

APA Official Actions

Position Statement on Assessing Driving Ability

Approved by the Board of Trustees, July 2023

Approved by the Assembly, November 2022

“Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. . . These are . . . position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects. . .” – *APA Operations Manual*

Issue:

The symptoms of psychiatric disorders, including major neurocognitive disorders (e.g., dementia), may in some cases interfere with the ability of patients to anticipate danger and avoid safety hazards, including those encountered while driving. Furthermore, some of the medications prescribed to ameliorate psychiatric symptoms may cause drowsiness and/or otherwise compromise the ability of patients to drive safely. Laws vary from state to state as to whether physicians, including psychiatrists, are obligated to inform the appropriate state agency if they believe that it is unsafe for their patients to operate a motor vehicle.

APA Position:

It is APA’s position that psychiatrists who report information on their patient’s driving abilities to the appropriate authorities in good faith should be immune from liability.

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