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Our mission is to protect the health, safety and well-being of all Union County by providing quality public health services.

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Press Release

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March 5, 2012 **For Immediate Release**

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day Safely This Year and Every Year

Everybody may be Irish on St. Patrick's Day* but nobody should drive drunk after celebrating Ireland's patron saint on Saturday, March 17, 2012.

"St. Patrick's Day is one of the most widely celebrated saint's days in the world, but all too often it shares that great distinction with a far lesser one—too many people are driving drunk and killing or maiming themselves and others on the road as a result," said Union County Safe Communities/Safe Kids Coalition Coordinator Shawnna Sue Jordan. "Even if you've think you've had only a few drinks and are just feeling 'buzzed,' don't kid yourself because Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving."

According to statistics compiled by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 37 percent of the motor vehicle traffic fatalities during St. Patrick's Day 2009 involved at least one driver or motorcyclist with a blood alcohol content of .08 grams per deciliter or above, the legal level of intoxication established in every state in the Union.

During St. Patrick's Day 2009, there were 103 crash fatalities. Of that number, 39 people were killed in traffic crashes involving at least one driver or motorcyclist with a BAC of .08 g/dL or higher.

"Whether you are meeting a few friends at the local pub after work or attending a St. Patty's Day parade, if alcohol is part of the festivities, make sure you designate a sober driver to get you home safely," Jordan recommended.

-more-

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"Alcohol not only dangerously impairs your driving skills; it also impairs your judgment. If you had a few drinks and feel 'buzzed,' remember Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving," Jordan said.

The Union County Safe Communities/Safe Kids Coalition recommends the following easy steps, for a safe St. Patrick's Day:

- Plan a safe way home before the festivities begin and designate a sober driver.
- If you happen to see a drunk driver on the road, don't hesitate to contact your local law enforcement.
- And remember, if you know people who are about to drive while impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to where they are going safely.

The Safe Communities/Safe Kids Coalition was developed through the Ohio Department of Public Safety to establish and/or expand community partnerships to create safer, healthier communities throughout Ohio.

For more information, contact the Union County Health Department at 937-642-2053, or log onto: www.uchd.net.

*** St. Patrick's Day is defined as the period from 6 p.m. on March 16 to 5:59 a.m. on March 18.**

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