

Safe Drivers Smart Options

Keys to Lifelong Mobility

• www.michigan.gov/agingdriver •



To: *Safe Driving Smart Options (SDSO): Keys to Lifelong Mobility* Stakeholders

This sample article provides readers with information about the issue of aging and mobility and the resources available to them on the SDSO website. It was prepared by the SDSO Communications Subcommittee. Please use it for your organization's newsletters, website, social media outlets, etc. as you wish. Additional materials such as the SDSO logo, fact sheet, images, and speaking points are also available on the SDSO site at Michigan.gov/AgingDriver on the "About Us" page.

Please use the "Contact Us" feature on the website should you have any questions or need assistance.

Smart options for keeping aging drivers safe

One of the most common concerns among aging drivers and their loved ones is the ever-present issue of ‘taking away the car keys.’ Worry about an aging driver’s growing inattentiveness, miscalculations, or confusion behind the wheel frequently start such discussions. However, it is the ultimate separation of driver from vehicle and the subsequent loss of independence that makes the topic so challenging. Recognizing a lack of cohesive guidance on the subject of aging drivers, a coalition of private and public partners launched *Safe Drivers Smart Options: Keys to Lifelong Mobility* in 2015.

The focal point of the *Safe Drivers Smart Options: Keys to Lifelong Mobility* initiative is the Michigan.gov/AgingDriver website. Recognized for excellence by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators and AAMVA’s Public Affairs and Consumer Education awards program, the website provides information and resources for drivers, their families and the professionals who work with them. It includes driving self-assessment tools, videos, links to driver refresher courses, information about how medications and health problems may affect driving, lists of resources available to drivers once they stop driving and other community supports for aging drivers. Families and caregivers will find strategies on the website for initiating conversations about when and how to transition to a non-driving lifestyle. Information about the aging process and how to most effectively interact with older drivers is adapted for audiences such as law enforcement, healthcare, and other professionals.

The question becomes how best to determine when to stop driving and what strategies can ease this difficult milestone so that the aging driver continues to be a safe, active, and mobile member of society. Any plan to assist aging drivers must include the following strategies:

- Help aging drivers continue to drive safely

- Help aging drivers transition to driving retirement
- Support the use of community mobility options

The fastest growing segment of Michigan's population are residents age 65 and older. Of the state's 7.2 million licensed drivers, approximately 1.5 million are within that age bracket. Also, it is estimated that by 2020, one in five Michigan drivers will be over 65 years of age. Living in a state heralded as the birthplace of the automobile industry, our love of cars and the freedom they represent is part of our culture. The prospect of losing that independence can be frightening to the point where we may deny or delay taking any action. Inaction may be dangerous. The *Safe Drivers Smart Options: Keys to Lifelong Mobility* website provides the roadmap needed to make informed decisions to keep aging loved ones safe and mobile.

Visit the *Safe Drivers Smart Options: Keys to Lifelong Mobility* website at Michigan.gov/AgingDriver.