



**ALLEGHENY COUNTY
MEDICAL SOCIETY**

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ACMS Supports PA Motorcycle Helmet Law

The Allegheny County Medical Society urges Pennsylvania legislators to support state representative Dan Frankel (D, Allegheny County, District 23) in his effort to reverse the 2003 law that made helmet use optional for motorcyclists in Pennsylvania.

Traumatic injuries incurred by lack of helmets affect not only public health, but treating them contributes to our ever-rising healthcare costs through increased health insurance premiums for care of the insured patient and increased taxes to cover the uninsured. Due to the current healthcare climate in the Commonwealth, surgeons who would care for traumatic brain injuries are becoming scarce and the ability of providing immediate care for a preventable traumatic brain injury is increasingly difficult.

By mandating the use of motorcycle helmets, much like requiring wearing seatbelts in vehicles, the Commonwealth would make a significant contribution to reducing trauma injuries. Currently in Pennsylvania, motorcyclists younger than 21 must wear helmets. Helmet use is optional for those who are at least 21 and have been licensed to ride for two years or have completed a state-approved motorcycle safety course.

In terms of medical benefits of helmets, there is little ambiguity. Even research from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration finds that head injury is a leading cause of death in motorcycle crashes and estimates that motorcycle helmets reduce the likelihood of a crash fatality by 37 percent. According to the American College of Surgeons, motorcycle riders wearing helmets have up to an 85 percent reduced incidence of severe, serious and critical brain injuries compared with non-helmeted riders. Simply put—helmets provide protection from head, brain, and facial injuries for motorcyclists involved in crashes.

As a body of physicians, the ACMS supports legislation requiring the use of motorcycle helmets as a way to decrease traumatic injury and death from motorcycle accidents and to help reduce the preventable economic and societal costs of treating those injuries.

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The Allegheny County Medical Society has 2,500 physician members from all specialties and is dedicated to providing leadership and advocacy on healthcare issues for the community and physicians. The organization has been serving Allegheny County since 1865. For more information, please contact ACMS at 412-321-5030 or acms@acms.org.