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DANGEROUS IMPACTS OF IMPROPER CAR SEAT USE

Springfield, IL (Date) – A report titled, “Pediatric restraint use and injury across race, ethnicity, and class in Illinois,” outlines the effects on children who are not properly buckled in their car seats. Improper car seat usage leads to more severe injuries, higher medical costs, and even death for children involved in crashes.

Children not properly restrained were nearly four times more likely to suffer a moderate or severe injury, including head injuries, compared to restrained children. And those unrestrained children had much higher hospital charges, nearly four and half times higher on average. Further, the report found car seat usage to be protective of children regardless of vehicle type and size.

The report finds car seat usage is not evenly distributed across Illinois. While over 93% of White children were properly restrained during a crash, just about 87% of Hispanic children, and only 84% of Black children were. Children who live in zip codes with high rates of poverty, and high rates of households without a car, were also significantly more likely to be in a crash while not in a car seat.

The report also finds that children aged 4 to 8 are at a particularly high risk of not being properly restrained. This is because children aged 4 to 8 commonly fall into a gray area where caregivers either prematurely place them in a booster seat, or use nothing but the regular seatbelt before their physical size should allow.

Families with questions about proper car seat installation should contact their local fire department about an upcoming Car Seat Clinic and learn about correct usage.

Disclaimer

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