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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Harborview Urges King County to Increase Booster Seat Usage in Preparation for
Upcoming New Law**

*Only 25 Percent of King County Parents Are Properly Protecting Their Children in
Motor Vehicles with Booster Seats*

SEATTLE – Physicians at the Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center urge King County residents today to prepare for a new child passenger safety law by putting their 4-8 year-old children in booster seats when travelling in motor vehicles. Currently, only one quarter of the county's parents is using these seats according to a Harborview survey of area childcare facilities. The Center is releasing this data during National Child Passenger Safety Week, February 10-16.

The Anton Skeen law, scheduled to go into effect on July 1, 2002, will require all children up to six years of age and 60 pounds to ride in booster seats in Washington State. For best protection, doctors and safety experts recommend children up to 8 years old and 80 pounds use booster seats when riding in vehicles.

“While we've seen an increase in booster seat usage during the past couple of years, I'm concerned that usage is still so low with less than five months to go,” says Dr. Frederick Rivara, a University of Washington pediatrician and child injury specialist at Harborview's Injury Prevention and Research Center. “There's no question that this new law will go a long way in reducing unnecessary injuries and deaths in motor vehicle crashes. Now's the time for parents to start letting their kids know that they're big enough for a booster.”

A booster seat provides protection to children ages four to eight who do not fit properly in motor vehicle seat belts. Use of lap and shoulder belts without a booster seat in children under the age of eight can result in serious spine and intestinal injuries. Booster seats raise children up so the lap belt and shoulder harness fit and protect the child properly. Recent national studies have shown that booster seats protect against serious

injuries 3 1/2 times better than seatbelts alone to children in this four to eight year age group.

Fred Meyer is currently offering discount coupons on a low-back booster seat that is recommended by consumer safety experts. Until June 30, 2002, coupon holders will receive \$10 off an Evenflo "Right Fit" Booster Seat at participating Fred Meyer outlets in Washington and Oregon. Coupons may be obtained from the Booster Seat Coalition or at any State Farm Insurance office. State Farm is an active supporter of the booster seat program.

For more information please visit the Booster Seat Coalition Web site at www.boosterseat.org or call the Safety Restraint Coalition at 1-800-BUCK-L-UP.

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The Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center works in conjunction with Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center, the Safety Restraint Coalition, the Washington Traffic Safety Commission and the Booster Seat Coalition to help prevent child passenger injuries by encouraging the use of booster seats.