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VOICE OF THE READER

Teen driver safety

To the Editor:

National Teen Driver Safety Week is Oct. 20-26. An estimated six teens die in motor vehicle crashes each day according to the Center for Disease Control. Hundreds more are injured.

This sobering statistic should motivate parents, families, community members and all licensed motorists to be part of the solution. Teen driver safety is everyone's responsibility and National Teen Driver Safety Week is an ideal time to unite on this issue.

Start the conversation by supporting and raising awareness to teen driver safety initiatives. Talk about driving distractions and best practices to avoid them. Stress the importance of following speed limits, leaving adequate space between cars and adjusting to changing driving conditions. Urge young people to buckle up on every trip whether driving or riding as a passenger. Discourage teens from driving under the influence of alcohol

or drugs, including certain prescription and over-the-counter medications. Drowsiness impairs the driver's ability to operate a vehicle too. Encourage good sleep habits.

Inexperience is a factor in many teen driving accidents. Illinois' Graduated Driver Licensing law addresses this problem by requiring more supervised time behind the wheel for beginning drivers. Use this opportunity to help the young person in your family recognize and respond appropriately to hazardous driving situations.

We all benefit when teens are capable, skilled and careful drivers. The Illinois Insurance Association, a property casualty trade association, and its member companies encourage residents to discuss, encourage and model safe driving practices during National Teen Driver Safety Week and throughout the year.

Kevin J. Martin
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Association