



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **San Antonio Families and Physicians Team up to Save Children's Lives**

*(San Antonio, TX)* Motor vehicle crashes continue to be the leading cause of death among children in the United States.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), child safety seats reduce fatal injury by 71 percent for infants and 54 percent for toddlers. *See Me Safe*, a Child Passenger

Safety (CPS) program, held an event today at University Hospital to address this critical issue by providing families essential training and information on how to keep their children safe while in their vehicles.



*See Me Safe*, developed by Ford Motor Company Fund, the philanthropic arm of Ford Motor Company, in partnership with Meharry Medical College, shows families how to keep their children safe by providing them hands-on instruction from CPS-certified technicians on the proper installation of their car seats. The program addresses some common issues, such as how to properly strap the seat into a vehicle, and explains the correct age, weight, and height requirements for each type of seat. *See Me Safe* will partner with University Hospital for its San Antonio child passenger safety seat efforts.

“Automotive safety is one of the most important aspects of our business,” said Jim Vella, President, Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services. “By working directly with parents and establishing a core network of health care providers, Ford is taking strides to ensure auto safety for children,” he continued.

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Recent findings have reported that many families are unaware of the importance of using booster seats. According to NHTSA, only 50 percent of booster-age children (ages 4 through 7) were restrained correctly in booster seats in 2007. This is an alarming fact especially since using booster seats can reduce injury risk by 59 percent compared to seat belts alone, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

To help address this, Ford has donated 150 child passenger safety seats and booster seats to University Hospital for distribution as part of the *See Me Safe* program. University Hospital will hold a booster seat check-up event at the Rodriguez Elementary School in San Antonio on April 30, 2009, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

“The complexities and evolving technology of child passenger safety can be overwhelming and difficult for many parents, who must often rely only on written information about the proper use of safety restraints,” said Dr. Ronald Stewart, Trauma Medical Director, University Hospital. “This partnership will assist in making sure that many San Antonio families receive hands-on experience in making the lives of their children healthier and safer.”

The *See Me Safe* program also recognizes the important role that health care providers play in stressing the need for precautionary, life-saving measures in motor vehicles. Through its *Prescription for Safety* education program, a reference tool specifically designed for the medical community, health care professionals, such as pediatricians, nurses, and emergency room personnel, are engaged as key advocates of child passenger safety.

The workshop gives these health care professionals a specially designed child passenger safety presentation and other educational information that helps them emphasize the topic when working with patients.

Meharry Medical College is nationally recognized as a community-focused, quality driven academic health center. This expertise coupled with its access to health care providers makes it a natural partner for *See Me Safe*'s dual approach of reaching families and the medical community with information on child passenger safety.

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“As the oldest, private, comprehensive, historically black institution for educating health professionals and scientists in the United States, Meharry Medical College is a perfect partner for this program,” said Osei Mevs, Associate Vice President, External Affairs, Meharry Medical College.

“*See Me Safe* focuses on narrowing the gap between what is and what can be in child passenger safety by helping parents/caregivers and medical professionals learn about important life-saving measures.”

All of the *See Me Safe* program materials are available in English and Spanish. For additional information on child passenger safety efforts in San Antonio, please call University Hospital at (210) 358-4295. Launched in 2007, *See Me Safe* has distributed 900 car seats in five cities and reached 180 health care providers through its *Prescription for Safety* workshop. In 2009, *See Me Safe* will hold child passenger safety events in San Antonio, Tex.; Chicago, Ill.; and Phoenix, Ariz.

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#### **About Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services**

Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services is committed to creating opportunities that promote corporate citizenship, philanthropy, volunteerism and cultural diversity for those who live in the communities where Ford operates. Celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2009 and made possible by funding from Ford Motor Company, Ford Motor Company Fund supports initiatives and institutions that foster innovative education, auto-related safety, and American heritage and legacy. National programs include Ford Partnership for Advanced Studies, which provides high school students with academically rigorous 21st century learning experiences, and Driving Skills for Life, a teen-focused auto safety initiative. The Ford Volunteer Corps, established in 2005, continues Ford's legacy of caring worldwide. Through the Volunteer Corps, Ford employees and retirees participate in a wide range of volunteer projects in their communities. For more information on programs made possible by Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services, visit [www.community.ford.com](http://www.community.ford.com).

#### **About Meharry Medical College**

Meharry Medical College is the nation's largest private, independent, historically black academic health center dedicated solely to educating minority and other health professionals. True to its rich heritage, it is a United Methodist Church affiliated institution. The College is particularly well known for its uniquely nurturing, highly effective educational programs; emerging preeminence in health disparities research; culturally sensitive, evidence-based health services; and significant contribution to the diversity of the nation's health professions workforce. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education's* ranking of institutions annually lists Meharry as a leading national educator of African Americans with M.D. and D.D.S. degrees, and Ph.D. degrees in the biomedical sciences.