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

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The Best Thanksgiving Side is a Sober Ride

XENIA, OH — During the Thanksgiving holiday, the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reminds drivers that 'Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving'. Even during Thanksgiving Eve, also known as "Drinksgiving," drinking and driving is a deadly choice; drivers should always commit to sober driving or arrange for a sober ride. Planning ahead for a sober ride will help get everyone to the Thanksgiving table safe and sound — and that's something to be thankful for.

Unfortunately, drunk driving has affected thousands of families during the Thanksgiving season. According to NHTSA, in 2024, 164 people died in drunk-driving crashes, in which one or more drivers had a blood alcohol level of .08 or higher, during the 2024 Thanksgiving holiday (6 p.m. Wednesday – 5:59 a.m. Monday). Drivers ages 21-34 (37%) had the highest involvement in fatal drunk-driving crashes on Thanksgiving 2024. From 2020-2024, the death toll in drunk-driving crashes during Thanksgiving festivities was 910, representing more than one-third (36%) of all fatalities in traffic crashes. In 2024, Thanksgiving Eve (6 p.m. Wednesday – 5:59 a.m. Thursday) is no exception: 36 drivers were involved in drunk-driving crashes during this period.

"Driving under the influence of alcohol is never an option," said Kaci Warren, Coordinator of Greene County Safe Communities Coalition through Greene County Public Health. "Even one drink can be enough to impair a person's judgment and driving ability. Having a plan in place for safe transportation before having the first drink is the responsible way to avoid the dangers of impaired driving this Thanksgiving season. Drivers can keep themselves, their passengers, and other families safe on the road by recognizing that Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving and by making plans to drive sober or get a sober ride home."

Drivers should be safe on Thanksgiving by planning ahead if they intend to drink. Planning a safe ride home before the first drink is the smart way to go, especially since impairment clouds judgment. A prepared driver sets up a designated driver or schedules a rideshare in advance to ensure the night ends safely.

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If a driver is not in a position to get behind the wheel, letting a sober friend drive or calling a ride is the right plan. Friends who take away the keys from an impaired friend considering driving help everyone arrive home safely. If anyone spots a drunk driver, contact local law enforcement.

For more information on impaired driving, visit NHTSA.gov/DrunkDriving.

For more information about Greene County Safe Communities, please call Kaci Warren at 937-374-5673 or email kwarren@greenecophoh.gov.

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