Effectiveness of Driver Improvement Programs

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ABSTRACT

Driver improvement programs have been pursued by many states in the United States to reduce the public safety risk posed by repeat violators of traffic rules and regulations. These programs include issuing warning letters, providing educational material and courses, conducting diagnostic reexaminations, individual counseling, and license suspension/revocation. Iowa’s Driver Improvement Program targets drivers who have received multiple citations for moving violations. Under this program, in lieu of driver’s license suspension, such drivers may be required to attend and successfully complete a driver improvement program at the person's own expense. Currently, there are 17 community colleges across the state of Iowa that offer the approved program.

A number of studies have been reported over the past three decades in the literature on the effectiveness of driver improvement programs. Most studies have been initiated by state motor vehicle divisions and, hence, offer state-specific results, while a few studies constitute a meta-analysis and offer quantitative reviews of existing research. This presentation will provide a synthesis of practices in the United States related to driver improvement programs and driver education (in-class training and online driver education courses). It also will offer a review of the existing literature (both in the United States and internationally) on the effectiveness of driver improvement programs (or select driver interventions) in reducing crashes and violations. The presentation will discuss data and methodological approaches used to evaluate such programs. These are key steps to develop recommendations of educational materials and strategies for adoption in driver education programs in Iowa and other states so as to enhance transportation safety.

Key words: driver improvement program—effectiveness—safety