

# Oregon's Safe Mobility Initiative

## Caring for the Medically At-Risk Driver

### Resources for Health Care Professionals

#### At what point is the physician required to report?

You may recommend options to help prolong the safe driving of some patients. These include attending driver improvement classes and restricting driving time and routes to avoid the freeway, heavy traffic and busy inter-sections. You may also encourage the patient to seek assistance from a driving rehabilitation specialist for an independent analysis and appropriate driving aids.

The physician must report when a patient's impairment is severe and uncontrollable. Severe means that the impairment limits a person's ability to perform normal daily activities, including safe driving, and it cannot be controlled by medication, therapy, surgery, or adaptive devices.

#### What happens to a driver who is reported to DMV?

When a physician files a mandatory report of an unsafe driver, DMV will usually suspend driving privileges. The driver may contact DMV to request the opportunity to take vision, knowledge and drive tests. For individuals with cognitive impairments, the medical and driving records of the individual are reviewed by the DMV's Medical Determination Officer to determine if the driver should be tested. Driving privileges will be reinstated upon passing all tests.

A doctor, health care professional, family member, or neighbor may voluntarily report an unsafe driver to DMV based on the driver's behavior or medical condition. The driver may be asked to provide medical information from his physician or may be asked to take DMV tests.

Depending on the result of the tests, the driver may be issued a restricted license or his license may be suspended. There may be an opportunity for a driver to return at a later date and demonstrate his ability to drive safely.



#### For more information

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**Shifting Gears in Later Years**  
Oregon Driver and Motor Vehicle Services

## Oregon's Reporting Requirement for Physicians

Driver and Motor Vehicle Services (DMV) requires some physicians and health care providers to report drivers with functional or cognitive impairments that are severe and can not be corrected or controlled by surgery, medication, therapy, or a driving device or technique. Functional or cognitive impairments are diminished physical, mental and/or sensory capacities that adversely impact the ability to safely operate a motor vehicle.

The issue of aging and driving is becoming a significant public health concern. Over the next two decades, the number of older Oregonians is expected to double. While aging itself does not diminish driving ability, as people reach their 60s and beyond, they are more likely to take medications and to incur medical problems that can hinder driving ability.

Research indicates that physicians can influence their patients' decisions to modify or stop driving. Physicians and other health care professionals are in a critical position to detect functional and medical conditions that may impact safe driving. Oregon licensing policy requires certain health care professionals to report a driver with cognitive or functional impairment.

### Who must report?

- A physician or health care provider acting in the capacity of a person's primary care provider
  - A physician or health care provider providing specialized or emergency health care services to a person who does not have a primary care provider
  - An ophthalmologist or optometrist providing health care services to a person who does not meet DMV vision standards
- \* "Physician" is a: medical doctor, doctor of osteopathic medicine or doctor of naturopathic medicine.
- \* "Health care provider" is limited to: chiropractic physician, nurse practitioner, occupational therapist, physical therapist, optometrist, physician assistant and podiatric physician or surgeon.

### What impairments should be reported?

Severe and uncontrollable functional impairments affecting the following:

- Vision
- Peripheral sensation of the extremities
- Strength
- Flexibility
- Motor planning and coordination

Severe and uncontrollable cognitive impairments affecting the following:

- Attention
- Judgment and problem solving
- Reaction time
- Planning and sequencing
- Impulsivity
- Visuospatial
- Memory
- Loss of consciousness or control

