# Study: Only laws that prohibit all handheld cellphone use while driving save lives

Researchers encourage lawmakers to pass comprehensive handheld cellphone bans and parents to teach safe habits to new drivers

# \*Note: Embargoed until Thursday July 29, 2021 at 12:00 p.m. eastern

Nationwide Children's Hospital

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#### NEWS PACKAGE

SUGGESTED TEASE	WE'VE ALL SEEN THOSE DRIVERS WHO ARE LOOKING DOWN AT THEIR PHONES IN TRAFFIC. COMING UP, A NEW STUDY REVEALS JUST HOW DANGEROUS THAT IS AND HOW MANY LIVES ARE SAVED BY PUTTING THE SMARTPHONES AWAY.
ANCHOR LEAD	UNFORTUNATELY, IT'S COMMON TO GLANCE OVER IN TRAFFIC AND SEE A DRIVER LOOKING AT THEIR PHONE OR TAKING A CALL. A NEW STUDY <sup>1</sup> REVEALS JUST HOW DANGEROUS HANDLING YOUR PHONE WHILE DRIVING IS AND HOW MANY LIVES ARE SAVED WHEN THE LAW REQUIRES THAT DRIVERS PUT THEIR PHONES AWAY. BUT IT'S ALSO IMPORTANT TO ENCOURAGE CULTURAL CHANGES THAT MAKE SMARTPHONE USE WHILE DRIVING UNACCEPTABLE, STARTING WITH NEW DRIVERS WHO HAVEN'T YET DEVELOPED BAD HABITS. BARB CONSIGLIO HAS THE DETAILS.
(PACKAGE START) CG: Courtesy: Nationwide Children's Hospital	(Nats - [41] grabbing keys, closing house door) :02
:00 - :03 Shot description	AS A BUSY SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD, CONNER WREN WAS EXCITED TO GET HIS DRIVER'S LICENSE. :04
CG: Conner Wren Teen driver	<i>"I was able to go to friends' houses and not have to coordinate transportation, school, work, run errands."</i> :07
Shots of Conner talking to parents	BUT BEFORE HE GOT BEHIND THE WHEEL, HIS PARENTS TAUGHT HIM ABOUT THE DANGERS OF USING HIS CELL PHONE WHILE DRIVING, EVEN FOR A MOMENT. :06
CG: Troy Wren	"You're trying to look at this phone and something's

Dad of teen driver	going to happen." :04
Conner Wren (CG'd earlier)	"I put it in the center console." :02
Shots of Conner getting in car	(NATS - Conner getting in car, putting phone away) :01
Shots of Conner driving	STILL, DISTRACTED DRIVING CAUSES MORE THAN THREE-THOUSAND FATAL TRAFFIC CRASHES ANNUALLY <sup>2</sup> , AND NEW DRIVERS ARE AT THE HIGHEST RISK. :07
CG: Motao Zhu, MD Center for Injury Research & Policy	"For the teen driver that just got their full license, they can drive without adult supervision, they have the highest crash risk. And also, they have the highest cellphone use while driving." :11
Shots of research center Shot of Conner driving (blur for graphic) Graphic: Comprehensive handheld cellphone use bans in the U.S.: -save 140 lives -prevent nearly 14,000 injuries	A NEW STUDY LED BY RESEARCHERS AT THE CENTER FOR INJURY RESEARCH AND POLICY AT NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL EXAMINED DRIVERS OF ALL AGES AND FOUND THAT LAWS THAT ENCOURAGE DRIVERS TO PUT THEIR PHONES AWAY HAVE HELPED, SAVING AN ESTIMATED ONE-HUNDRED-FORTY LIVES EVERY YEAR IN THE U-S AND PREVENTING NEARLY FOURTEEN THOUSAND DRIVER INJURIES. :16
Dr. Zhu (CG'd earlier) Graphic: Comprehensive hands-free cellphone laws associated with 7% fewer driver deaths Shots of Conner driving	"Our research has shown that comprehensive hands-free cellphone laws were associated with fewer deaths. But the specific cellphone bans were not." :13 THOSE MORE SPECIFIC LAWS THAT JUST BAN THINGS LIKE CALLING OR TEXTING ARE MORE DIFFICULT TO ENFORCE, AND THEREFORE HAVE
Shots of road from inside car	LOWER COMPLIANCE. YET, ONLY TWENTY-ONE STATES HAVE ENACTED BROAD LAWS THAT PROHIBIT ALL HANDHELD CELLPHONE USE WHILE DRIVING. :12
Dr. Zhu (CG'd earlier)	<i>"We recommend all states pass comprehensive hands-free cellphone laws." :</i> 05
Shots of Conner driving, pulling	(NATS - Conner Driving) :01
into parking lot Shots of Conner getting out of	UNTIL THEN, IT'S IMPORTANT TO ENCOURAGE DRIVERS LIKE CONNER, WHO KNOWS THAT KEEPING HIS HANDS ON THE WHEEL, HIS EYES ON THE ROAD AND HIS MIND ON DRIVING CAN SAVE LIVES. :08
car at work	NATS - (Conner getting out of car) :02
(PACKAGE END)	AT NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, THIS IS BARB CONSIGLIO REPORTING. :02

	WHILE NEW DRIVERS SHOULDN'T USE ANY CELLPHONE FUNCTIONS WHILE DRIVING, EXPERTS SAY IF EXPERIENCED, FULLY-LICENSED DRIVERS NEED TO USE THEIR PHONE WHILE DRIVING, THEY CAN USE BLUETOOTH FEATURES THAT ALLOW THEM TO USE FUNCTIONS LIKE G-P-S AND HANDS-FREE CALLING IN THE CAR. THEY ALSO ENCOURAGE THE USE OF "DRIVING MODES" OFFERED ON SOME SMARTPHONES THAT BLOCK NOTIFICATIONS AND REDUCE THE TEMPTATION TO REACH FOR YOUR PHONE IN THE CAR.
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# SOCIAL MEDIA

Share it! Suggested tweet:	Seeing someone looking at their phone or taking a call while driving is all too common. A new study by @ZhuMotao and @CIRPatNCH reveals just how dangerous it is and how many lives are saved in states where all handheld cellphone use is prohibited. https://bit.ly/3obHqps
Suggested post:	Distracted driving causes more than 3,000 traffic fatalities in the U.S. every year. A new study by the <u>Center</u> for Injury Research and Policy at <u>Nationwide Children's</u> <u>Hospital</u> reveals just how dangerous handling your cellphone while driving is and how many lives are saved through laws that broadly prohibit handheld cellphone use. <u>https://bit.ly/3obHqps</u>

# EXTRA BITES

	Zhu says laws that don't broadly ban cellphone use aren't associated with fewer driver deaths: "We found that comprehensive hands-free cellphone laws were associated with fewer driver deaths. But the laws don't have comprehensive hands-free laws, but the laws don't ban cellphone use broadly, are not associated with reduced driver deaths." :21
CG: Motao Zhu, MD Center for Injury Research & Policy	Zhu states the findings of the study regarding deaths and injuries: <i>"Our research has found that comprehensive hands-free cellphone laws have prevented about 140 driver deaths, and about 13,900 driver injuries annually in the United States." :12</i>
	Zhu says only comprehensive hands-free cellphone laws are effective: "Our study finds that only one type of law is effective. That's broad, comprehensive hands-free cellphone laws that ban almost all handheld cellphone use while driving. That's effective." :13

CG: Conner Wren Teen driver	Conner says even looking at your phone quickly is dangerous: "When you're sitting in your room, you allow yourself to get focused in on the device. When you're in a car, it's hard to gauge that because you're like, "Oh, I'm driving. I can't get distracted." So, even just a glance could mean car merges in front of you and then It's just so shaky," :18 Conner says more drivers should be aware of the dangers of using a cellphone: "There should be more statistics mainly to show that, "Hey, you being there texting whoever, barreling down the highway, there's this chance to kill or hurt anyone," because I just think they don't know how Although they probably feel in control, they're really not, I think they don't know that." :23 Conner says starting with safe habits will help be a safe driver for life:
	<i>"Having this knowledge now and having the self control to not touch it while I'm driving will help prevent myself in the future from causing accidents." :08</i>
CG: Troy Wren Dad of teen driver	Troy says he pointed out distracted drivers when teaching his son to drive: <i>"I would point and call out people that were not paying</i> <i>attention and ask him some things, 'What would you do in</i> <i>this situation, if you're next to someone on the interstates</i> <i>and you see that they are texting and driving, what do you</i> <i>do."</i> :15
	Troy says reading a text or an email can compromise your safety: "While you're trying to focus in on reading that text, reading that email, something is going on around your environments and you are behind the wheel at not 10 and two anymore, you're at 12 o'clock. And you're trying to look at this phone and something's going to happen.":17
	Troy says something something can happen if you take your attention off the road for a moment: <i>"Folks merging, the red lights, the green lights, who's next</i> <i>to you, who's in front of you and just making sure that</i> <i>you're being very aware of your surroundings because at</i> <i>any given moment something's going to happen." :16</i>

## References

<sup>1</sup> Bans on Cellphone use while driving and traffic fatalities in the United States, **Epidemiology**, **July 29, 2021**. Online:

https://journals.lww.com/epidem/Fulltext/2021/09000/Bans\_on\_Cellphone\_Use\_While\_Driving\_an\_d\_Traffic.17.aspx

<sup>2</sup>NHTSA Releases 2019 Crash Fatality Data, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Dec. 18, 2020. Online:

https://www.nhtsa.gov/press-releases/nhtsa-releases-2019-crash-fatality-data

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