

Older driver screening program expands to other counties, law enforcement

January 18 2011

Keeping older drivers safe behind the wheel is the goal of a successful program at the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine now expanding into additional counties. A team of experts from the School's Trauma Epidemiology and Injury Prevention Research Center has received two grants to expand the program, which focuses on interventions to assist older drivers who may be at risk for a crash due to age-related health impairments.

"Our goal is to help older drivers and their physicians identify and address medical conditions that could interfere with safe driving," said Linda Hill, MD, MPH, clinical professor in the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine at UC San Diego School of Medicine.

"Treatment may be as simple as a new pair of glasses, some adaptive equipment for the car or physical therapy to improve range of motion. However, there are times when driving safely is no longer possible and health care practitioners need to know the signs and symptoms to watch for."

Hundreds of [health care professionals](#) in the San Diego region have been trained through the TREDs (Training, Research and Education for Driving Safety) program using the American Medical Association's screening standards for adult drivers over age 65. The training provides skills to screen and diagnose, make referrals and, when necessary, assist their older patients through the inevitable transition into driving retirement. Hill and her team will expand training to eligible physicians, nurses, medical assistants, occupational therapists and [health care](#)

[workers](#) at hospitals and outpatient medical sites in Riverside, San Bernardino, and Imperial counties, as well as continue their work in the San Diego area.

The TREDIS group is expanding its efforts to promote safety for [older drivers](#) by encouraging [law enforcement](#) to aid in the identification and referral of at-risk drivers.

"Getting older does not mean the end of a person's driving days," said California Highway Patrol (CHP) Chief Jim Abele, commander of CHP's Border Division. "It's the perfect time to evaluate, improve and maintain the safety and mobility of California's senior drivers."

On a daily basis, law enforcement officers face the challenge of sensitively handling older motorists who are driving unsafely. Sensitivity training as well as how to recognize medical conditions which can mimic 'driving under the influence' are now available to law enforcement organizations in selected counties within Southern California.

"If age-related driving issues are left unaddressed, there is a risk of injury not only to the older adults themselves, but also to their families and to others who share the road," said Hill. "Our communities rely on these professionals to look out for our seniors' well-being."

Provided by University of California - San Diego

Citation: Older driver screening program expands to other counties, law enforcement (2011, January 18) retrieved 30 March 2023 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-01-older-driver-screening-counties-law.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.