

R. Joseph Ebel, R.S., M.S., M.B.A.
Health Commissioner



(740)349-6535
(740)349-6474 WIC
(740)349-6475 Environmental
(740)349-6476 Nursing
(740)349-6510 FAX
www.lickingcohealth.org

Licking County Health Department

675 Price Road

Newark, OH 43055

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CONTACT: Kate White
(740) 349-6535
kdwhite@lickingcohealth.org

Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk This St. Patrick's Day *Designate a Sober Driver Before the Party Begins*

[Newark, Ohio]— For many Americans, *St. Patrick's Day has become a popular night out to celebrate with friends and family. Unfortunately, due to the large number of drunk drivers, the night out has also become very dangerous.

On St. Patrick's Day 2009, 37 percent of the drivers and motorcyclists involved in fatal crashes had a blood alcohol content (BAC) at or above the legal limit of .08, according to statistics by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

"Whether you are meeting a few friends at a restaurant or the local pub after work, if you plan on using alcohol, never drive while impaired—and never let your friends drive if you think they are impaired." "*Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk*," said Health Commissioner, Joe Ebel.

Licking County Safe Communities recommends the following easy steps, for a safe St. Patrick's Day.

- Plan a safe way home before the festivities begin;
- Before drinking, please designate a sober driver and leave your car keys at home;
- If you're impaired, use a taxi, call a sober friend or family member, or use public transportation so you are sure to get home safely;
- If you happen to see a drunk driver on the road, don't hesitate to contact your local law enforcement or 1-800-GRAB-DUI, make sure to get the vehicle make/model and color and the license plate number;
- And remember, if you know someone who is about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to where they are going safely.

"Driving impaired is simply not worth the risk," said Ebel. "Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for driving while impaired can be really significant. Don't depend on dumb luck this St. Patrick's Day. Designate your sober driver before the party begins."

For more information, visit www.StopImpairedDriving.org

*- ST. PATRICK'S DAY IS DEFINED AS 6PM MARCH 16 TO 5:59AM MARCH 18