Ahead of 4/20, MADD Reminds Everyone of the Dangers of Impaired Driving

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WASHINGTON (PRWEB) April 12, 2019 -- Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is reminding everyone to take the high road this 4/20 and never drive under the influence of cannabis or any other mind-altering substance.

“Driving under the influence of any drug, including cannabis and alcohol, all too often has tragic consequences. Combining both cannabis and alcohol is even more dangerous than using either substance alone, leading to greater impairment and a greater risk of getting into a crash,” said MADD National President Helen Witty. “My 16-year-old daughter, Helen Marie, was rollerblading on a bike path near our home when a marijuana- and alcohol-impaired teen driver ran off the road and struck her. Helen Marie died an instant, violent death, and my life changed forever.”

MADD urges everyone to plan ahead for a safe ride home in advance of April 20, an unofficial cannabis holiday. On April 18, MADD will join law enforcement and traffic safety partners in Colorado — one of the first states to legalize recreational use of marijuana — to highlight the dangers of driving while impaired.

According to Canadian researchers who studied 25 years of data on fatal crashes in the U.S., the risk of being in a fatal crash is 12 percent higher from 4:20 p.m. to midnight on April 20 compared to the same time one week earlier. For drivers younger than 21, the risk is 38 percent higher. The findings were published a year ago in a research letter in the journal JAMA Internal Medicine.

“Just because you drive somewhere, doesn’t mean you have to drive home,” Witty said. “With so many options available today, there is never any excuse to drive drunk or high. Please, designate a non-drinking, non-consuming driver, use public transportation, call a taxi or use a ride share app like Uber.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, THC, the main active ingredient in marijuana, affects areas of the brain that control your body’s movements, balance, coordination, memory and judgment — skills needed to drive safely.

“Marijuana does not make you a better driver,” Witty said. “In fact, it can slow reaction time and interfere with your ability to make decisions. It can distort perception and make it harder to solve problems. The dangers become even greater when you combine marijuana with alcohol, which is still the deadliest threat on our roadways.”

Driving while high is impaired driving — and can result in a DUI. In fact, the number one reason police in Colorado stop cannabis-impaired drivers is due to speeding, according to the Colorado State Patrol.

“Drugged driving is a danger to everyone on the road,” Witty said. “As more states legalize cannabis, we need to work even harder to make sure we all make it home safe. It’s up to all of us.”

About Mothers Against Drunk Driving
Founded in 1980 by a mother whose daughter was killed by a drunk driver, Mothers Against Drunk Driving® (MADD) is the nation’s largest nonprofit working to end drunk driving, help fight drugged driving, support the victims of these violent crimes and prevent underage drinking. MADD has helped to save nearly 380,000 lives, reduce drunk driving deaths by more than 50 percent and promote designating a non-drinking driver. MADD’s Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving® calls for law enforcement support, ignition interlocks for all offenders and advanced vehicle technology. MADD has provided supportive services to nearly one million drunk and drugged driving victims and survivors at no charge through local victim advocates and the 24-Hour Victim Help Line 1-877-MADD-HELP. Visit www.madd.org or call 1-877-ASK-MADD.
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