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## My Efforts To Reduce Distracted Driving

In last month's newsletter, I suggested that a great New Year's resolution for all of us to consider was reducing distracted driving.

This year, I'm putting my money (or at least my time) where my mouth is.

I am teaming up with lawyers around the country to help with an organized campaign to raise awareness about the dangers of distracted driving.

Our efforts will culminate in April, National Distracted Driving Awareness Month. At that time, we all hope to give a number of presentations to high schools, youth groups, and civic organizations.

While much of our efforts will focus on education of teens, this is an issue that all of us need to learn about. A study by the noted Pew Research Center found that almost 50% of adults who have phones that will text message have engaged in texting while driving.

The research also indicates that people know the dangers of

distracted driving — except when it involves their distracted driving.

Unfortunately, many of us who are personal injury lawyers have personally seen the consequences of distracted driving. That's why so many of us have decided to join in this campaign.

Before we even start, we owe a debt of gratitude to sponsors EndDD.org and the Casey Feldman Foundation (created in honor of Casey Feldman, a 21 year old college student who was killed in 2009 by a distracted driver).



If any of you have kids' groups that might be interested in the presentation or belong to civic organizations or other groups that might be interested, please feel free to call me. If I can't do a presentation for you myself, I'll try to find someone who can.

— Brooks Schuelke

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# Killer Headphones, Dude. Literally.

A study released earlier this month found that the number of US pedestrians killed or seriously injured while wearing headphones has almost tripled in the last six years. Not surprisingly, most of the victims are teens or young adults.

More than half of the deaths involved pedestrians being run down by trains, and many involved incidents where the train or driver of the vehicle were sounding a horn trying to warn the pedestrian of the potential problem.

“Everybody is aware of the risk of cell phones and texting in automobiles, but I see more and more teens distracted with the latest devices and headphones in their ears,” said lead author Richard Lichenstein, M.D., associate professor of pediatrics at the University of Maryland School of Medicine and director of pediatric emergency medicine at the University of Maryland Medical Center. “Unfortunately, as we make more and more enticing devices, the risk of injury from distraction and blocking out other sounds increases.”

I found the researchers’ explanation of the problem interesting. Obviously, one of the issues is that the headphones drown out the sounds of the horns and traffic. But this “sensory deprivation” problem is exacerbated by distraction. Researchers call this “inattention blindness” — where multiple stimuli divide the brain’s mental resource allocation. This deprivation greatly intensifies problems caused by the inability to clearly hear the oncoming vehicles.

I hope we can learn from the study and from the many deaths the subject of the study.

While I don’t have any research to back it up, I assume the problem also applies to many other things our kids do. This is likely a problem with bike-riding, skateboarding, riding scooters, and even driving.

We need to make sure that we talk to our kids about these problems; make them aware of the dangers so that they might be a little less likely to become victims of this increasing problem.



## Know the risks for heart disease

The leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States is cardiovascular disease, which includes heart disease and stroke. They kill an estimated 630,000 Americans each year.

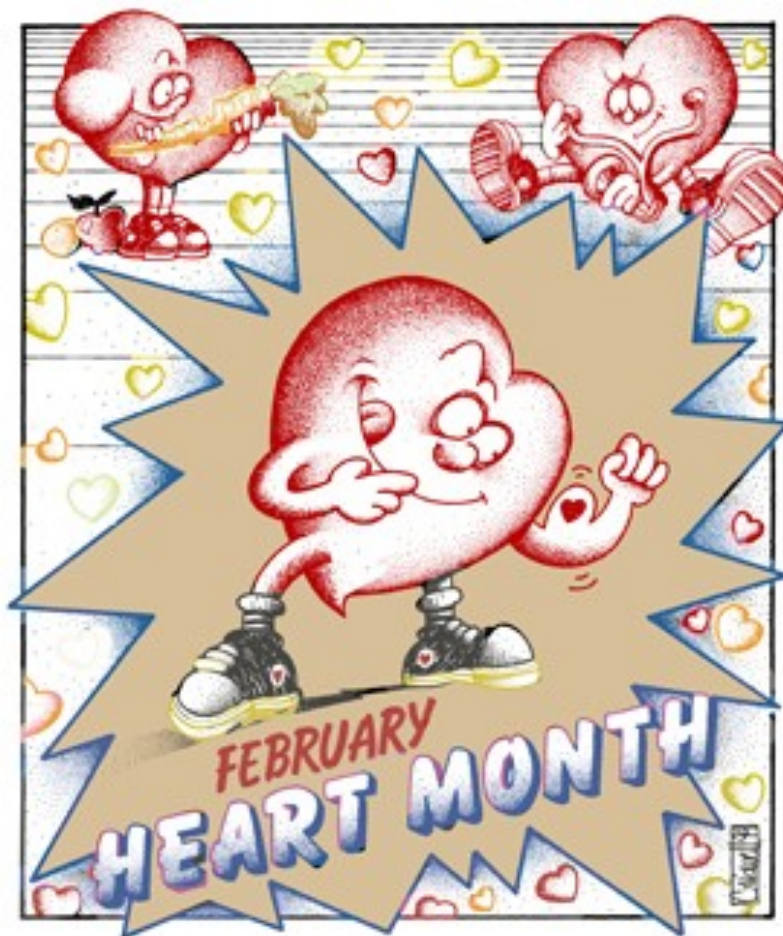
Heart disease can be prevented. American Heart Month is a good time to decide what you can do to achieve a heart-healthy life.

The most common type of heart problem is coronary artery disease (CAD), which can lead to a heart attack. You can reduce your risk through lifestyle changes and, in some cases, medication, such as a statin.

The American Heart Association's Go Red For Women campaign urges citizens to spread the message that heart disease is not only a man's problem. More women die of cardiovascular disease than from the next four causes of death combined, including all forms of cancer. Women once believed breast cancer was their greatest health risk; new data show that while one in 30 women die of breast cancer, one in three women die of heart disease.

Eighty percent of all cardiac events can be prevented if people made the right choices for their hearts. The advice for both men and women is the same:

- Watch your weight.
- Quit smoking.
- Control cholesterol



Control blood pressure.  
Drink alcohol in moderation.  
Get active and eat healthy.  
Manage stress.

### Stroke

Stroke is the third leading cause of death and a major cause of long-term disability.

Stroke and TIA (transient ischemic attack) happen when a blood vessel feeding the brain gets clogged or bursts. The signs of a TIA are like a stroke, but usually last only a few minutes:

Numbness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of your body.

Confusion, or trouble speaking.  
Trouble seeing in one or both eyes.  
Loss of balance; walking trouble.  
Severe headache with no known cause.

Don't wait more than five minutes before calling 911 for help if you experience any of these signs.

This month, we can rededicate ourselves to reducing the burden of heart disease by taking steps to improve our own heart health and encouraging our families to do the same.

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This newsletter is informational and not legal advice. If you need legal advice, feel free to call us to set up a consultation.

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## THANKS FOR YOUR REFERRALS

As always, we want to thank you for your referrals. Most of our new clients come to us from referrals from friends, attorneys, doctors, former clients and others.

We understand that when you refer a case to us, you're going out on a limb. Because of that, we strive to provide the best service we can. That obviously means striving to obtain the best result possible. But it also means more than that.

It means listening to your referrals. It means being willing to take the time to answer questions and explain any confusing parts of your referrals' claims or lawsuits. It means returning phone calls and emails.

We pledge to do this and more to take care of those who you entrust to us.

