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For immediate release

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Safety Seat Checkup Scheduled at South Los Angeles Mall

TORRANCE, CA (July 14, 2008) – Motor vehicle crashes still kill more kids than any other cause of death – yet more than ninety percent of the children who attended safety seat checkups in the Los Angeles area this year were buckled up incorrectly. In 2006, 179 child passengers under 15 died in California and, in addition, 18,318 were injured, as a result of vehicle crashes. More than 80% of the small children killed would have survived if they had been properly buckled up.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. is offering parents the opportunity to have their children's safety seats inspected at a **safety seat checkup** at Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza, 3650 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90008, on Tuesday July 29, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (enter parking structure next to Magic Johnson Theatres). Parents and caregivers can call the Safe Ride Helpline, (310) 222-6860, weekday afternoons, to make an advance checkup appointment. Drive-ins will be taken if there are unused appointment times.

“This is a great opportunity for families to check that their kids are riding safely,” said SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. Executive Director Stephanie Tombrello. “Most safety seats are used incorrectly, but many parents don't realize that their kids are at risk in the car. I hope that many local families will come and find out if their children are well protected.”

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Teams of nationally Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians and other trained volunteers will inspect each safety seat to make sure it fits the child properly, is correctly secured, and is in the safest possible location in the vehicle. Older children will be invited to try the 5-Step Test to find out if they fit properly in the vehicle safety belts or need a booster.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. conducts free safety seat checkups throughout the year at various locations as a part of a training program for health and safety professionals. At checkups last year, more than 90% of the seats checked were not safe for the child or needed adjustment. Even well-educated, safety-conscious parents often make unsuspected mistakes that can result in serious injuries to their children.

California law requires children to ride in a safety seat or booster, in the back seat, until they are at least six years old or weigh 60 pounds. However, most children need a booster for proper belt fit until they are at least age 8 to 10, depending on their proportions and the design of the vehicle. SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. recommends that children ride in the back seat, which is 40% safer than the front, until they are old enough to drive.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. is the national non-profit organization dedicated to child passenger safety and was founded in 1980 by fifteen Los Angeles area safety advocates. The organization is nationally recognized for technical expertise and program excellence. The checkup is made possible with funding from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Injury and Violence Prevention Program. For more information, go to www.carseat.org or call the Safe Ride Helpline: (310) 222-6860 or (800) 745-SAFE. For Spanish: (310) 222-6862 or (800) 747-SANO.