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ATV Injuries and Deaths Slightly Increased ATVs are not Toys

Washington, DC – For the sixth year in a row, serious injuries caused by all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) increased, and children under age 16 continued to suffer a significant portion of those injuries. Estimated deaths on ATVs increased also.

“The continued increase in injuries and deaths caused by ATVs show how pervasive this national epidemic has become. This tragic problem is in need of an aggressive and immediate solution,” stated Rachel Weintraub, Director of Product Safety for Consumer Federation of America. “Unfortunately, instead of working to keep children off of adult-size ATVs and creating meaningful standards to decrease ATV hazards, the ATV industry has been prioritizing the protection of their economic interest.”

“During this holiday season, I strongly recommend that parents not buy an ATV as a gift for their children. Pediatric emergency physicians have learned to expect devastating injuries when a child crashes an ATV,” stated Gary Smith, MD, DrPH, FAAP, Chair of the AAP Committee on Injury, Violence and Poison Prevention. “For almost 20 years, physicians and consumer advocates have been pressing the CPSC to pass meaningful regulations to reduce the carnage, and each year we are disappointed.”

The CPSC released its 2005 Annual Report on ATV-related Deaths and Injuries today. Major findings include:

- Serious injuries requiring emergency room treatment increased less than one percent from 136,100 in 2004 to 136,700 in 2005, an increase that was not statistically significant. Since 2001, there has been a statistically significant 24% increase in serious injuries.
- The estimated number of ATV-related fatalities increased from 757 in 2003 to 767 in 2004.
- In 2005, ATVs killed at least 120 children younger than 16 accounting for 26 percent of fatalities.
- Children under 16 suffered 40,400 serious injuries in 2005 – or 30 percent of all injuries. This is a 10 percent decrease from the 2004 estimate of 44,700. CPSC

found that this decrease was not statistically significant. Since 2001, there has been a statistically significant increase of 18% in the number of children under 16 seriously injured on ATVs.

- Between 1985 and 2005, children under 16 accounted for 36 percent of all injuries.

The CPSC data includes a risk estimate of ATV injuries per 10,000 four-wheel ATVs. The risk estimate for 2005 is 171.5 as compared to 187.9 in 2004. According to CPSC, this slight reduction is not statistically significant.

More than four years after doctors, nurses, consumer advocates and others demanded action, through filing a petition with CPSC; the agency has commenced a rulemaking process to formally study the problem and potential solutions. In August, CPSC defeated this petition and moved forward with a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPR) that could result in ATV standards. There is no timeline for the full rulemaking process, though the public has until December 26, 2006 to respond to this ANPR.

While the NPR sets out a number of proposed rules, one in particular is of concern to consumer and public health advocates – the development of a “transitional ATV” for children 14 and older. These ATVs would likely have engines larger than those currently recommended for children under 16. “The data released today does not provide support for allowing children on larger and faster ATVs,” stated Weintraub. The CPSC, industry and many consumer advocates recommend that children ages 12 through 15 not ride ATVs with engines larger than 90 cc’s. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that no child under age 16 ride an ATV of any size.

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Consumer Federation of America is a non-profit association of 300 consumer groups, with a combined membership of more than 50 million people. CFA was founded in 1968 to advance the consumers' interest through advocacy and education. www.consumerfed.org

American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults. www.aap.org