Toyota and the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute Launch Teen Driver Distraction Study

September 13, 2012

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Sept. 13, 2012) – At a Safety Research Forum here yesterday, Toyota announced that it has teamed up with the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI) to conduct a major new study of 5,600 teens and adults. Results of the Teen Driver Distraction Study commissioned by the Toyota Collaborative Safety Research Center (CSRC) in July 2012 will be released incrementally as data is analyzed. This scientific study is based on a national telephone survey of newly licensed drivers between ages 16 to 18 and parents of drivers in the same age group. A portion of the sample is comprised of teens and parents from the same household, one of the first studies to examine teen and parent driving behaviors in the same family.

The study will examine teen attitudes toward frequently discussed risks, such as texting and driving, to help identify effective recommendations to keep teen drivers safe. It will also look at a range of risk factors that receive less attention but sometimes pose even greater threats to young drivers. In addition, the study will examine the role that parents, peer behavior and cognitive development play in driving behaviors and will also explore the impact of any gaps between parent expectations about teen driving and the reality of what teens report they do behind the wheel.

Beyond national findings, the study will include results from several metropolitan areas across the country, including Chicago, Houston, Long Island, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Washington, DC.

Car Crashes Remain the Leading Cause of Teen Fatalities

"Motor vehicle crashes remain the number one cause of death for teenagers, claiming more than 3,000 lives in the U.S. each year," said Chuck Gulash, CSRC Director. "We are pleased the Teen Driver Distraction Study will help parents and teens understand their roles as driving mentors and mentees. We look forward to working with the world-class researchers at UMTRI to build upon the strong body of academic research that already exists and sharing our findings and recommendations with the public."

Dr. Tina Sayer, CSRC Principal Engineer stated that per mile driven, teens are four times more likely than other drivers to be involved in a crash. "In-car distractions can increase that risk even more," she said "By examining the actions and expectations of teens and parents around the country, we will be able to dig deeper into how a teen's driving behaviors differ from what their parents feel they have helped instill. This will allow us to develop even stronger recommendations, help change risky behaviors and ultimately help make teens safer drivers. As a safety researcher and parent, I am excited to see where the findings take us."

Dr. Ray Bingham, Research Professor at the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute and head of the Young Driver Behavior and Injury Prevention Group added that the study is examining a broad range of distracted driving behaviors, including cell phones and texting, as well as a variety of other common behaviors that distract drivers and increase their risk of a crash. "In addition, while it takes a look at the distracted driving of teens, it also examines distracted driving by parents of teen drivers." Bingham said "Finally, the study delves into the motivations and attitudes of parents and teens that lead them to engage in distracting behaviors while driving. This in-depth look at families will add to our understanding of distracted driving by teens and will yield useful results for researchers world-wide who are focused on enhancing teen driver safety,"

Toyota's Advanced Safety Research and Wide-Ranging Commitment to Teen Driver Safety

Toyota's work on the Teen Driver Distraction Study is led by its Collaborative Safety Research Center, which was launched in January 2011 with an unprecedented 5-year, $50 million commitment from the automaker. Based at the Toyota Technical Center (TTC) in Ann Arbor, the CSRC works closely with leading

North American universities, hospitals, research institutions and federal agencies on projects aimed at developing new safety technologies that help reduce the number of traffic fatalities and injuries, particularly among the most vulnerable traffic populations, including children, teens, seniors and pedestrians. The CSRC follows an open research approach based on sharing Toyota talent, technology, and data with a broad range of institutions and regulators. The CSRC's work on teen safety includes in-car, teen driver coaching system research with the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute.

Toyota complements this research with extensive safety education programs for young drivers and their parents as well as direct outreach to consumers, including:

- *Toyota Driving Expectations,* which provides hands-on, real world defensive driving courses that go far beyond what is taught in standard driver education courses;
- *Toyota Teen Driver*, a national partnership with the Discovery Education to bring critical safe driving information and activities directly into schools; and
- Additional teen safe driving partnerships with DoSomething.org and the National Safety Council.