



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Motor Vehicles

2300 West Broad Street

Richard D. Holcomb
Commissioner

Post Office Box 27412
Richmond, VA 23269-0001

December 1, 2017

The Honorable Ronald A. Villanueva, Delegate
Chairman House Committee on Transportation
Pocahontas Building, Room W439
900 East Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable Charles W. Carrico, Senator
Chairman Senate Committee on Transportation
Pocahontas Building, Room E519
900 East Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

RE: Mature Driver Study-Follow-Up Report

Dear Chairman Villanueva and Chairman Carrico:

The purpose of this letter is to provide a report on the work of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) since completion of the 2013 Mature Drivers Study and passage of subsequent legislation. The report outlines the background of the Mature Drivers Study, and the resulting legislation, and provides DMV data comparing information before and after the study and legislation to illustrate that the legislation and other DMV activities has had a positive impact. The 2013 Mature Drivers Study may be found on the Virginia Legislative Information System at: <http://leg2.state.va.us/dls/h&sdocs.nsf/4d54200d7e28716385256ec1004f3130/61e49ff4b0fa765485257c37007334b0?OpenDocument>.

Background

In January of 2013, Delegate Joe May, then Chairman of the House Transportation Committee, and Senator Stephen Newman, then Chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee, called upon DMV to establish a stakeholders group to study “whether the Commonwealth should adopt additional objective criteria in current license renewal requirements as a means of assessing mature drivers’ continued capability to remain active, safe,

independent, and mobile on the road as they age.”¹ In addition to this charge, DMV was tasked with reviewing amendments to the federal *Highway Safety Program Guidelines: Highway Safety Program Guideline No. 13 Older Driver* (hereinafter *Guideline 13*) issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in conjunction with current DMV data and practices.

In response to the request from the transportation committee chairs and *Guideline 13*, DMV convened an executive oversight committee and stakeholder committee to study the issues outlined in the charge letters from Delegate May and Senator Newman and *Guideline 13* to better prepare the Commonwealth for the aging driving population. The executive oversight committee included state agency leaders and leading members of state colleges and universities. The stakeholder committee was made up of over 40 participants from the medical profession, elder care industry, state agencies, state colleges and universities, law enforcement, safety and special interest groups, insurance industries, and concerned citizens. The study group was tasked with examining three main topics, driver licensing requirements, the DMV medical review process, and outreach and education resources available for educating the public, law enforcement, medical professionals, and caregivers on how age affects driving ability.

In order to review the broad topics the stakeholder group was divided into three committees: Driver Licensing, Medical Review, and Outreach and Education. While working closely with numerous stakeholders, DMV conducted extensive review of existing research and data from other states, surveyed other jurisdictions, invited leading researchers from the University of Virginia, NHTSA and TransAnalytics, LLC to present information, and collected specific data from Virginia crash reports and demographics relating to mature drivers.

As a result of the work of the Driver Licensing committee the study recommended legislation to:

- Amend § 46.2-330 of the *Code of Virginia* to lower the current statutory age for mandatory in-person license renewal for mature drivers from age 80 to age 75
- Amend § 46.2-330 of the *Code of Virginia* to shorten the current license renewal period from eight years to five years for persons age 75 and older. Therefore, any person renewing his license at age 75 or older would have a five-year license renewal cycle
- Implement a convenient means for licensed drivers age 70 and older to voluntarily exchange their driver’s licenses for special identification cards through alternative means (online, by phone, by mail)
- Amend the *Code of Virginia* by adding a section (proposed § 46.2-943.1) to provide judges the option of requiring drivers to attend mature driver motor vehicle crash prevention courses where applicable based on the offenses committed

Delegate Hugo patroned House Bill (HB) 771 with the study’s recommendations (2014 Acts of Assembly Chapter 282). The bill’s provisions became effective on January 1, 2015. Prior to enactment of HB 771 the law required persons aged 80 and older to appear in person at DMV and to take a vision test in order to renew their licenses. The original provision mandating in-person renewal requirement with vision tests for persons aged 80 and older was codified in 2004.

¹ Charge letters from Delegate May and Senator Newman, January 9, 2013.

An in-person requirement provides an opportunity for DMV customer service representatives (CSRs) to observe to some degree the physical and cognitive functioning of customers. A customer's vision is checked and mobility is observed as well as cognitive functioning (ability to understand and answer questions related to license renewal). Virginia crash data analyzed for the eight years before the original mandatory in-person renewal requirement passed and for the eight years after the law passed showed a 28 percent reduction in crashes per 1,000 licensed drivers age 80 and above in the Commonwealth.² HB 771 was based on consideration of the increased rate of crashes for drivers age 75 and older, leading to the legislation's requirement for in person license renewals for persons age 75 and older. Virginia crash data revealed that when mature drivers are involved in crashes they have an increasing rate of being at fault, and are more likely to suffer injuries or fatalities as compared to drivers in other age ranges.³ HB 771 was a product of a thorough and deliberate review of Virginia crash data.

As a result of the work of the Medical Review committee, the study recommended that DMV enhance training and the tools available to CSRs to better assist them with identifying medically at-risk drivers based on observation in Customer Service Centers (CSCs) and referring at-risk drivers to DMV's medical review process. DMV implemented these recommendations immediately upon completion of the study.

The Outreach and Education committee was tasked with reviewing and considering recommendations regarding outreach and education programs addressing mature drivers and those drivers who are medically at-risk. Stakeholders agreed that the goal of outreach and education is to educate groups on identifying when a mature driver is at-risk and how to refer medically at-risk drivers to the DMV medical review process. Additionally, the purpose of outreach and education is to share resource information with mature drivers, their families, and caregivers, including information on the effects of aging, alternate transportation options, and driving cessation. Targeted groups to reach through outreach and education included medical and allied health professionals, law enforcement and the judiciary, DMV staff, mature drivers themselves, family and caregivers, and the general public. As a result of the work of the Outreach and Education committee the study made general and targeted recommendations that included:

- Creating a coalition of stakeholder partners to create and execute a comprehensive strategic communication campaign.
- Leveraging the GrandDriver website (<http://granddriver.net/>) through the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) as the central hub for messages and resources for mature drivers, their families and stakeholder organizations including the medical and allied health professions community, law enforcement and the judiciary.
- Updating and developing additional DMV and DARS website content specifically for the medical and allied health professions community, law enforcement, the judiciary, and the general public.
- Updating and distributing communication and informational tools as well as brochures for the targeted audiences.

² Mature Driver Study Report page 9.

³ Mature Driver Study Report page 10-11.

- Seeking more proactive opportunities to address mature driver issues at conferences and events to inform the medical and allied health professions, law enforcement, and the public about the DMV medical review process, how aging affects driving, and GrandDriver resources.
- Distributing to DMV customers information on the effects of aging on driving, the DMV medical review process and exchanging a driver’s license for a special identification card at no charge.

DMV and its partners have been actively working to implement these recommendations since completion of the study through the ongoing efforts of the Outreach and Education committee that was subsequently renamed the Mature Driver Program Committee.

Implementation of Mature Driver Study Recommendations and Legislation

With HB 771 effective in January of 2015, DMV’s efforts to have CSRs better trained to identify medically at-risk drivers, and DMV’s outreach and education efforts to make medical professionals and others more aware of the need to report medically at-risk drivers to DMV, the agency has compiled data comparing available information from fiscal year (FY) 2014 to data from FY 2017 to determine whether the changes in law, CSR training, and outreach have had a positive impact.⁴

The main factor in deciding if drivers require medical review is based on their driving function, not on their age. Each case is evaluated on its own merits. Table 1 illustrates that reporting of medically at-risk drivers has increased from 2014 compared to 2017. However, reporting has not been focused on seniors. The data illustrates the number of senior and non-senior drivers reported increased between 2014 and 2017, however seniors made up a smaller percentage of the overall total compared with non-seniors.

Category	FY 2014		FY 2017		Change	
	#	% of Total	#	% of Total	#	% of Total
Non-Senior	4,189	65.6%	6,717	70.1%	2,528	4.6%
Senior	2,200	34.4%	2,860	29.9%	660	-4.6%
Grand Total	6,389	100.0%	9,577	100.0%	3,188	0.0%

Table 2 illustrates that DMV’s efforts in providing enhanced training and better tools to CSRs has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of reports of medically at-risk drivers by CSRs to DMV’s Medical Review Services. There has also been an increase in the number of physicians reporting drivers who may be medically at-risk to DMV for review. DMV will continue its outreach and education efforts in collaboration with DARS to enhance the information available on both agencies’ websites to provide medical professionals with information on available options when determining that patients may be unsafe to drive.

⁴ The data and statistics collected define “Senior” as a person who is 75 years old or above and a “Non-Senior” as less than 75 years old.

Reporting Source	FY 2014	FY 2017	# Change	% Change
Concerned Citizen	15	17	2	13.3%
Court	116	78	-38	-32.8%
Court Medically Incapacitated	1,051	1,376	325	30.9%
Customer	44	65	21	47.7%
Dept. of Blind and Visually Impaired	235	331	96	40.9%
DMV Customer Service Representative	<u>623</u>	<u>2,290</u>	<u>1,667</u>	<u>267.6%</u>
Family Member	137	168	31	22.6%
Local Law Enforcement	1,438	1,755	317	22.0%
MRS-Crash Reports**	877	260	-617	-70.4%
Physician	1,647	2,912	1,265	76.8%
State Police	206	325	119	57.8%
Grand Total	6,389	9,577	3,188	49.9%

Table 3 illustrates that since passage of HB 771 requiring drivers age 75 and older to appear in person at DMV every five years to renew their licenses there has been an increase in the number of seniors voluntarily surrendering their licenses. The increase in the number of drivers surrendering their licenses has likely reduced the number of drivers referred to Medical Review Services.

Category	FY 2014		FY 2017		Change	
	#	% of Total	#	% of Total	#	% of Total
Non-Senior	1,314	65.7%	826	45.3%	-488	-20.4%
Senior	686	34.3%	997	54.7%	311	20.4%
Total	2,000	100.0%	1,823	100.0%	-177	0.0%

Table 4 illustrates that since the passage of HB 771 there has been a decrease in the number of medically at-risk drivers having their licenses suspended. This is likely due to more seniors voluntarily surrendering their licenses rather than being subject to the medical review process and having their licenses suspended as a result of that review.

Category	FY 2014		FY 2017		Change	
	#	% of Total	#	% of Total	#	% of Total
Non-Senior	2,158	62.8%	2,125	68.5%	-33	5.7%
Senior	1,279	37.2%	976	31.5%	-303	-5.7%
Total	3,437	100.0%	3,101	100.0%	-336	0.0%

In addition to positive indications illustrated by the data, DMV continues to coordinate implementation of the outreach and education recommendations through the work of the Mature Driver Program committee. The committee's membership includes Mr. Dave Morrell, advocate for highway safety that advocated for the Mature Drivers Study, representatives from the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, Virginia Tech Center for Gerontology, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Department of Health Professions, Virginia State Police, DMV, DMV Medical Advisory Board, DriveSmart Virginia, AAA Mid-Atlantic, SeniorNavigator, Virginia Municipal League, Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, Virginia Department of Transportation, AARP, VCU/Virginia Center on Aging, Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, and the Office of the Attorney General.

The Mature Driver Program committee serves as the coalition of stakeholder partners recommended by the study. The committee has met ten times since the release of the Mature Drivers Study in November 2013. The most recent meeting was held November 16, 2017. The meetings serve as an opportunity for partners and stakeholders to update activities related to Mature Driver Safety, to identify areas for more outreach and to foster collaboration. The GrandDriver Project within the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services and grant-funded through the DMV's Virginia Highway Safety Office continues to serve as the central hub for dissemination of information and outreach efforts related to mature driver safety as recommended in the study. Committee members also actively collaborate between meetings and share new efforts and initiatives at meetings. Since the completion of the Mature Drivers Study, recommendations of the study that have been accomplished by the Mature Driver Program committee include:

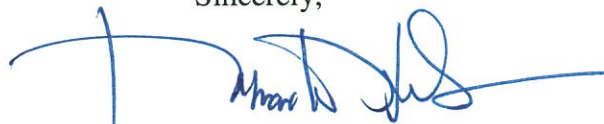
- Redesign of the Virginia GrandDriver website, as well as updated communication and advertising online and through more traditional media channels.
- Updating and developing additional DMV and DARS website content specifically for the medical and allied health professions community, law enforcement, the judiciary, and the general public.
- Redesign and distribution of the DMV publication *Shifting Gears: Keeping the Drive at 75* to make mature drivers aware of the requirements of HB 771 and GrandDriver resources.
- DMV staff attend conferences and other events to inform medical and allied health professions, law enforcement and the community about the DMV medical review process, the impact aging has on driving, and GrandDriver resources. Such opportunities include attending the Maryland Older Driver Symposium and AARP Regional meetings; presenting information at churches, retirement communities and other venues as requested; and participating in the Interstate Collaboration on Older Drivers.
- VDH has held regional healthcare provider trainings focused on mature drivers and reducing prescription misuse and substance abuse case management.
- DMV staff partner with VDH to present information on issues related to aging and driving at VDH conferences and through VDH publications.
- Virginia State Police have trained troopers on the GrandDriver website and provided them with the *Red Card for Identifying the Medically At Risk Driver*.

- DARS staff attend conferences and outreach events to disseminate information about the GrandDriver Program and driver evaluations.
- DARS staff have identified opportunities to provide information and outreach to the health care community through collaboration with VCU/Virginia Center on Aging.
- DARS Staff collaborate with AAA Tidewater to increase participation in CARFIT events (a program designed to “fit” a vehicle to senior drivers for maximum comfort and safety.) by including child safety seat checks to their events.
- SeniorNavigator (a non-profit organization that assists seniors in finding alternative transportation) has been providing potential links for the GrandTrans section of the GrandDriver website for transportation alternatives.
- The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) is developing driver training and links to GrandDriver as a way to partner and to get the word out about using alternative transportation sources for seniors.
- The Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) has been working closely with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) on mature driver related projects and with DARS disseminating ABC brochures. ABC will conduct a media campaign aimed at older adults who may be mixing alcohol and medication. The information will also be on the ABC website.
- The Virginia Tech Center for Gerontology has been working with VDH on a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant to address substance abuse and to train those in higher education.
- The Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI) is involved with a naturalistic driving study of mature drivers as well as a study relating to substance abuse and driving.
- Mr. Dave Morrell, highway safety advocate who advocated for the Mature Drivers Study has continued to play an active role in identifying opportunities for presenting information about the success of the Mature Drivers Study and the legislative issues that were considered. He is also working to identify ways to get information out to the public through Area Agencies on Aging.

Conclusion

This letter summarizes the work of DMV since the completion of the Mature Drivers Study and the resulting legislation. I hope that it illustrates DMV’s commitment to the mature driving population and to continuing to improve highway safety throughout the Commonwealth. I hope you find this information helpful. As always, my staff and I are available to answer any questions that you or other members of the General Assembly may have.

Sincerely,


 Richard D. Holcomb

c: The Honorable Aubrey L. Layne, Jr.
 Secretary of Transportation