

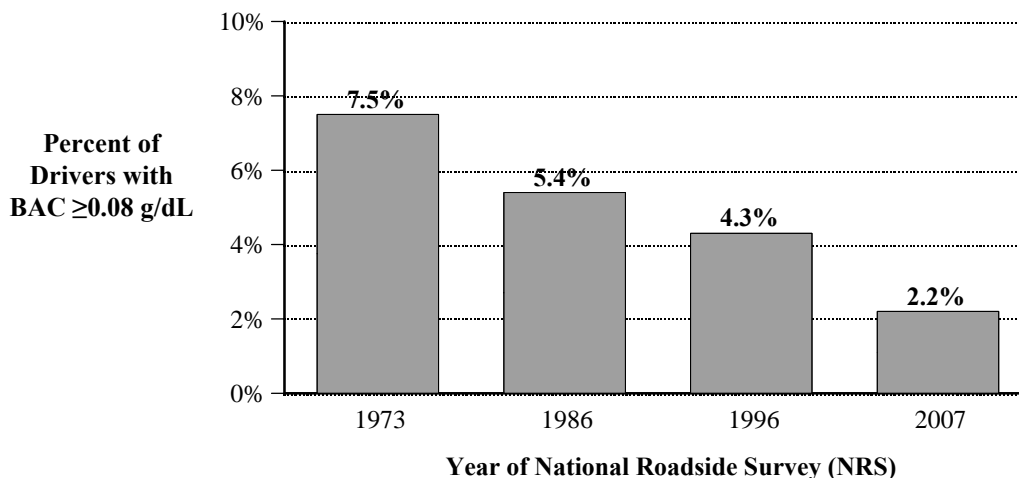
**A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research**

**University of Maryland, College Park**

***National Roadside Survey Finds Decline in DWI Rates***

There has been a dramatic decline in U.S. driving while intoxicated (DWI) rates, according to data from the four National Roadside Surveys\* conducted since 1973. In 1973, 7.5% of weekend nighttime drivers had a BAC over the current legal limit of 0.08 g/dL, compared to 2.2% in the most recent survey conducted in 2007 (see figure below). Males were significantly more likely than females to have a BAC over the legal limit, as were drivers surveyed during late nighttime hours (1 a.m. to 3 a.m.) compared to earlier hours (10:00 p.m. to midnight). The 2007 survey also included for the first time the collection of saliva and blood samples to test for other potentially impairing drugs, including illegal, prescription, and over-the-counter products. Overall, 16.3% of nighttime drivers tested positive for such drugs. The authors caution, however, that “drug presence does not necessarily imply impairment. For many drugs, “drug presence can be detected long after any impairment that might affect driving has passed” (p. 3).

**Estimated Percentage of Weekend Nighttime Drivers with BACs  $\geq 0.08$  g/dL**



\*The National Roadside Survey (NRS) is a stratified random sample of weekend nighttime drivers in the contiguous 48 states conducted by either the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and/or the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. In the 2007 survey, breath-alcohol measurements were obtained from 9,413 drivers.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from data from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), “Results of the 2007 National Roadside Survey of Alcohol and Drug Use by Drivers,” *Traffic Safety Facts Research Note*, July 2009. Available online at <http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/DOT/NHTSA/Traffic%20Injury%20Control/Articles/Associated%20Files/811175.pdf>.

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