**2019 OTC/Rx Drug-Impaired Driving**

**SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE**

**SOCIAL NORMING VERSION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: [Date]**

**CONTACT: [Name, Phone Number, E-mail Address]**

***Note:*** *Before filling in the names of the organization and organization spokesperson, you* ***MUST*** *contact them to obtain their permission to use their names in this press release. Also, you must get their approval for the language of their quotes and any changes or additions they may require. Only after this is done should you issue the press release.*

**Crash Risk Can Increase with Use of**

**Over-the-Counter and Prescription Drugs**

* *Commonly used over-the-counter drugs like cold, allergy and sleep medicines can put motorists at risk*
* *Antidepressants, opioids, sleep aids and other prescription drugs may cause impairment*

**[City, State]** — There’s more than one way to be under the influence. That’s the message **[State Organization/Community Organization/Local Law Enforcement Organization]** and the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration want to convey to motorists. Use of over-the-counter and prescription drugs can alter judgment, reaction time, and coordination, impairing driving skills, making motorists more susceptible to crashes and related injuries and fatalities.

“The common misconception is that impairment only occurs with alcohol, illegal drug use or abuse of prescriptions. The reality is that common over-the-counter drugs, such as cold, flu, sleep and allergy medicines, and drugs like antidepressants, opioids and sleep aids prescribed by a doctor, can affect your ability to drive safely. We urge motorists to think twice before getting behind the wheel while using over-the-counter and prescription medications because they could cause them to be impaired,” **[State/Local leader]**.

In a national roadside survey of drivers conducted in 2013-2014, NHTSA found that during weekday daytime, 10 percent of drivers tested positive for the presence of a prescription or OTC drug.

Whether a drug is obtained legally or illegally, driving while drug-impaired poses a threat to drivers, vehicle passengers, and other road users. Driving while impaired by any substance is against the law in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Violating state DUI laws—which include prescription drugs, OTC medications, illegal drugs and alcohol—can result in arrest.

**[State/Local Leader or Organization]** recommends these simple tips to stay safe:

* If you know that you will be driving, don’t take drugs that can impair your ability to drive.
* If you’re taking a new prescription drug or a higher dose of a current prescription drug, do not drive until you know what effect it has on your judgement, coordination, and reaction time.
* Read and follow all drug warning labels carefully and abide by warnings against “operating heavy machinery,” which includes a motor vehicle.
* If you do use an impairing drug, designate a sober driver, call a cab or use a ride-hailing service.
* Some medications may not impair you on their own, but if taken with a second medication or with alcohol, they may cause impairment.
* If you see an impaired driver on the road, contact local law enforcement.
* If you know someone is about to drive while impaired, take their keys and help them make safe, sober travel arrangements to where they are going.

For more information, please visit [NHTSA.gov](https://www.nhtsa.gov/).