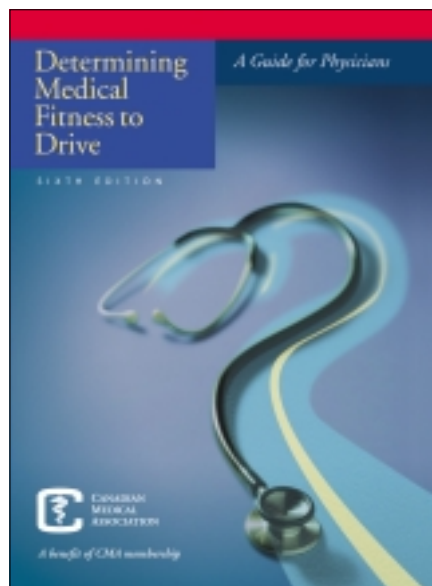


Revised fitness-to-drive guide now available

The CMA's new *Determining Medical Fitness to Drive: A Guide for Physicians*, which took 2 years to revise and is 3 times longer than the previous version, is now available. This new version reflects changes that have taken place in medicine, the transportation industry and the legal system in the last 10 years.

"We feel what we have done is medically responsible and will protect drivers and the public," says Dr. David Irving, chair of the CMA project advisory group assigned to revise the 1991 guide. The new sixth edition, with its emphasis on evidence-based background information, includes a new section on airbags, more supplementary information, and an expanded appendix with evaluative tools. It also has the latest information about elderly drivers, as well as about driving and medical conditions such as epilepsy, sleep apnea and cardiovascular disease.

Irving says his group recognized that elderly drivers are a growing concern. "Their licence is important to them but



so is their life and the lives of others," says Irving, an Edmonton cardiologist. Proposed solutions include limiting their driving to local shopping only, and only during daylight, nonrush hours.

Irving and the other 3 members of the advisory group — Drs. Robert Brisson, Linda Inkpen and David Smith — began the process in 1998 by consulting with 135 groups and associations ranging from medical specialty bodies to the Canadian Diabetes Association and police organizations. Irving says this inclusive approach yielded "superb recommendations and responses."

These same groups then reviewed the draft guide to ensure it met their concerns. The final draft was then test driven for 6 weeks by 30 general and specialist physicians in rural and urban settings. "We had practically nothing but compliments from them," says Irving. The participating doctors were particularly enthusiastic about the guide's comprehensiveness.

CMA members can order their free copy of the guide by phoning 888 855-2555, or 613 731-8610 x2307. The cost for nonmembers is \$34.95, plus taxes and shipping charges. — *Barbara Sibbald, CMAJ*

A stitch in time

In Nova Scotia, an innovative "message quilt" is allowing organ recipients to express their gratitude and donor families to gain a glimpse into the lives they have helped to rebuild. The Organ Procurement Centre at the Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre in Halifax sponsored the creation of 2 special quilts that are being displayed throughout Nova Scotia.



"The most precious gift I ever received has come from a perfect stranger," writes Donald. "Thank you." Heather, on a piece of her satin wedding dress, had these words stitched: "A wedding toast to a young man I never knew who signed a donor card and gave me my Dad to walk down the aisle with me." — *Donalee Moulton, Halifax*

OMA gets involved at federal level

The Ontario Medical Association made its second foray into federal politics in June by urging its members to consider becoming involved in the leadership race of the Canadian Alliance. The new party, which replaced the Reform Party, held its first-round leadership vote June 24. In a June 1 letter to members, surgeon Alan Ryley, chair of the Political Action Committee, said the OMA wanted to encourage doctors to "become involved as the next federal election draws near."

Although a *Globe and Mail* columnist criticized the letter as "partisan," an OMA spokesperson was adamant that the association would have sent the same message if another federal party was having a leadership contest. She also noted that the OMA sent a letter to Toronto-area physicians during the 1997 federal election, urging them to consider supporting 2 candidates — Dr. Carolyn Bennett, a Liberal, and Dr. Bob Frankford, a New Democrat. Ryley says the OMA encourages its members to get involved in politics "as a continuation of our ongoing, nonpartisan participation in municipal, provincial and federal politics." — *Patrick Sullivan, CMAJ*