram - written by Yvonne E. Lancaster - a free lance writer who lives in Shirley, Massachusetts

1-7
* = Change Slide