

Fitness-to-Drive: Evaluating and Reporting

Medically impaired drivers can be very dangerous. The increased risk for an at-fault crash is **7.6** times higher for drivers with cognitive impairment than for healthy drivers. By way of comparison, the increased risk for alcohol impaired drivers with a blood-alcohol level of .08 is 5 times.

When there is a fitness-to-drive concern about my patient, what do I do?

- Advise your patient.
 - Patients should be advised of medical conditions, procedures, and medications that may impair driving abilities.
- Recommend a driving assessment when driving safety is questionable.
 - Diagnoses are a poor predictor of a patient's fitness-to-drive. Often patients have several conditions and medications with complex, unknown interactions affecting function.
 - Referring for a DriveABLE assessment enables evidence-based decisions. DriveABLE provides timely (within 2 weeks) assessments developed through science and demonstrated to be equally fair for urban and rural drivers.
 - As an arm's length assessment, DriveABLE allows you to focus on the outcome of the assessment and remain an advocate for your patient.
- Manage your litigation risk by documenting thoroughly.
 - Document your referral, observations, opinions, and recommendations on the patient's chart.
- Report your concerns to your licensing authority.
 - Medical associations encourage all physicians to report medically at-risk patients to local licensing authorities to protect public safety and manage risk.

How do I report a medically at-risk patient to the licensing authority?

Inform the patient that you will be outlining your concerns for their safety to the licensing authority and what they can expect from the licensing authority. Consider giving the patient a copy of the letter.

On receipt of information from physicians, most licensing authorities conduct a medical review. A medical advisory committee may be consulted. The medical review process may also request the patient to send further medical information and/or have additional tests completed. The patient is usually informed about any changes to the status of their license by mail.

The letter (see sample letter on back) to the licensing authority should contain the following information:

- Full name and address of the medically at-risk driver
- Date of birth
- Specific concerns about the driver that would make them a safety risk
- Medical conditions, medications and/or physical conditions that would affect driving.
- Results of DriveABLE assessment or recommendation for the assessment.