



MICHIGAN HEALTH & HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

Advocating for hospitals and the patients they serve.

TO: Members of the Senate Transportation Committee
FROM: Chris Mitchell, Director, Government Relations
DATE: June 7, 2011
SUBJECT: Senate Bill 291– Motorcycle Helmet Law Repeal

MHA Position: OPPOSE

The Michigan Health & Hospital Association strongly opposes Senate Bill 291, which would repeal Michigan's mandatory motorcycle helmet law for persons 21 years of age and older. If enacted, this legislation could result in increased insurance and Medicaid costs. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, **"Every single state that has repealed its helmet law has seen a significant increase in fatalities and serious injuries."** The MHA has opposed similar legislation in the past and will continue to stymie any effort to diminish public safety initiatives.

During the past 5 legislative sessions, the **MHA opposed similar legislation due to the fact that crash helmets reduce the severity of injury, the likelihood of death and the overall cost of medical care.** According to the National Department of Transportation, an unhelmeted motorcyclist is 37 percent more likely to need ambulance service, be admitted to a hospital as an inpatient, have higher hospital costs, need neurosurgery and intensive care, need rehabilitation, be permanently impaired, and need long-term care than cyclist who wear a crash helmet. And it should come as no surprise that the National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration reports that head injury is the leading cause of death in motorcycle crashes.

The MHA consistently supports public policy that promotes responsible behavior and improves the health status of Michigan residents. **The mandatory helmet law, like the mandatory seat belt law, saves lives.** The National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration states that motorcycle helmets saved the lives of 1,784 motorcyclists nationally in 2007 and could have saved 800 more if helmets were used by all motorcyclists. In addition, the MHA believes that current helmet law is in place to reduce risks to motorcyclists and improve the overall health of citizens of Michigan. **We urge you to oppose SB 291 and maintain the current mandatory helmet law.**

Please contact Chris Mitchell (cmitchell@mha.org) at (517) 703-8622 at the MHA if you have further questions on this issue.

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