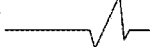


ADVANCING EMERGENCY CARE 

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 18, 2009

CONTACT:
David Blunk
877-ER-DOC-PA

Save Lives this Memorial Day Weekend and All Summer Long

Harrisburg —Memorial Day weekend signifies the traditional beginning of summer, and Pennsylvania’s emergency physicians are encouraging motorcyclists to wear helmets, and asking motorists to slow down and share the road with motorcycles.

“Safety should be your first priority if you are riding a motorcycle, especially during this busy holiday traveling weekend,” says Dr. Michael Turturro, president of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians (PaACEP). Dr. Turturro, who is a practicing emergency physician at UPMC Mercy in Pittsburgh, emphasized that riders should “be smart, use helmets and protect their heads.”

“As an emergency physician, I encounter the tragic consequences of motorcyclists who do not wear helmets. Head injuries are the leading cause of death in motorcycle accidents,” Dr. Turturro said. “Motorcyclists not wearing helmets are 40 percent more likely to die from a head injury in a crash and 15% more likely to suffer a nonfatal injury, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.”

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation reported that nearly 4,200 crashes involving motorcycles occurred on Pennsylvania roadways in 2008, which resulted in 236 motorcyclist fatalities. Along with a tragic increase in motorcyclist deaths, many more cyclists that do not wear helmets will suffer the long-term consequences of severe head injuries.

“Most physicians don’t need statistics to prove the benefits of helmet use,” Dr. Turturro said. “But statistics do show that wearing a helmet radically improves a motorcyclist’s chances of walking away uninjured from a crash.” Motorcyclists have an overall greater increase of risk on the road, versus those in a vehicle. Wearing a helmet reduces that risk, and better protects riders, so they have the ability and freedom to ride again all summer long.

In addition, the number of motorcyclists on the road has greatly increased in a short period of time. PennDOT reports that in 2008, the number of registered motorcycles in Pennsylvania increased by more than 30,000, to approximately 390,000. The number of licensed motorcyclists in Pennsylvania is 815,000, well over 175,000 more than in 2000.

With more motorcyclists on Pennsylvania’s roads, Dr. Turturro advises motorists to wear their seat belt, and be alert for motorcyclists. "Our roads always get busier as summer approaches," Dr. Turturro said. "That's why I'm urging all drivers, whether they're in a vehicle or on a motorcycle, to use extra caution this long holiday weekend, and throughout the summer."

Dr. Turturro also said PaACEP encourages all motorcyclists – both experienced and new – to complete Pennsylvania’s motorcycle safety courses. The free courses teach riders of all skill levels the fundamentals needed to safely operate a motorcycle. Call 800-845-9533 or visit www.pamsp.com for more information.

###

The Pennsylvania Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians (PaACEP) is a medical society representing more than 1,400 Pennsylvania physicians who specialize in emergency medicine. PaACEP is committed to improving the quality of emergency care through continuing medical education, research, and public education.