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Attorneys at Law

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Jenimae Almquist
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Of Counsel

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B.S.C.E., M.S.C.E.
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Tom Margiotti
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MESSA & ASSOCIATES, P.C.
Trial Attorneys

Head Injury Awareness Day

March 20th is Head Injury Awareness Day. Head injuries can range from a simple bump of the head to more severe injuries such as brain damage. An estimated five percent of people each year suffer brain injury after an accident or unknowingly bumping their head. In some cases and depending on the type of injury, immediate medical attention can help to reduce the outcome of the injury.

While many things can cause a head or brain injury, many of the injuries occur as a result of everyday activities we participate in. Here are a few safety tips to help reduce your risks of head injury:

- Always wear a helmet when riding a bicycle or motorcycle or playing any sport where a head injury can occur.
- Fasten your seat belt when you are in a vehicle.
- Childproof your home to reduce fall risks for younger children.
- Use proper lighting in dark areas of your home or in stairways to avoid bumping into something.

If you or a loved one has suffered any type of head injury or have any signs or symptoms of traumatic brain injury following a recent blow or other traumatic injury to the head, you should seek treatment from a medical professional immediately. Some signs and symptoms of brain injury include headaches, slurred speech, loss of consciousness, memory problems, difficulty sleeping, slurred speech, confusion and nausea or vomiting.

March is also National Brain Injury Awareness Month!

FDA Warns Merck About Failure to Study Diabetes Drugs

Merck may be fined for not completing a study of its diabetes drugs, Januvia and Janumet, to determine if the pills cause an inflammation of the pancreas. The drug maker had agreed to complete the study to gain expanded approval of the drugs by March 15, 2011, according to a letter sent to Merck by the FDA.

Merck attempted to submit a 12-month independent study to the FDA, but the data in that study was determined to be insufficient.

There were 88 cases of acute pancreatitis reported to the FDA between Oct. 16, 2006 and Feb. 9, 2009 associated with sitagliptin, the first in a new class of diabetic drugs.

Messa & Associates, P.C.

123 S. 22nd Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 • 877-MessaLaw • 215-568-3500
2091 Springdale Road, Suite 2, Cherry Hill, NJ 08003 • 856-810-9500
www.MessaLaw.com • MessaLaw.com/Blog • GHightower@MessaLaw.com

Recent Settlements and Verdicts

Confidential

Seven-figure settlement in Philadelphia County for the family of a man who died after physicians failed to properly diagnose and provide treatment for an aortic aneurysm. The man sought treatment at a hospital two days before his death. Timely treatment would have likely ultimately prevented the man's death.

New Law Alert: Ban on Texting While Driving

A new law banning texting while driving has gone into effect in the state of Pennsylvania. Drivers caught texting while behind the wheel will face a fine of \$50. The Pennsylvania law makes texting a primary offense, which means that police may pull a driver over for texting alone.

The law also prohibits reading, sending e-mails and web surfing. However, drivers will still be permitted to talk on their handheld phones. Only nine states, including New Jersey, have banned the use of all handheld devices while driving.

Still, lawmakers and police hope the ban will help to decrease the amount of accidents caused as a result of distracted driving. At least one driver was found to be distracted in 15 percent to 30 percent of motor-vehicle accidents nationwide, and texting increases the risk of accidents, according to a 2011 study by the Governors Highway Safety Association.

Messa & Associates handles motor vehicle accident cases involving serious injuries and death. If you have been injured in a motor vehicle accident, please contact us at 1-877-MessaLaw or visit us at www.messalaw.com to discuss your case with one of our skilled motor vehicle accident attorneys.

Consumer News: *The Recall Report*

Toyota has recalled 495,000 Tacoma trucks made during the 2005 to 2009 model years because of potential airbag problems. Friction in the car's steering wheel spiral cable assemblies may eventually cut the connection to the driver's air bag and keep it from deploying in the event of a crash.

In addition, Toyota is recalling 70,500 Camry sedans made during the 2009 model year and 116,000 Venza crossovers made between 2009 and 2011, because grease in their stop lamp switches could keep the cars from starting.

Toyota says grease may have reached the inside of the switch during installation, causing an increase in electrical resistance.

The attorneys at Messa & Associates have handled dozens of cases involving serious injuries and death related to the use of defective products. If you or a loved one has suffered serious injury or death as a result of this or any other recalled product, please contact us at 1-877-MessaLaw or visit us at www.messalaw.com.

SPRING FORWARD....

Remember: In addition to the warmer springtime weather, March also brings us Daylight Savings Time. This is a great time to change the batteries in the smoke alarms in your home. Messa & Associates recommends using **photoelectric and/or dual sensor smoke alarms**. Photoelectric smoke alarms are designed to detect slow-burning fires as well as flash fires. According to tests performed by the U.S. National Bureau of Standards, photoelectric smoke detectors provide users two to three times more of a chance of escaping during a fire.

*"We know you want and **deserve** the best when it comes to representation. At Messa & Associates, we strive for nothing short of perfection."*



For more information, please call 877-MessaLaw or email GHightower@MessaLaw.com