

SAFE ROADS NOW!

A group of organizations and individuals working together to make the roads safe for everyone.

Contact Information:

Jessica Costantino
AARP Massachusetts
One Beacon Street, Suite 2301
Boston, MA 02108
617.305.0538
jcostantino@aarp.org

AAA Southern New England

AARP Massachusetts

Alzheimer's Association
Massachusetts/New Hampshire
Chapter

Massachusetts Association of Councils
on Aging and Senior Center Directors

Jon Bailey, TRIAD Officer
Waltham Police

Juergen Bludau, MD

Elizabeth Dugan, PhD
Associate Professor, Gerontology
University of Massachusetts Boston
Author of *The Driving Dilemma: The
Complete Resource for Older Drivers
and Their Families*

Lissa Kapust
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
Drive Wise Program

Massachusetts Association of Older
Americans

Massachusetts Medical Society

Massachusetts Silver Legislature

Margaret O'Connor
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
Drive Wise Program

Nina M. Silverstein, PhD
Professor of Gerontology
University of Massachusetts Boston

Robert Stern, PhD
Associate Professor of Neurology
Boston University School of Medicine

Senior Mobility Initiative on Cape Cod

June 18, 2009

RE: Road Safety and Driver Retesting

Dear Legislator:

Safe Roads Now is a broad and varied group of stakeholders that have come together and are committed to working with you and other policy makers to achieve the goal of safe roads for everyone.

We would like to see a new law in place that truly corrects deficiencies in the current system as soon as possible. We recommend a performance-based approach to setting standards for driver licensing that incorporates two types of evidence: 1) linking a medical condition or functional impairment to impaired driving and/or increased crash risk; and 2) demonstrates the effectiveness of licensing practices or standards in improving performance and/or lowering crash risk. In addition, we are cognizant that this effort will require significant resources, both financial and human, and we urge you and other legislators to fund the necessary reforms.

We propose the following components be incorporated:

- In-person renewal, throughout a driver's career;
- Implementing a screening test to address issues such as visual contrast sensitivity; visual acuity; periphery vision; divided attention; and processing speed;
- Implementing a tiered system whereby a driver would need to take additional testing should they fail the initial testing components and ultimately may need to take a road test. The first two tiers could consist of non-driving assessment tools (e.g., driving knowledge test, vision tests, and observation of obvious physical limitations). Applicants failing both tiers would be required to pass an on-road driving test to renew their licenses;
- Additional training for law enforcement as they are often the first to encounter an unsafe driver;
- Additional training for Registry of Motor Vehicle personnel;
- Strengthening medical advisory board roles;
- Voluntary reporting by health care providers and immunity;
- Long Term Driver Ombudsman;
- Implementing a trigger system (ex – several accidents within a few months – need to go into the Registry of Motor Vehicles for an in-person exam);

- Continuing education and/or retraining programs for those who face losing their license;
- Implementing the recommendations of the Federal Highway Administration to improve traffic signs and signals, pavement markings, and other roadway enhancements;
- Conducting a pilot program that includes accident review and assessment – modeled on existing successful programs such as one utilized by the Waltham Police;
- Improving the transportation and community mobility alternatives for those who cannot or chose not to drive; and
- Non-mandatory, continuing education for physicians and health providers on changes in our state laws related to this issue.

There are currently several bills addressing road safety, driver retesting and driver impairment pending in the Massachusetts legislature. We urge you to take action now and pass a comprehensive bill that incorporates the above-mentioned components. At a minimum, we urge you to pass Senate Bill No. 1900, An Act Relative to Driver Impairment, sponsored by Senator Buoniconti and House Bill No. 2241, An Act Relative to Impaired Drivers, sponsored by Representative Khan, into law now.

Please contact Jessica Costantino, Director of Advocacy, AARP Massachusetts, at 617.305.0538 or jcostantino@aarp.org if you have any questions or concerns.

Very truly yours,

Charles T. Alagero, Esq.
Vice President and General Council
Massachusetts Medical Society

Jon Bailey, TRIAD Officer
Waltham Police

Deborah E. Banda, State Director
AARP Massachusetts

Elizabeth Dugan, PhD, Associate Professor, Gerontology
McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies
University of Massachusetts Boston
Author, *The Driving Dilemma: The Complete Resource Guide for Older Drivers and Their Families*

Gerald Flaherty, Vice President, Medical & Scientific Programs
Alzheimer's Association, Massachusetts/New Hampshire Chapter

Robert Green, President
Massachusetts Association of Older Americans

Sally M. Hoyt, Senate President
Massachusetts Silver Legislature

Lissa Robins Kapust, LICSW
Program Coordinator, DriveWise
Behavioral Neurology Unit
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

Mary M. Maguire, Director
Public and Legislative Affairs
AAA Southern New England

Margaret O'Connor
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center Drive Wise Program

Nina M. Silverstein, PhD, Professor of Gerontology
University of Massachusetts Boston

Warren Smith, Chair
Senior Mobility Initiative on Cape Cod (SMICC)

Robert Stern, PhD, Associate Professor of Neurology
Co-Director, Alzheimer's Disease Clinical and Research Program
Boston University School of Medicine

David P. Stevens, Executive Director
Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging and Senior Center Directors

Cc: The Honorable Deval Patrick, Governor
Ellie Shea-Delaney, Interim Secretary, Executive Office of Elder Affairs
Rachel Kaprielian, Registrar, Registry of Motor Vehicles