

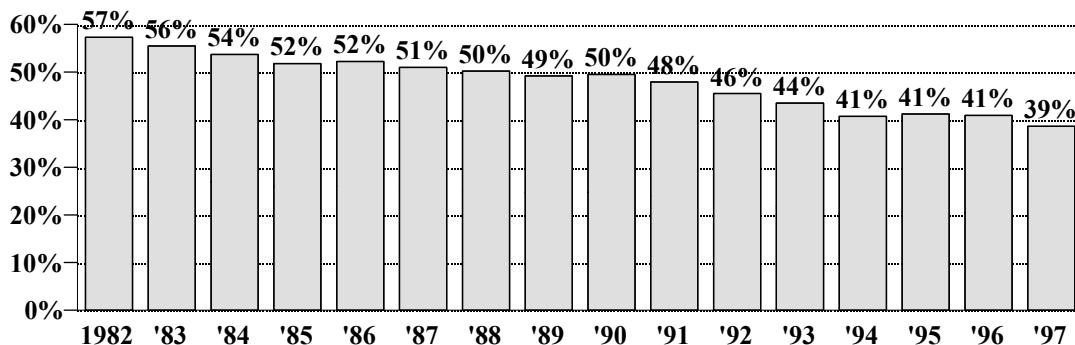
## A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

### *Drunk Driving Deaths Continue to Decline in the United States*

Almost 40% of the 41,967 traffic fatalities that occurred in the United States in 1997 were alcohol-related, according to data from the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS). While this percentage is a cause for concern, it represents a marked improvement over past years; alcohol-related traffic fatalities have decreased from 25,165 in 1982 to 16,189 in 1997. Many factors have likely influenced this decline, including the enactment of stricter alcohol-impaired driving legislation (see CESAR FAX, Volume 5, Issue 41). Fifteen states and the District of Columbia have lowered the legal blood alcohol limit to 0.08% and as of this year, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have enacted laws prohibiting people under the age of 21 from driving with any blood alcohol level.

**Percentage of Vehicular Crash Fatalities That Were Alcohol-Related,  
United States, 1982-1997**



NOTE: The Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) gathers data on fatal motor vehicle traffic crashes from the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. To be included in FARS, a crash must involve a motor vehicle traveling on a traffic way customarily open to the public, and result in the death of a person (either an occupant of a vehicle or a non-motorist) within 30 days of the crash. An accident is considered to be alcohol-related if any driver or nonoccupant involved in the crash had a positive blood alcohol level.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS). For more information, visit [www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov).

### **December is Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month**

Join communities across the country in supporting National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month by providing public awareness and enforcement campaigns to prevent impaired driving. For more information, including a list of national campaign activities, visit the National 3D Prevention Month Coalition's web site at [www.3dmonth.org](http://www.3dmonth.org), or call them at 202-452-6004.

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CESAR FAX is supported by a grant from the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention.

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