



Florida Department of Transportation Research

Health Care Providers and Older Adult Service Organizations to Assist in the Prevention and Early Recognition of Florida's At-Risk Drivers

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Project Number

BDY17

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Current Situation

Florida is well known for retirement and winter homes. Currently, over 18% of Floridians are 65 or over, but by 2030, this is expected to be over 27%. To meet the transportation challenges of an aging population, State Traffic Engineering and Operations Office of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), in partnership with Florida State University's Pepper Institute on Aging and Public Policy, created the Safe Mobility for Life Coalition (SMFLC). The mission of the SMFLC is to improve the safety, access, and mobility of Florida's aging road users by implementing a broad Aging Road User Strategic Safety Plan (ARUSSP) to reduce their crash rate. To effectively meet the goal of its Prevention and Early Recognition Emphasis Area, one of ten emphasis areas within the ARUSSP, the SMFLC needed to establish a baseline and assess the current situation and level of knowledge among the health care community and other adult service organizations.



More older Floridians are using Florida roads, whether driving, walking, cycling, or riding. Assuring their safety and their safe use of roadways is an ongoing project for the Florida Department of Transportation.

Research Objectives

Researchers from SRA Research Group Inc. assessed Florida's health care community and older adult service organizations to determine their baseline levels of community practice, knowledge, interest, and resource needs regarding at-risk drivers.

Project Activities

To prepare for development of the assessment tool used in the project, the researchers reviewed the literature for studies in the U.S. and abroad conducted among medical professionals and providers of services to older adults. They also set up a technical advisory group and conducted in-depth interviews with several professionals who serve the older adult community. Based on findings from these activities, the researchers developed an assessment tool and a sampling plan. Invitations to participate in the Web-based survey were sent to a wide range of practitioners, including physicians, social workers, senior center workers, and law enforcement among others in all 67 Florida counties. Over 1,300 surveys were completed. Survey results were analyzed in total and by many subgroups, including county, FDOT district, respondent title/category, urban/rural counties, age, and gender. The survey asked questions about awareness, understanding, knowledge, and use of solutions and tools that are available to address driving when working with older adults. Practitioners were also asked what tools they would like to have to address the safe driving issues of aging drivers.

Project Benefits

The assessment results provide a snapshot of current practice in Florida of how professionals from health care and older adult service organizations interact with older Floridians on driving issues. Project results will be used by SMFLC to guide development and/or dissemination of educational and outreach materials which support the recognition and reporting of at-risk drivers. Results will allow SMFLC to continue to work towards their goal of reducing crash rates for aging road users by improving their safety, access, and mobility.

For more information, please see dot.state.fl.us/research-center, or visit www.FLsams.org