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New Grand Theft Auto Game Allows Players to Drive Drunk

While drunk driving continues to be one of our nation's deadliest acts, killing nearly 13,500 people each year, the latest version of the popular Grand Theft Auto video game allows players to get behind the wheel and experience drunk driving. Substance abuse prevention advocates and national organizations, including CADCA, are concerned that the game normalizes a behavior that costs thousands of lives and injuries.

Released on April 29, Grand Theft Auto IV is the ninth title in the Grand Theft Auto video game series produced by Rockstar North. While the game has always been controversial, allowing players to earn points by killing police officers, the new version takes it to another level, with the inclusion of a module where players have to drive drunk.

Members of CADCA are already weighing in to say the game glamorizes drunk driving and could have a particularly dangerous impact on younger teens.

"It's unconscionable that something that has devastated so many lives is being made into entertainment," said Pamela White, Executive Director of Community Anti-Drug Coalitions Across Tennessee (CADCAT). "Allowing drunk driving in a video game normalizes a behavior that is not only illegal, but threatens lives."

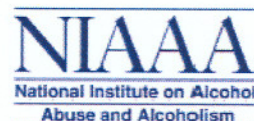
Cheryl Guthier, Executive Director of Community Prevention Partnership of Berks County, echoed that sentiment, pointing to how children and young teens would interpret drunk driving in a video game. "People may argue that teens can tell the difference between a game and reality, but I think it could really have an impact on younger kids because they are impressionable," Guthier noted. "I have young grandkids and I know that if they play this game, they're going to see it as funny and cool, and something that people do."

While the game is currently rated as mature, [Mothers Against Drunk Driving \(MADD\)](#) is calling on the Entertainment Software Ratings Board to reclassify Grand Theft Auto IV as an Adults Only game. In addition, in a recent advocacy alert, MADD is requesting that the manufacturer consider a stop in distribution, "if not out of responsibility to society then out of respect for the millions of victims/survivors of drunk driving."

In response to MADD's request, Rockstar North issued a statement to the Associated Press, saying: "We have a great deal of respect for MADD's mission, but we believe the mature audience for 'Grand Theft Auto IV' is more than sophisticated enough to understand the game's content."

CADCA believes a video game with a drunk driving mode is offensive—even to a "sophisticated" mature audience. We agree with MADD's position and encourage coalitions to contact retailers to express their views about Grand Theft Auto IV's drunk driving mode.

"A game that in any way promotes or makes light of drunk driving is a cause for deep concern. I would strongly encourage both the makers of the game and those that

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distribute it to reconsider selling it," noted Gen. Arthur T. Dean, CADCA's Chairman and CEO.

To express your concern about the game, contact the following retailers that carry Grand Theft Auto IV:

Amazon.com
206-266-1000

Best Buy
612-291-1000

Circuit City
804-527-4000

EB Games and GameStop
817-424-2000

Wal-Mart
479-273-4000

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