

NEWS RELEASE

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Non-Fatal DUI Crashes Can Be Horrific for Kids Riding with Impaired Drivers

Riverside County, CA (April 20, 2018) – A six-year-old girl underwent emergency surgery for serious internal injuries last Sunday as a result of a single vehicle, rollover crash caused by her mother who was allegedly driving under the influence. The driver, 24-year old Floraceli Sanchez-Reyes was heading east on SR 74 near Homeland when she drifted off the roadway and struck a fence.

Rollover crashes are particularly violent and serious. They represent just 2.3% of crash events but generate 78.3% of child crash injuries. Sanchez-Reyes and her four-year-old daughter were treated for minor injuries and released from Riverside County Regional Medical Center. Sanchez-Reyes was then booked into the Larry D. Smith Correctional Facility and charged with, among other things, driving without a license, suspicion of driving with a BAC of .08 or higher, and child endangerment.

According to Stephanie Tombrello, Executive Director of *SafetyBeltSafe* U.S.A., children being injured or dying in DUI crashes is a little-recognized problem – especially when the driver is the parent. “Of the 1,132 traffic deaths among children ages birth to 14 years in 2015, 209, or 16 percent, involved an alcohol-impaired driver. Impaired drivers are 48% less likely to properly restrain their child passengers. Many more kids are injured in DUI-involved crashes. Rather than being put at risk from dangerous choices by the driver of another vehicle, 51% of these children were riding with the DUI driver, usually a person responsible for their welfare and often a parent. One third of the time, the impaired driver in these crashes is a woman.”

Since children cannot refuse to ride with adults in their lives, they are especially vulnerable to being driven by caregivers under the influence. Moreover, even more kids also are put at risk by parents who think they are buckling up their children correctly when in fact they are not. Research shows that 9 out of 10 kids ride in safety seats or belts that are not being used correctly, even though 85% of caregivers think their children are properly restrained. “These tragic cases should serve as a reminder to all parents that children need to be protected in the car. Don’t take a chance on your child’s safety – get your safety seat properly checked by a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician,” Tombrello recommended. “At our checkups, we regularly record 90% or more of the caring families attending having their children at risk.”

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