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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
April 20, 2009

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## **INJURY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION EFFORTS ARE CRITICAL TO U.S. HEALTH REFORM**

*STIPDA releases paper linking injury and violence prevention to national health reform*

**Atlanta, GA** – The State and Territorial Injury Prevention Directors Association (STIPDA) has released a [white paper](#) that demonstrates how injury and violence prevention are fundamental to national efforts to reform the U.S. health care system.

While providing quality affordable health care to all Americans is a necessary and fundamental step to improving health in America, STIPDA finds that investing in the primary prevention of disease and injuries is essential to driving down health care costs in the United States.

According to STIPDA, efforts to reform the U.S. health care system must involve and encompass the prevention of injuries and violence. STIPDA recommends four (4) objectives that comprehensive health reform proposals must include: (1) accelerated diffusion of proven, cost-effective interventions; (2) integration of injury and violence prevention efforts with other public health areas, including chronic disease prevention, public safety, and behavioral health; (3) investments in and the standardization of electronic information technology systems; and (4) the provision of funding for new and existing injury and violence prevention programs.

When evidence-based, prevention strategies are utilized, the estimated return on investment can be substantial. For example, an investment of \$46 for the purchase of one child car seat has been estimated to save \$1,900 in medical and other costs. Curfews and provisional licenses for teen drivers save \$600 per driver with an investment of only \$74 per driver. In addition, home visitation programs have been demonstrated to be particularly effective in reducing child abuse and injury, saving between \$2.88 and \$5.70 for every dollar spent.

Nationally and in every state in the United States, injuries are the leading cause of death in the first 44 years of a person's life. More than 173,000 people die as a result of injuries and violence each year. Millions more Americans are injured and survive, only to cope with lifelong disabilities. Injuries and violence are also a significant financial burden on the U.S. health care system. Each year, nearly 30 million people are treated for injuries in emergency departments across the country – accounting for nearly a third of total emergency department visits annually. Injuries are major causes of hospitalization, disability, and medical care costs for all age groups. In 2000, Americans suffered injuries resulting in over \$117 billion in medical costs and an estimated \$289 billion in productivity losses.

It is widely acknowledged that U.S. health care costs are substantial. These costs are only expected to increase as investments in primary prevention remain limited. In order to effectively improve health, increase public safety, and reduce health care costs, efforts to reform the U.S. health care system must address injury and violence prevention.

More information and data sources can be obtained at [www.stipda.org](http://www.stipda.org).

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The State and Territorial Injury Prevention Directors Association (STIPDA) is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) organization of professionals committed to strengthening the ability of state, territorial, and local health departments to

reduce death and disability associated with injury and violence. Formed in 1992, STIPDA is the only national non-profit organization comprised of public health injury professionals representing all states and territories throughout the United States. For more information about STIPDA, call (770) 690-9000 or visit the STIPDA website at [www.stipda.org](http://www.stipda.org).