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July 20, 2015

Kara N. Templeton
Director
Bureau of Driver Licensing
P.O. Box 68676
Harrisburg, PA, 17106-8676

Dear Ms. Templeton:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed regulation 67 Pa. Code, Chapter 83, Physical and mental criteria, including vision standards related to the licensing of drivers. The PAO Board of Directors has reviewed the proposed amendments and sought additional insight from a neuro-ophthalmologist.

Currently the legal requirements for vision include that the driver must have 120 degrees of field in the horizontal meridian. The proposed update states: Section 83.3(e)(1) and (2) is proposed to be amended to disqualify an individual that has a binocular visual field defect of 30 contiguous degrees or more. The Department will make an exception to this disqualification if the individual's health care provider verifies in writing that the individual is capable of driving safely despite the condition and the individual has demonstrated appropriate visual compensation through a knowledge and driving skills evaluation administered by the Department.

The PAO has the following concerns about the proposed amendment:

1. Although the stated purpose of the amendment is "so that individuals that do not present a safety risk are not unnecessarily recalled," the changes would result in allowing only those drivers who have retained 150 degrees of field, which is more rigorous than the current criteria. By Goldmann perimetry, normal individuals have 180 degrees in a binocular field. Subtracting 30 degrees gives the new requirement 150 degrees of retained field. This is more restrictive than the current requirement of 120 degrees of retained field.
2. If the proposed regulation is adopted, will the physician be required to review all existing patient records to identify patients who now fail to meet the updated criteria?
3. The amendment involving an exception being made if the individual's health care provider verifies that the individual is capable of driving safely places an undue burden on physicians. An ophthalmologist can state whether certain visual requirements are met. If there are

concerns about driving ability and the criteria outlined in regulations are met, an ophthalmologist can also *recommend* that the state retest an individual; however physicians are not trained to evaluate an individual's ability to safely drive and should not be asked to verify this in writing. Even if the driver passes an exam administered by the Department, if an accident occurs involving a patient who an ophthalmologist as verified as a safe driver, it is possible that the physician could be faced with legal action and deemed liable. This culpability may extend to the previous concern cited in point number two.

4. Section (h) only lists prism lenses as a corrective device is not acceptable for meeting visual field requirements. We suggest that telescopic lenses should also be included in this stipulation.

Unless there is evidence to the contrary, we believe that existing regulations are successful in preventing accidents due to visual fields impairments. Without such evidence, it is the position of the PAO that the additional restriction of a binocular visual field defect of 30 continuous degrees or more is not necessary. Furthermore, we strongly oppose any regulation that adds the burden of verifying driver safety to the physician.

Thank you again for allowing us to comment. If you would like to discuss any of the PAO's concerns regarding this proposed regulation, please contact our Executive Director, Jennifer Keeler, at (717) 909-2692 or jkeeler@pamedsoc.org. She will put you in contact with me or another board member.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Drew Stoken".

Drew J. Stoken, MD, FACS
President