

**Executive Committee for Highway Safety
Older Driver Safety
Working Group Meeting Minutes – Mtg. #9**

January 19, 2007

Location:

AARP State Office, Raleigh, NC @ 11:00 a.m.

Attending:

Jane Stutts, Chair	UNC Highway Safety Research Center
Cliff Braam	NC DOT Traffic Engineering & Safety Systems Branch
Sherry Creech	NC DMV Driver License Medical Review Branch
Sarah Davis	AAA Carolinas
Davis Fort	Physician, retired
Janice Huff	NC Medical Society
Susan Stewart	NC DMV Driver License Medical Review Branch
Carol Williams	NC Assistive Technology Program
Frank Winecuff	Engineer, retired

Minutes:

Jane welcomed those attending, noting that several members who had planned to attend had needed to cancel at the last minute. She reminded everyone to please RSVP their intentions to attend a scheduled meeting, since the agenda is set with consideration to who will be present.

Jane noted that the two remaining strategies that the group had developed (Improve Roadway and Driving Environment: Building Capacity, and Increase Public Awareness of Issues and Resources) had been presented to the full Executive Committee for Highway Safety at its regularly scheduled quarterly meeting held earlier in the week, and were both approved. The group now has four approved strategies, which should be posted on the ECHS website shortly (available at <http://www.ncdot.org/doh/preconstruct/traffic/ECHS/>).

The primary focus of the day's meeting was to review information and material that members of the group had compiled for potential inclusion on a statewide senior driver safety website (the focus of the above Increase Public Awareness strategy). Prior to this discussion, however, there was a more general discussion of the role Coalition members might play in the creation of the website. Jane commented that, without some funding for such a project, it would likely be a challenge for this all-volunteer group to pull together a quality website, both with respect to the technical logistics of doing so and the overall look and content of the site. Cliff noted that IT help could be requested from a number of sources (NCDOT, Traffic Engineering, DMV, GHSP, HSRC), and advised that the next step might be for this group to develop a plan for the website's creation that among other things would identify any additional required resources. Given the

group's desire for DSAA to host the website, Jane said that she would follow up with Phyllis Bridgman (who was unable to attend the day's meeting) and others regarding perceived needs to help move this strategy forward.

Moving to a presentation and discussion of content for such a website, several members of the group distributed sample materials they had compiled for the various topic areas identified during the group's last meeting. These included information with respect to

- Driving self-tests (Huff, Davis, Stutts)
- Exercises for mobility (Davis)
- Age-related functional changes affecting driving and their assessment (Huff, Stutts)
- Retiring from driving (Stutts)
- How to help an older driver (Huff)
- Improving the roadway (Stutts)
- Older driver safety myths (new area proposed by Dr. Fort)

Jane will maintain a file of all the materials distributed for consideration in future small group meetings. In general, it was noted that given the abundance of available material, our group should not have to devote that much effort to creating new materials and text for the website. Rather, our role should be that of recommending which existing materials are most appropriate for our needs. At the same, we must be aware of copyright issues when using others' materials, as well as seek permission when linking to another website. In both cases, having members of the group representing many leading organizations active in the field (AARP, AAA, AOTA, etc.) should help smooth the process.

Other issues to be addressed are the need to ensure that all website material is accessible to those with disabilities, and the need for overall coordination of the website development to ensure compatibility across the various areas. Carol Williams agreed to assist with the former, and a technical working group coordinated through DSAA will likely need to be established for the latter.

The group agreed that it should continue its search for good website material, with Jane suggesting that future efforts to define the website's content might more efficiently occur in smaller group sessions, with this smaller group's recommendations then being brought before the full working group for review and approval. This approach will be reviewed with Phyllis and other key coalition members unable to attend the day's meeting. In addition, we will need to work out how material might be posted to a "dummy" website to facilitate group review and comment.

Jane then provided a brief update of Kristen Bovid's project to document best practices with regard to educating physicians about older driver safety issues, including reporting of at-risk drivers to the DMV. As part of the project, Kristen has compiled information from the NC DMV on drivers in the Medical Review Program, and has also interviewed physicians in various fields and talked with licensing officials in other states. A draft of her report should be available by late March, and should serve as a useful resource to this group as it considers potential additional strategies for addressing medically at-risk drivers.

Members then brainstormed of other potential strategies that the group might consider proposing to the ECHS for improving safety for older drivers. Jane provided information on a new course NHTSA has made available to educate law enforcement officials about effective means of interacting with older drivers (see pdf file attached). The group agreed that she should pursue obtaining a copy of these materials for review, with the idea of recommending that they be considered for use in North Carolina.

Cliff Braam noted that several of the other working groups had developed strategies to update and strengthen material contained in the state's driver license handbook, and that our group might consider this as a strategy. (A copy of the handbook is available at http://www.ncdot.org/dmv/driver_services/drivershandbook/. Currently there is no section specific to older drivers, or to the driver medical review program.) It was suggested that any revised material for the handbook could include the address for the senior driver safety website, and that even if this were not possible, information on the website could be distributed via flyers and other print materials at DMV offices across the state. Another potential strategy suggested by Cliff was incorporation of information on older drivers in driver education classes, including any standardized state curriculum that may be recommended by another ECHS working group.

The following additional announcements were made:

- ✚ FHWA personnel will be hosting three one-day workshops on “Planning and Designing Roads for Older Driver Safety” on February 6 (Raleigh), February 7 (Winston-Salem), and February 8 (Hickory). These workshops are the focus of this group’s “Building Capacity” strategy. If interested in attending one of the workshops, please contact Lisa Avery at 919-733-3915 or lavery@dot.state.nc.us (or contact Jane for additional information about the workshops).
- ✚ NC AARP is hosting a free seminar from 9:30 – 12:30 on Wednesday, February 7 on how to talk with older adults about driving safety and transitioning from driving to not driving. For information or to sign up, contact Suzanne at 919-508-0269 or slcameron@aarp.org.
- ✚ AARP and AAA are also planning to host CarFit events in Wilmington and Hendersonville this spring, and will be conducting a second CarFit training in Greensboro in May. Stay tuned for further details.
- ✚ Another future event being planned is a DriveWell training session. DriveWell is a program of the American Society on Aging that focuses on helping communities come together to address issues of older driver safety and mobility (see <http://www.asaging.org/drivewell/>)
- ✚ The ECHS has initiated a newsletter highlighting its activities, including progress of each of its working groups. Jane distributed printed copies of the first newsletter.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the full Coalition/Working Group will be held at the AAA offices in Charlotte at a date and time to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 pm.