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Alcohol-Related Crashes Involving Young Adult Women Drivers Soar

Greenbrae, CA., June 1st, 2009 – It seems as though every week there is another celebrity getting charged with drunk driving; young female celebrities such as Nicole Ritchie, Lindsey Lohan and Paris Hilton all have been charged with high profile DUI cases in California. Due to these alarming trends The Automobile Club of Southern California wanted to further analyze the trend of young adult women and drunk driving. Their analysis of California drinking and driving data from 1998 to 2007 using California Highway Patrol data, shows that women drivers ages 21-24 involved in fatal and injury alcohol-related crashes more than doubled, rising by 116%.

The analysis also shows that young adult women drivers, passengers and pedestrians' alcohol-related deaths and injuries have risen substantially, by nearly half since 1998 when 1,037 women ages 21-24 were killed and injured in alcohol-related crashes. In 2007, the level had risen by 46% to 1,515 in 2007, according to the Auto Club. The Auto Club analysis also showed a notable increase in alcohol-related crashes among female drivers 18-20. Women drivers ages 18-20 were involved in 74% more alcohol-related fatal and injury crashes in 2007 than in 1998. About 2,200 California drivers ages 18-20 are in alcohol-related fatal and injury crashes annually.

The fines, fees and penalties associated with a DUI conviction average \$13,500 to \$15,000 and not only could ruin someone's career but also ruin someone's life through injury or death. In response to these statistics, Marin Services for Women (MSW), a substance abuse and trauma treatment center for women, recommend's stronger education initiatives about the dangers of abusing alcohol. MSW's CEO, Dr. Cindy Myers, explains "Women absorb and metabolize alcohol differently than men. Because women's bodies have a higher ratio of fat to water, they reach a higher blood alcohol concentration after a single drink than men, even when matched for weight and size. Since women are typically smaller than men the effects of alcohol impairment are further increased. In addition, women appear to eliminate alcohol from the blood slower than men." According to a 10-year research effort from the [National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University \(CASA\)](#) more than 20 million girls and women in the United States abuse drugs and alcohol. The study also documents how women, pound for pound, not only get drunk or high faster than men, but also become addicted more easily.

There is no safe way to drive while under the influence. Even one drink can make you an unsafe driver. Furthermore it is possible to be arrested for a California DUI without being in excess of the .08% threshold for legal intoxication. Police can initiate a DUI arrest simply based on perceived impairment.

ABOUT Marin Services for Women:

For over 30 years, Marin Services for Women has advanced community health by providing a full continuum of superior quality chemical dependency recovery services and trauma treatment for women and their children. MSW is dedicated to meeting the community's need to understand the nature, treatment and prevention of alcohol and other drug abuse. MSW is located in Greenbrae, California (Marin County) just 10 minutes from the Golden Gate Bridge and San Francisco. MSW helps women from all over California and the United States in a safe, welcoming and supportive environment. MSW empowers women in their journey towards sustained recovery from addiction and trauma. www.marinservicesforwomen.org (415) 924-5995.

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