MEDICAL FITNESS TO DRIVE EVALUATIONS

Colorado Coalition for Elder Rights and Abuse Prevention

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THE IMPORTANCE OF DRIVING

- Driving has been identified by older adults as the most valued instrumental activity of daily living (Dickerson, Reistetter & Gaudy, 2011).

- Participating in religious or spiritual activities
- Participating in exercise
- Traveling to visit people
- Going out to eat
THE IMPORTANCE OF DRIVING

• Independence
• Identity
• Connections to others

Cessation of driving can lead to poor health outcomes, increased health care costs, and decreased access to care. (Marottoli, 2000)
AGE RELATED CHANGES

- The number of older adult drivers is growing rapidly, and they are driving longer distances.

- Motor vehicle crashes are far more harmful for older adults than for all other age groups.

- The risk of crashes for older drivers is in part related to physical, visual and/or mental changes associated with aging and/or disease.

(AGS & A. Pomidor, Ed., 2016)
AGE RELATED CHANGES

- Vision
- Cognition
- Motor and Sensory
- Prescription medications
COLORADO’S GUIDE TO AGING ROAD USERS


- Created for older adults and their families. Includes information on roadway improvements, licensing requirements, and the impact of aging on driving.

- Also safety tips and resources for families and caregivers.
Clinician’s Guide to Assessing and Counseling Older Drivers

3rd Edition
CLINICIAN’S GUIDE TO ASSESSING AND COUNSELING OLDER DRIVERS, 3RD EDITION

- Updated by the American Geriatrics Society in collaboration with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
- Interprofessional team-based care: medicine, nursing, social work, pharmacy, and occupational therapy, especially driving rehabilitation specialists
- Redesigned Clinical Assessment of Driving Related Skills (CADReS) for vision, cognition and motor/sensory function
- Expanded Plan for Older Driver Safety (PODS) decision algorithm for screening, evaluation and outcomes
- Revised recommendations for medical conditions, medications, and patient education materials
HIGHLIGHTS OF CLINICIAN’S GUIDE

- Information on patient reporting, with a State-by-State list of licensing agency contact information

- A reference listing of medical conditions and medications that may affect driving, with specific recommendations for each

- Recommended Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) codes for assessment and counseling procedures

- Handouts for older adults and their caregivers that include a self-screening tool for driving safety, safe driving tips, driving alternatives, and a resource sheet for concerned caregivers.

- [www.Geriatricscareonline.org](http://www.Geriatricscareonline.org) CEU’s available
PLAN FOR OLDER DRIVERS SAFETY

• **Screen** for red flags

• **Assess** driving-related functional skills in those at risk

• **Evaluate and Treat** the at-risk older driver for medical conditions and other causes that may be impairing functional skills related to driving

• **Refer** older adult drivers with persistent deficits despite optimal medical treatment, when appropriate, to a driving rehabilitation specialist for further driving evaluation and/or training in use of adaptive equipment

• **Perform** re-evaluations and **follow-up**
CLINICAL RISK FACTORS - PHYSICAL

- History of falls
- Impaired ambulation
- Vision and/or hearing impairment
- Functional impairment with regard to use of gas or brake pedals
- Decreased ability to turn the head to fully visualize an area
CLINICAL RISK FACTORS - COGNITIVE

- Decreased short-term memory
- Decreased or impaired way finding
- Easily distracted
- Inability to learn new information quickly
- Inability to recognize unsafe situations
CLINICAL RISK FACTORS – DRIVING ABILITY

- Not using turn signals appropriately
- Difficulty turning the wheel and making turns
- Difficulty staying in the correct driving lane
- Difficulty judging the space between cars or upcoming exits
- Hitting curbs when parking or backing up
- Stopping in traffic inappropriately
- Not following stop signs, yield signs, traffic lights, etc.
- Not noticing workmen or activity on side of the road
- Inappropriate speeds for the weather/driving conditions
SPECTRUM OF DRIVER REHABILITATION SERVICES

- Community / population based programs
- Screening by health care professionals
- OT Evaluation at the level of general practice:
  - Address driving risk as a part of the range of ADL/IADL
- OT as a Specialist in Driving Rehabilitation
  - In depth evaluation for the medically-at-risk
  - Explore every option to preserve driving
# Spectrum of Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>Driver Safety Programs</th>
<th>Typical Providers and Credentials</th>
<th>Driving School</th>
<th>Driver Screen</th>
<th>Clinical IADL Evaluation</th>
<th>Specialized Evaluation and Training</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community-Based Education</strong></td>
<td>Licensed Driving Instructor (LDI) certified by state licensing agency or Dept. of Education.</td>
<td>Program specific credentials (e.g., AARP and AAA Driver Improvement Program).</td>
<td>Health care professional (e.g., physician, social worker, neuropsychologist).</td>
<td>Occupational Therapy Practitioner (Generalist or Driver Rehabilitation Specialist*). Other health professional degree with expertise in Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL).</td>
<td>Driver Rehabilitation Programs (Includes Driver Evaluation)</td>
<td>Driver Rehabilitation Specialist*, Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist*, Occupational Therapist with Specialty Certification in Driving and Community Mobility*.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Medically-Based Assessment, Education and Referral</strong></td>
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Spectrum of Decision Indicators for D&CM Intervention: Evidence, Clinical Judgment, and Risk

Normal Aging → Medical issues with increasing complexity

Generalist → DRS Specialist → Generalist

Able to Drive
- Lower Risk: Evidence is Weak; Below thresholds of impairment in most areas.
- Risk: Degree to which impairment affects fitness-to-drive is unclear. On-road evaluation is justified.
- Higher Risk: Evidence is Strong; Above thresholds of impairment in most areas.
- Non-driver: Impairments clearly exceed threshold for safe driving.

Generalists: Individualized Plan for Mobility

- Encourage fitness, strength, flexibility
- Promote driver safety programs & CarFit
- Discuss warning signs

- Rehab: Optimize sub-skills
- Individualize options and plan
- Refer to specialized services as needed.

- Promote driving retirement
- Mobility preservation through supportive transportation

Dickerson & Schold Davis, 2015
MEDICAL FITNESS TO DRIVE EVALUATIONS

- Clinical evaluation 1.5 hours
  - Visual function including contrast sensitivity and binocular vision
  - Visual motor reaction time
  - Multitasking
  - Useful Field of View
  - Motor and sensory assessment
  - Diagnosis specific assessments
    - i.e. dementia screen
MEDICAL FITNESS TO DRIVE EVALUATIONS

• Behind the wheel evaluation 1.5 hours

• Driver evaluation vehicle with instructor brake
• Start in a low challenge environment
• Increase demands to include the use of executive function skills
  • i.e. Find and pull into a gas station
  • i.e. Drive me to a familiar location from here
DRIVER SPECIALIST INTERVENTION

• Specialized driver education

• Adaptive equipment training

• Compensatory strategies such as modifying a driving route to avoid left turns, or avoiding driving during peak driving hours

• Communication of final conclusions to the client, family members and report to referring doctor
MORE RESOURCES

• Proxy Assessment
The Fitness to Drive Screening Measure
http://fitnesstodrive.phhp.ufl.edu/

• Self Assessment
Roadwise Review online assessment from AAA
www.aaafoundation.org/-roadwise-review-online

• We Need to Talk: Family Conversations
https://www.thehartford.com/resources/mature-market-excellence/publications-on-aging
WEB RESOURCES

• Colorado Aging Driver Guide

• Clinician’s Guide
  www.Geriatricscareonline.org

• University of Florida Institute for Mobility, Activity and Participation. (2013). Fitness-to-drive screening measure online (Web Page). Retrieved from the University of Florida website at http://fitnesstodrive.phhp.ufl.edu/
WEB RESOURCES

- The Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc. (2015, July)
- Fitness to Drive Screening Measure
  http://fitnesstodrive.phhp.ufl.edu/
- Roadwise Review
  www.aaafoundation.org/-roadwise-review-online
REFERENCES


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