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**BAKER-POLITO ADMINISTRATION LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE
DRIVING ALTERNATIVES FOR MARIJUANA AND ALCOHOL USERS**

Marijuana dispensaries, ride-sharing services and safe-driving advocates join state officials to begin "Driver Sober or Get Pulled Over" education and enforcement campaign

Boston, MA – August 8, 2018 –The Baker-Polito administration today launched a statewide education and enforcement campaign to highlight the danger of impaired driving and to urge marijuana and alcohol users to find alternatives to driving while drunk or stoned.

"Safely operating a motor vehicle is a responsibility every driver must take on for themselves, their passengers and other travelers on the road," **said Governor Baker**. "Today, we remind everyone in Massachusetts about the serious dangers associated with mixing alcohol or marijuana with driving and the importance of planning ahead for a safe ride home from a designated driver, ride-sharing service or public transportation."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, marijuana, like alcohol, negatively affects the skills required for safe driving by:

- Slowing driver reaction time.
- Negatively affecting a driver's ability to make decisions.
- Impairing coordination.
- Distorting perception.

"Recent data reveals that marijuana is the most prevalent drug found in drivers involved in fatal crashes," **said Jennifer Queally, Undersecretary for Law Enforcement for the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS)**. "We are asking the marijuana industry to provide information to their customers stressing the importance of arranging a sober ride – especially to new users who may not understand how marijuana can affect you."

"Responsible cannabis use includes making plans for sober transportation," **said Cannabis Control Commissioner Jennifer Flanagan**. "It is up to consumers to educate themselves about the consequences of impaired driving and I appreciate the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security for getting to the heart of this important issue."

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The state's education campaign will include TV ads that highlight the devastation caused by impaired drivers, and the responsibility drivers have to other motorists to avoid getting behind the wheel if stoned or drunk.

"The Massachusetts Department of Transportation urges everyone who is getting behind the wheel to make smart decisions and remain sober or use a designated driver," **said Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver**. "Driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol is illegal, jeopardizes your safety, and the safety of everyone else on our roadways, and no one should have to live with fact they may have killed or injured an innocent person because he or she decided to drive impaired."

In addition to the education campaign, EOPSS is providing funding to the State Police and 153 local police departments to conduct high-visibility enforcement patrols and sobriety checkpoints throughout the state. EOPSS is also working to increase the number of law enforcement representatives who are trained in Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE) and Drug Recognition Expert (DRE), two programs that allow officers to detect drug impairment in drivers. There are currently 155 officers who are certified DREs and 1,263 who are ARIDE trained.

"Our number one priority is keeping roads safe for all motorists," **said Kerry Gilpin, Colonel, Massachusetts State Police**. "Drivers impaired by alcohol or drugs will be stopped and taken off the road."

Massachusetts Data:

- Marijuana was the most prevalent drug found in drivers involved in fatal crashes from 2012-2016.
- From 2012-2016, an average of 10% of all drivers involved in fatal crashes were found with both alcohol and drugs in their system.
- From 2015 to 2016, alcohol impaired driving fatalities increased 9 percent (109 to 119).
- From 2011-2015, 82 percent of impaired drivers in fatal crashes were men.
- From 2011-2015, 45 percent of all alcohol-related driver fatalities were ages 21 to 34.

National Data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:

- Approximately one-third of all traffic crash fatalities in the United States involve drunk drivers. In 2016, there were 10,497 people killed in these preventable crashes. In fact, on average, more than 10,000 people have died each year (2012 to 2016) in drunk-driving crashes. To put it in perspective, that's equal to about 20 jumbo jets crashing, with no survivors.
- In 2016, almost one in five children (14 and younger) killed in traffic crashes were killed in drunk-driving crashes. Fifty-four percent of the time, it was the child's own driver who was drunk.
- Drugs were present in 43 percent of the fatally-injured drivers with a known test result in 2015, more frequently than alcohol was present.
- NHTSA's 2013–2014 roadside survey found drugs in 22 percent of all drivers both on weekend nights and on weekdays.
- Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)—the chemical responsible for most of marijuana's psychological effects—slows reaction times, impairs cognitive performance, and makes it more difficult for drivers to keep a steady position in their lane.
- Mixing alcohol and marijuana may dramatically produce effects greater than either drug on its own.

Data Links:

GHSA Drug Impaired Driving – Marijuana and Opioids Raise Critical Issues for States
https://www.insurancejournal.com/app/uploads/2018/05/GHSA_DrugImpairedDriving_FI_NAL-1.pdf

What You Need to Know About Marijuana Use and Driving
<https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/pdf/marijuana-driving-508.pdf>

The Effect of Cannabis Compared with Alcohol on Driving
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2722956/>

Driving with a Marijuana High: How Dangerous Is It?
<https://www.livescience.com/51450-driving-on-marijuana-alcohol-dangerous.html>

GHSA Drug Impaired Driving – 2018
<https://www.ghsa.org/issues/drug-impaired-driving>

*****Media Note*****

Impaired crashes are not “accidents”. We urge media to follow the AP Stylebook, which suggests avoiding the word “accident” in reference to impaired or negligent crashes.

To view the Highway Safety Division’s (HSD) “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over” TV spots, or for more information about the HSD’s educational campaigns, go to
www.mass.gov/DriveSober

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