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## 2023 RESEARCH PROJECT STATEMENT

### **Research Topic:**

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Driver's Education Modules on Safety

### **Research Budget and Timeline:**

- \$370,000
- 24 months (of which final 3 months are for review)

### **Problem Statement and Objectives**

There is mixed evidence as to the effectiveness of driver education courses and the ability of driver's education to prepare drivers to interact with Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS). Some research suggests that driver education programs do not directly impact traffic crashes or citations, but rather manifest themselves in terms of improved driver behaviors. Relatedly, there has yet to be a comprehensive examination of driver's education instruction to determine which, if any, modules of the program positively influence novice driver behavior. The objective of this project is to: (1) examine how differences in novice drivers' pre-license behaviors affect crashes and citations; (2) examine how differences in drivers' education delivery affects novice drivers' behavior, crashes, and citations; and (3) examine how education and training can help improve use of ADAS.

The hypotheses are: (1) novice drivers who can successfully identify and mitigate hazards pre-licensure will have lower rates of crashes and citations, (2) drivers' education that is delivered in a more detailed and comprehensive manner will lead to improved novice driver behavior and/or fewer citations and crashes, and (3) targeted training will provide a safe and structured way for novice and experienced drivers to accelerate their understanding and safe operation of ADAS equipped vehicles.

### **Anticipated Outcomes and Deliverables:**

Outcomes: The project will yield data and associated reports detailing the effectiveness of driver education courses on improving safety and reducing driver citations; and guidelines/standards for driver education components, delivery methods, etc. that lead to optimal effectiveness in positively influencing safe ADAS use and novice driver behavior. These outcomes will assist MassDOT in developing regulations, policies and practices throughout its driver's education curriculum and licensing processes.

Deliverables:

1. Recommended changes to the RMV driver education curriculum to optimize effectiveness
2. Recommended delivery methods for RMV to require of driver education schools
3. Recommended training curriculum for training new and experienced drivers on ADAS
4. Compiled data that can be used as justification for policy changes regarding junior operating licenses (JOLs)
5. Final presentation
6. Final report summarizing research activities, results, and recommendations
7. Presentation to driver's education professionals on the outcomes of the research