Press Release

Greene County Public Health
A Safe Communities Grantee of Ohio Department of Public Safety
Ohio State Highway Patrol-Traffic Safety Division
360 Wilson Drive, Xenia, OH 45385

Contact Person:
Laurie Fox, Public Information Officer
Greene County Public Health
937-374-5669; lfox@gcph.info

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, May 8, 2019

CLICK IT OR TICKET—OR PAY THE ULTIMATE PRICE

GREENE COUNTY, OH – Buckling your seat belt should be automatic. It should be the first thing done when you get in the car. Seat belt use should be as ingrained as tying your shoes or brushing your teeth. Still, nearly 10 percent of drivers and passengers go without their seat belts. As law enforcement officers, it is our greatest wish to spread the message about the importance of seat belt use, and remind people that seat belt use isn't just a suggestion, it's the law. Between 2013 and 2017, seat belts saved just over 69,000 lives in the United States.

From May 20 to June 2, 2019, the Greene County Safe Communities Coalition, part of Greene County Public Health, is joining the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for the 2019 *Click It or Ticket* enforcement mobilization. Local law enforcement will be out in full force, cracking down on seat belt violations and issuing citations to anyone caught traveling without a buckled seat belt or transporting unrestrained children. Greene County's law enforcement officers are working to spread the message that seat belts save lives.

For this year's national *Click It or Ticket* seat belt mobilization effort, NHTSA is asking all states to participate in the kickoff event, *Border to Border* (B2B), a one-day national seat belt awareness event coordinated by participating state highway safety offices and their respective law enforcement liaisons. The B2B kick off will include a 4-hour enforcement crackdown from 4–8 p.m. on Monday, May 20. The focus of B2B is on nighttime hours, when seat belt use is at its lowest. The B2B program aims to increase law enforcement participation by coordinating highly visible seat belt enforcement and providing seat belt fact sheets for drivers at heavily traveled, highly visible state border checkpoints.

Greene County Safe Communities Coalition will hold a special local kickoff on Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 11:00 am at the AAA Office in Beavercreek located at 3321 Dayton-Xenia Road. The public is invited to attend; local law enforcement and coalition members will be present to share information on the Click It or Ticket campaign as it applies to Greene County.

May is a critical month for law enforcement agencies to target unbuckled drivers. With the Memorial Day holiday weekend marking the official start to summer, there will surely be thousands more families traveling the roads to their vacation destinations. We have found this to be the most effective time to remind drivers why seat belt laws matter—they help save lives. This is not a campaign to write tickets or train law enforcement. This is a campaign to help keep people safe and alive. Our local law enforcement officers see firsthand the casualties of not wearing a seat belt, and we do not wish that devastation on anyone.

According to NHTSA, in 2017, there were 10,076 unbuckled passenger vehicle occupants killed in crashes in the United States. In that same year, 55 percent of passenger vehicle occupants killed at night (6 p.m.–5:59 a.m.) were not wearing their seat belts. That's why one focus of the *Click It or Ticket* campaign is nighttime enforcement. Participating law enforcement agencies will be taking a no-excuses approach to seat belt law enforcement, writing citations day and night.

We ask drivers across the country to please make buckling up an automatic habit. Whether you ride in the front seat or the back, and no matter which car seat or booster seat your child may use, everyone's seat belt should be buckled every trip. The action is so quick and so basic—and it can save your life.

In addition to increased patrols and zero-tolerance enforcement, here are the facts about the dangers of unbuckled driving:

- YOUTH: Young adults in particular seem to think they are invincible in vehicles. Unfortunately, they are dying at a disproportionate rate because they are not wearing their seat belts.
- MALES: Almost twice as many men are dying in vehicle crashes compared to women, and they are wearing their seat belts less often.
- PICKUP TRUCK DRIVERS AND PASSENGERS: Many pickup truck occupants think that they don't need to wear their seat belts because they believe their large vehicles will protect them in a crash. However, the numbers from NHTSA tell the truth: 59 percent of pickup truck occupants who were killed in crashes were not buckled up. That's compared to 42 percent of passenger car occupants who were unbuckled when they were killed in crashes.

Nighttime also poses a particularly dangerous threat to vehicle occupants, which is why an important part of our safety message to motorists includes the words "day and night." In 2017, about 55 percent of passenger vehicle occupants who were killed during the nighttime hours of 6 p.m. to 5:59 a.m. were not wearing their seat belts. More people are being killed in nighttime crashes than ever before, and local law enforcement officers are going to be targeting nighttime seat belt violators as a result.

Each year, too many people die as a result of refusing to buckle their seat belts. The numbers must change. The behavior is too simple. Just a click of the seat belt. Do not just buckle up to avoid a ticket—our friends' and families' lives in Greene County are more important than that. But if you are caught driving while unbuckled, you will get a ticket—no excuses, no warnings. Wearing your seat belt is required by law. Day and night, front seat and back, *Click It or Ticket*.

You can find out more about the *Click It or Ticket* mobilization at www.nhtsa.gov/ciot. For more information on the Greene County Safe Communities Coalition, call 937-374-5624 or email asteveley@gcph.info.

Greene County Public Health…
Your Trusted Local Public Health Authority Since 1920

# # #