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SECTION 5R

ER nurse has message for teens

SCOTTSDALE

Speaking truth to power is a high aim, but talking tough to teenagers may take more guts.

Especially talking about their driving.

That's what Shelly Silvers does. A trauma nurse at Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn, Silvers presents seminars on safe driving at local high schools and other places where teenagers gather.



KATE
NOLAN

Silvers, 46, used to be an emergency charge nurse and hated the part of the

job where she and a doctor had to tell parents: We're sorry we couldn't save your child.

"Teenagers are my passion. They are the drivers who are at greatest risk because they are the highest risk takers," Silvers said.

Next month she will get some backup from a new Arizona law.

July 1, the state starts enforcing the Teenage Driver Safety Act.

The new regulation calls for increased

What Arizona's new teenage driving safety law says

Arizona's Teenage Driver Safety Act goes into effect July 1. Here are its key points:

■ Establishes Graduated Driver License, where licensed drivers, ages 16-17, do not have full driving privileges until six months after licensing.

■ Increases supervised training requirement from 25 to 30 hours, of which 10 must be at night.

■ Prohibits driving from midnight to 5 a.m., for the first six months, with exemptions for job, religious or school activities or family emergencies.

■ Limits number of non-family teenage passengers to one, during first six months.

■ Establishes fines and extensions of restrictions for non-compliance.

Source: State of Arizona.

Nurse takes message to teens

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driver training and implements a graduated license where teenagers have a nighttime curfew and other limitations in the first six months after being licensed.

The legislation may nudge Arizona loose from last place on a list rating states for their traffic safety laws. The list is maintained by the Emergency Nurses Association, which lobbies for injury prevention efforts.

Teen accidents drop 30 percent

Arizona was one of five states without such a law. States with a teen law have seen reductions in teen-related accidents by as much as 30 percent.

The idea stems from sobering statistics: more teens die in traffic than from drugs, alcohol, suicide and other violence combined, according to the American Automobile Association. In Arizona, more than 20,000 teenagers a year below age 18 are involved in traffic accidents, resulting in more than 100 deaths.

Silvers hopes the law saves lives. people send her gory pictures and tell her to use them in her classes, but she doesn't want to "gross them out."

IN THE REPUBLIC

Senior-center cool

Dining halls and chair exercises give way to cafés and treadmills in preparation for boomers. **Arizona Living**

Instead, the mother of two former teens zeros in on their lifestyle.

Silvers stresses the more diversions in the car, the worse the driver's reaction time will be.

"I tell them being responsible is not playing with a cellphone or radio while driving. With other teens in the car, they get into a conversation and horse around and the driver wants to horse around, too. It only takes a split second," she said.

Focusing on the hurt of others

Silver leads the kids to think about victims. Their own loss of life is one thing. Their passengers and those in a car they may hit are another.

"I ask them, if they have a terrible brain injury for the rest of their lives, are their friends going to visit them in the nursing home? How easy will that be on their parents?" Silvers said.

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