

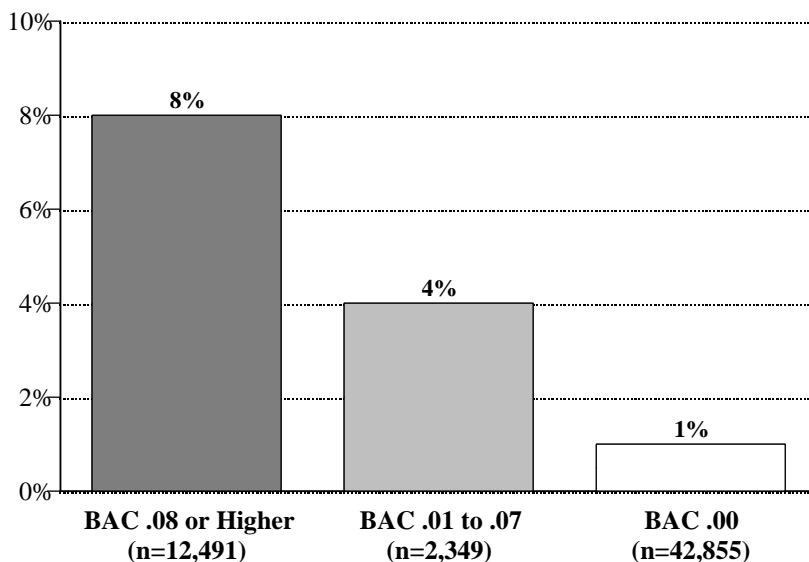
## A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

### *Drinking Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes Four to Eight Times More Likely to Have a Prior DWI Conviction*

Drinking drivers involved in fatal crashes are more likely than sober drivers to have a previous conviction for driving while impaired (DWI), according to recently released data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). In 2006, drivers with a measurable blood alcohol concentration (BAC) at the time of the fatal crash were four to eight times more likely to have had a DWI conviction within 3 years of the crash than drivers who had not been drinking. For example, of the 12,491 drivers who had a BAC of .08 or higher at the time of the fatal crash, 8% had a prior DWI conviction, compared to 1% of drivers with a BAC of .00 (see figure below). These findings suggest that increased interventions after the first DWI conviction, such as assessment and treatment for substance use problems and administrative sanctions, may help reduce the number of alcohol-involved fatal crashes.

**Prior DWI Convictions Among Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes,  
by BAC at the Time of the Crash, 2006**



NOTES: Data are from 57,695 drivers involved in fatal crashes as documented by the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS). A fatal crash is defined as a police-reported crash involving a motor vehicle traveling on a trafficway in which at least one person (driver, passenger, or nonmotorist) dies within 30 days of the crash. Having a measurable BAC does not indicate that a crash or a fatality was caused by alcohol impairment. All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico had laws in 2006 making it illegal to drive with a BAC of .08 or higher.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration (NHTSA), "Alcohol-Impaired Driving," *Traffic Safety Facts 2006 Data*, March 2008. Available online at <http://www.nhtsa.gov>.

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