LIFESAVERS

The New Driving Impairment: Conditions That Affect Aging Drivers

Highlights of Maryland’s Older Driver Safety Program & Analysis of Specific Projects

- E-referrals
- Silver alerts
- Resource Guides

Nanette M. Schieke
Chief, Driver Safety Division
Maryland Dept of Transportation
Motor Vehicle Administration
nschieke@mdot.state.md.us
mva.maryland.gov/olderdriversafety
Why Care About Older Driver Safety?

- Older adults more likely to be injured, disabled or killed if involved in a crash (IRCOBI 2012 Conference)
- Research suggests most older drivers will outlive their ability to drive by 7-10 years (NIA, 2002)
- Older adults who stop driving are at risk of adverse health consequences (AAAFTS, 2015)
- Transportation options are available but limited in various respects
Medical Issues With Aging

- **Physical Impairments**
  - Leg Strength (Diabetes)
  - Gripping the Wheel (Arthritis)

- **Visual Impairments**
  - 55 yr old takes 8x longer recover from glare as 16 yr old

- **Cognitive Impairments**
  - Ability to reason, remember, handle perceived threat
  - 100,000 Marylanders w/Alzheimer’s (2016)

- **Medications**
  - 78% drivers use 1+ meds on regular basis
  - 19% drivers use 5+ meds on regular basis
Medical Review Process

- Medical Advisory Board since 1947
- Driver Wellness & Safety Division – Nurse case reviewers
- Focus on functional ability - not age or condition …with an individual review of fitness to drive

Outcomes may include:
- License restrictions
- Adaptive Modifications
- Approval with No Restrictions
- Suspension

Who Makes Referrals to MVA?

- Professionals
  - clinicians, law enforcement, etc
- Concerned citizens
  - neighbors, friends and family
- Self-reports medical condition

MVA: Hub of Wheel
Electronic Medical Referrals from Law Enforcement

- Not adequately controlling vehicle (58%)
- Other (45%)
- Confused / disoriented (45%)

- Lost of confused while driving near home
- Drowsy
- Blackout
- Seizure
- Fainting spell
- Alcohol / drug use
- Prescription medication
- Weakness / poor coordination
- Walking / balance problem
- Vision problem
- Not reacting to vehicles / pedestrians
- Driving too slow or inappropriately stopping
- Driving on wrong side of road / wrong lane

Red Flags of Medically At-Risk Drivers

Look for “Red Flags” when you make a stop:

- Does the driver have difficulty communicating/ do the answers make sense?
- Does the driver seem confused when following your instructions or have difficulty producing ID?
- Does the driver recall the time of day, day of the week, month, or year?
- Does the driver admit to being unaware of other vehicles or pedestrians?
- Does the driver understand the laws ignored or violated?

If the behavior you observe raises Red Flags about a potential medical condition that affects safe driving, MAKE THE REFERRAL:

Check-off Indicators:

- Confused/disoriented
- Lost or confused while driving near home
- Drowsy
- Blackout
- Seizure
- Fainting Spell
- Alcohol/drug use
- Prescription medication
- Weakness/poor coordination
- Walking/balance problem
- Vision problem
- Not reacting to vehicles/pedestrians
- Not adequately controlling vehicle
- Driving too slow or inappropriately stopping
- Driving on wrong side of road/wrong lane
Referrals from Law Enforcement

Electronic Referrals

Referrals from Law Enforcement

Deployed electronic referrals Oct 2013

Crash Type Corresponding to eReferral Oct '13 thru Sep '16

- Fatals: 18
- Personal Injury: 832
- Property Damage: 1,304
- N/A: 3,236

Electronic Referrals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Referrals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1,543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2,234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outreach & Education

- **Three statewide symposiums** – with plenary sessions and exhibits / demonstrations to showcase Maryland programs

- **Professional development training** – segmented by profession

- Workshops **focusing on integration** of ODS into **everyday practice**

- Focus on providing **tools & resources**

- Each with **basics** including **referrals & medical review process** and case presentation **exercises**
Program Growth

- Development of a statewide **Strategic Program Action Plan for Older Driver Safety**
  - Specific projects to address priorities

- Stepping up the **collaboration** with and learning from national partners and researchers

- Taking **workshops on the road** around the state

- Aging Road User Safety: **Interstate Collaboration**

---

*Maryland*  
*Florida*
Medical Reviews for Silver Alerts
– Why & How

- Assessment of records for silver alert drivers determined a need to review fitness to drive and licensing for these drivers
  - 71% still had a valid license (including all 5 repeat customers)
  - Only 13% had been referred to MVA

- In collaboration with Maryland State Police, all Silver Alert drivers referred to MVA
  - First, review and report from Investigations
  - Then, full medical review process, if necessary
80-year-old Somerset County man reported as missing has been located in Roanoke, Va.

…It was reported to police that Owens left his home in Westover around 3:30 p.m. Saturday to drive to the "Dash In" convenience store and had not been seen or heard since.

However, shortly after 11 p.m. Sunday, Owens was located on Interstate 81 in Roanoke after his pickup truck ran out of gas …
Medical Reviews for Silver Alerts – Since Implementation (6 months)

- **59 Cases;** Ages ranging from 58 to 91 – avg 78 years old
- 71% white, 27% black; and 63% male, 37% female
- Most all driving a vehicle they own
- **Most found unharmed within their own county, but…**
  - 2 were hospitalized after found
  - 9 found in another county in Maryland
  - 9 found in another state (1 was deceased)
- Continue to review and assess for **opportunities to educate** and help drivers, families, and the professionals involved
Maryland’s Resource Guide for Aging Drivers

Booklet is concise, easy-to-follow format that focuses on primary issues and messages important to aging drivers, including several checklists and charts for personal use and plenty of resources for local follow-up

Download online at mva.maryland.gov/olderdriversafety
Pre-survey for Maryland’s Resource Guide for Aging Drivers

- **950 responses** from the 2,000 booklets distributed
  - Pre-survey evaluates the need for the topics, type, and format of info on driver safety for our aging citizens
  - Post-survey about 6 weeks later to evaluate the effectiveness of booklet and determine gaps of information not yet covered in initial printing

- **2/3 of respondents** are in their 60s or 70s, and about **65% drive** 6 or 7 days per week

- 85% say it’s **very important or somewhat important** to have a printed copy of the booklet

- 85% plan to **keep the booklet** as reference guide; about 25% say they will **use it to talk** to someone about their driving
Which topics of most interest to you?

- How health and age can impact driving
- What is MVA’s medical review process and what to expect
- How to talk with family, friend, or clinician about driving
- How to sharpen driving skills and knowledge
- Transportation options if one has to stop driving
- How to know if I am a safe driver
- How to transition from driving
- When and where to get a driving assessment or evaluation
- Other
Overall Goals for Maryland’s Older Driver Safety Program

- How can we help aging drivers continue driving as long as safely possible?
- How can we help folks to plan for transportation?
  - Realize important **skills** necessary for driving
  - Realize there are higher **risks** as we age – because of likely health issues – BUT there are things we can do to mitigate those risks; and
  - Realize that chances are there will be a time when we have to **transition** from driving
Thank You!