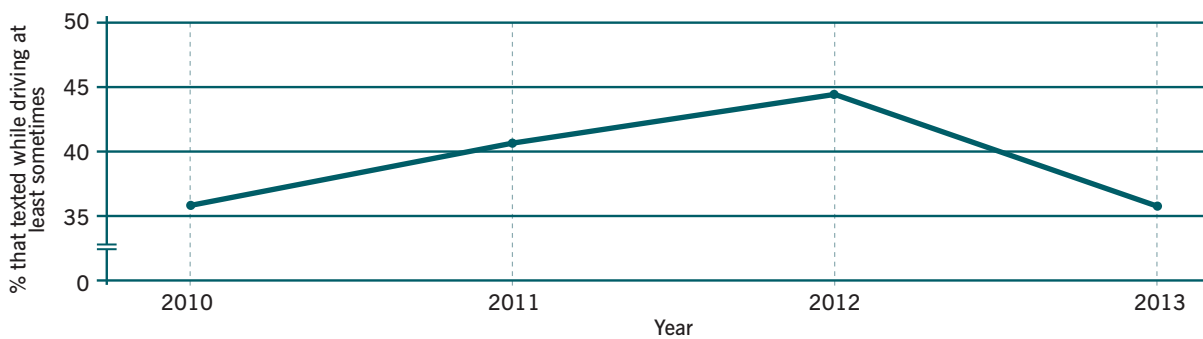


AN UPDATE ON TEXTING AND DRIVING AMONG MISSOURI COLLEGE STUDENTS

Partners in Prevention, a coalition of 21 colleges and universities across the state, is dedicated to reducing high-risk behaviors among Missouri college students. One of the risky behaviors students engage in is phone use while driving.

Texting while driving encompasses the three main types of distraction – visual, manual and cognitive. It also reduces the driver's focus from the road more frequently and for longer periods of time than other distractions, which makes it more dangerous than many other forms of driver inattention (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration).

Results from the 2013 Missouri College Health Behavior Survey (MCHBS) indicate a **decline** in texting and driving compared to the previous three years, though it is too early to determine if this is a trend that will continue.



The reported percentages are of students reporting texting while driving "Sometimes", "Most of the time", and "Always".

DISCUSSION

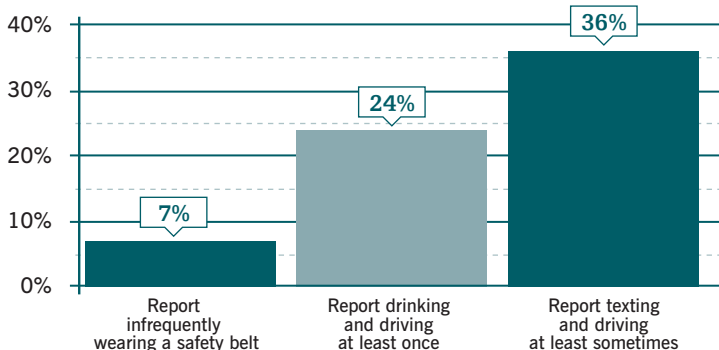
For the first time in 4 years, texting while driving rates among Missouri college students declined in 2013. The MCHBS shows an 8% drop in self-reported texting while driving rates in 2013, with 36% of students engaging in the behavior at least sometimes. While this is a very positive decline, it cannot yet be determined if this is a trend that will continue. NHTSA reports that at least 1 out of every 10 traffic fatalities is a result of distracted driving, therefore it is important that campuses continue to educate students on multiple facets of traffic safety, including distracted driving.

As the graph opposite shows, when compared to other dangerous driving behaviors, students are texting and driving at much higher rates than they are driving without seatbelts or drinking and driving. According to the 2013 MCHBS, 7% report infrequently wearing their safety belts, 24% report drinking and driving at least once, but 36% report texting and driving at least sometimes.

SUMMARY

The data shows campus efforts are potentially starting to make a difference, but at this point it is too early to determine if this is a declining trend as this is the first decline in texting in recent years. The behavior is still disproportionately high compared to other dangerous behaviors such as impaired driving and driving without a safety belt. It is important for campuses to continue efforts to educate their students about the dangers of text messaging and driving.

Dangerous Driving Behaviors of Missouri College Students



Data taken from the 2013 Missouri College Health Behavior Survey

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