

**Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center
New Jersey Foundation for Aging**



Safe Mobility at Any Age Policy Forum Series

Forum 2 Functional Assessment and Health Screening

February 18, 2004

**Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
College Road East & Route 1
Princeton, New Jersey**

Invited Stakeholders

- NJ Dept. of Health & Senior Services *
- AARP and Senior Advocates *
- County Offices on Aging *
- Senior Centers *
- Automobile Association of America (AAA)
- Public health policy experts
- Transportation policy experts *
- NJ Department of Transportation *
- NJ Motor Vehicle Commission *
- NJ TRANSIT
- County paratransit providers *
- Hospital & health care providers *
- Regional transportation management associations *
- Regional and county planning agencies *
- Community Transportation Providers (non COST) *
- Law Enforcement
- Researchers on aging and transportation *

* Attended Forum 1

Purpose of Safe Mobility Policy Forums

- **To develop policy responses to improve safe mobility for all ages exploring:**
 - **Identification and assessment of functionally at-risk drivers**
 - **Remediation programs for continued safe mobility**
 - **Public education programs on functional fitness and safe mobility**
 - **Feasible and user-friendly community transportation options**
- **To develop policy responses that embrace the concept of creating community options to promote life long mobility**

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

Key Health Factors

Contributing to Increased Risk of Crashes

- **Functional declines in critical abilities such as visual, cognitive, physical, and perceptual abilities that are important for processing certain driving tasks**
- **Increased incidence of disease and pathology**
- **More extensive use of multiple medications**

Source: Maryland Consortium, Dr. Loren Staplin

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

Agenda

- **Status of the Medical Advisory Board in NJ**
 - Kathy Higham, NJ Motor Vehicle Commission
- **Best Practices in Functional Assessment & Health Screening**
 - Wendy Stav, PhD, OTR/L, CDRS, National Older Driver Research & Training Center
- **AOTA Older Driver Initiative**
 - Maureen Freda Peterson, MS, OT/L, FAOTA, American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)
- **Driver Rehabilitation & Remediation Programs**
 - Beth Roland, OTR, CDRS, Kessler Rehabilitation Institute
 - Claire McLaughlin, OTR, CDRS, Bacharach Institute for Rehabilitation
 - Jennifer Palasits, OTR, CDRS, JFK-Johnson Rehabilitation Institute
- **AARP Driver Safety Program**
 - Nat Giancola, AARP Driver Safety Program
- **Question and Answer**