

Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center
Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy



Safe Mobility at Any Age

Policy Forum Series

Forum #3

The Future of Vehicle and Roadway Safety and Design

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Safe Mobility at Any Age

Policy Forum Series

- Cosponsored by the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center and New Jersey Foundation for Aging
- Policy Forum Topics:
 - Facts and myths related to NJ's mature driver
 - Maryland Safe Mobility Research Consortium
 - Functional fitness to drive assessment and screening
 - Safety perspectives addressing roadway design, vehicle design and adaptive technologies to improve safety
 - Regulatory practices and compliance issues related to driving licensure
 - Community mobility options for those who cannot or wish not to drive



New Jersey's Mature Driver

- Crash incidence declined with the age of the driver although fatalities increased
- Crash characteristics:
 - More crashes during daylight hours and good weather
 - More crashes on local and private roads
 - High incidence of left turn crashes
 - Crashes most often due to:
 - Driver inattention
 - Failure to yield right of way
 - Failure to obey traffic signals
 - Older drivers more likely to be at fault

Source: The Mature Driver in New Jersey, Dr. Naomi Rotter and Dr. Claire McKnight



Products and Policy Outcomes Identified by the Maryland Consortium

- Functional areas identified as significant predictors of “at-fault” crashes:
 - Visualization of missing information
 - Direct visual search
 - Information processing speed under divided attention conditions
 - Working memory
 - Leg strength and general mobility
 - Head and neck flexibility



Products and Policy Outcomes Identified by the Maryland Consortium

- Functional capacity screening adds value to traditional medical evaluation procedures
- Identifying functional loss can promote safe mobility by allowing earlier intervention (and remedial help)

Source: Maryland Consortium, Dr. Loren Staplin



NJ Motor Vehicle Commission Medical Advisory Board

- Most medical review referrals are made by concerned physicians and/or family members
- Referrals cannot be made anonymously
- Medical reviews may result in reinstatement of an individuals license or a recommendation for additional testing
- MVC is in the process of upgrading its capacity to proactively pursue medical reviews when license holders with long-standing medical conditions or those with time limited suspensions come up for license renewal



Best Practices for Functional Assessment and Health Screening

- Functional fitness to drive assessments should include:
 - Vision
 - Cognition
 - Motor performance
 - Reaction time
 - Roadway knowledge
- Functional assessments will NOT answer whether a person can drive safely, but they can help to identify diminished capacity
- Only clinical testing can provide a full picture of how an individual is likely to perform while driving

Resources for Improving Skills and Rehabilitation

- American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) – Older Driver Initiative
 - Educate occupational therapists and promote awareness that driving is an instrumental activity of daily living
 - Increase awareness of the needs of older drivers
 - Promote working with older drivers as a viable practice area
 - Develop a “good practice” guide and continuing education materials for occupational therapists through a cooperative agreement between the NHTSA and the CDC

Resources for Improving Skills and Rehabilitation

- Certified Driving Rehabilitation Specialists (CDRS)
 - Six CDRSs practicing in New Jersey
 - CDRSs are trained to perform fitness to drive evaluations using medical history, physical examination, vision, cognitive and perceptual skills testing and behind-the-wheel road testing
 - Based on evaluation, CDRSs provide occupational therapy as well as vision and driver skills training, as needed
 - If prohibition on driving is recommended, CDRSs assist client and their family to explore community resources for alternative transportation
- AARP Driver Safety Program



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