This short presentation of 21 slides will introduce the Texas Heatstroke Task Force (THTF), a community heatstroke prevention education network. The presentation will share briefly how it came about, its activities and major Texas accomplishments in the effort to lower child vehicular heatstroke deaths. Pictured is a Dynamic Messaging Sign (DMS) in Austin during heatstroke prevention campaign.
You may be interested in starting a heatstroke task force, or some part of it, in your city or state.

The THTF is characterized by a large number of members who are involved in traffic or child safety and advocacy. They are connected to the THTF and to each other for resources, information and help. Pictured above is a group of THTF members and a news reporter with Univision following some local television interviews.
There were 742 known child vehicular heatstroke deaths during 1998-2017. Texas leads all states in number of deaths, followed by Florida.
2010 was a disastrous year for child vehicular heatstroke deaths with 49 U. S. deaths, including 13 deaths in Texas and 6 in Florida. In 2011, SafeKids Worldwide gathered traffic safety representatives from Arizona, Florida, and Texas for a multi-day summit to develop solutions for those states. Texas’ team developed a statewide heatstroke task force network.
Texas Heatstroke Task Force: a network of community educators and advocates who include heatstroke prevention in their day-to-day activities.

As of March 2018, there are 254 THTF members. Many are Child Passenger Safety Technicians, and many are not. Although the THTF does some high-profile events, its real work is the day-to-day activity of its members in field, such as discussing heatstroke prevention with a family during a child seat checkup as pictured in this checkup which took place in Austin.
Heatstroke Prevention Message

Remember ACT

- **A** - Avoid heatstroke-related injury and death by never leaving your child alone in a car, not even for a minute. And make sure to keep your car locked so kids don't get in it on their own, including at home. If a child goes missing, check the pool first, then the car, including the trunk.

- **C** - Create reminders by routinely putting something you will need when you reach your destination (a purse, briefcase, or cell phone) in the back next to your child.

- **T** - Take action. If you see a child alone in a car, call 911.

The THTF stresses prevention, such as this version of the ACT message from Safe Kids. Members can and do use other similar messages if desired.

- “Avoid” section includes locking your car, even at home. This is important as nearly one-third of child vehicular heatstroke deaths occur because a child enters a vehicle unnoticed.
- “Create reminders” if done consistently on every ride, including when no child is present, will develop a habit so that the driver will consistently check the back seat when exiting the vehicle.
- “Take Action” is a way everyone can help. Even children should be educated to get grownup help if they see an unattended child in a car.
Texas Heatstroke Task Force provides communication, resources, and support to members; members provide activity reports to the THTF.

Ongoing features of the THTF include the following:
- Monthly email update with news and heatstroke prevention resources to THTF members.
- Rapid response notifications when a child vehicular heatstroke death occurs in Texas.
- Loans of standing & tabletop temperature display units.
- Support for news media events.
- Public presentations.
- Members are expected to report their heatstroke activities periodically for an ongoing activity log that can be shared by all.

The above photo shows a heatstroke news conference in Fort Worth during 2014 that featured a child rescue demonstration resulting from a recorded 911 call.
Major Texas Accomplishments
Dynamic Messaging Signs (DMS) campaign by Texas Dept. of Transportation (TxDOT)

TxDOT heatstroke DMS campaign takes place during a two- to three-week period every July. It began in 2014. In addition, individual TxDOT districts are free to run the messages at other times during the year, and several do so. The message is in two parts: ”Never leave a child alone in a car,” and “If child alone in a car, get help.” There are 1187 full-size DMS locations in Texas. Photo on Left: DMS on Highway 121 in Fort Worth. Photo on Right: DMS on MoPac Freeway in Austin.
Major Texas Accomplishments

- **Heatstroke Education law** (passed in 2015).

  This law requires hospitals, birthing centers, midwives, nurse midwives and physicians to provide heatstroke prevention information to new parents along with other child health and safety information. The pictured newborn family discharge class is one of several conducted each month at Women’s Hospital at Renaissance, Edinburg, in the Rio Grande Valley.
Major Texas Accomplishments

- **New law specifically protects bystanders who take action** (passed in 2017).

Texas had an existing Good Samaritan law, but its new law specifically protects bystanders from civil liability who remove a child (or other vulnerable person) from imminent danger from a vehicle when certain conditions are met (such as calling 911 first). Pictured above is a related social media post from Safe Kids Worldwide.
These 16 states have Good Samaritan laws related to unattended children in vehicles.
Day-to-Day Heatstroke Prevention Activities

Playing a guessing game with participants using standing heat display is a good way to actively involve participants. As groups or individuals gather around, the inside-vehicle temperature readout is hidden. Participants are asked “What temperature do you think it is inside the car?”
Day-to-Day Heatstroke Prevention Activities

When the actual inside-vehicle temperature is revealed, most participants will realize they guessed too low and that the heat buildup inside a car can be significant.
Day-to-Day Heatstroke Prevention Activities

Austin-Travis County EMS conducted an interview with local news media about hot car dangers for children. Then, they posted the interview on their Facebook page for additional exposure.
Badge of Courage is an award certificate available through Safe Kids Worldwide. It recognizes persons for taking action to call 911 to report an unattended child in a vehicle. When possible, present an award during a public venue. Here a Badge of Courage recipient (third from left) receives an award, along with a city proclamation, during a Houston City Council meeting.
To give you a moment to process information and talk about it, please turn and talk with a nearby person about one thing you have noticed so far. We will continue after 2 minutes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>U. S. Child Vehicular Heatstroke Deaths</th>
<th>Texas Child Vehicular Heatstroke Deaths</th>
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</table>

Even with rapid population growth, child vehicular heatstroke death numbers in Texas have not gone into double-digits since THTF began its work.

Data source: Noheatstroke.org, Jan Null, San Jose State University
Day-to-Day Heatstroke Prevention Activities

Day-to-day activities by members in the field is what makes the THTF work. (Clockwise from left) heatstroke prevention highlighted during a health fair community event, talking with caregivers about heatstroke prevention during a child seat checkup, and posting heatstroke prevention information on a bulletin board during a WIC clinic class.
You may want to begin a heatstroke task force, or some part of it, in your city or state.
Resources

• Jan Null, San Jose State University, Dept. of Meteorology & Climate Science
  noheatstroke.org

• Safe Kids Worldwide
  www.safekids.org/heatstroke

• Kids and Cars
  www.kidsandcars.org

• National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Many good national resources are available for information, statistics, and downloadable materials.
You are invited to join THTF and may contact the chair through either email listed. And you are also welcome to contact him for with questions.
Please use the Lifesavers Conference Mobile App to evaluate this presentation.