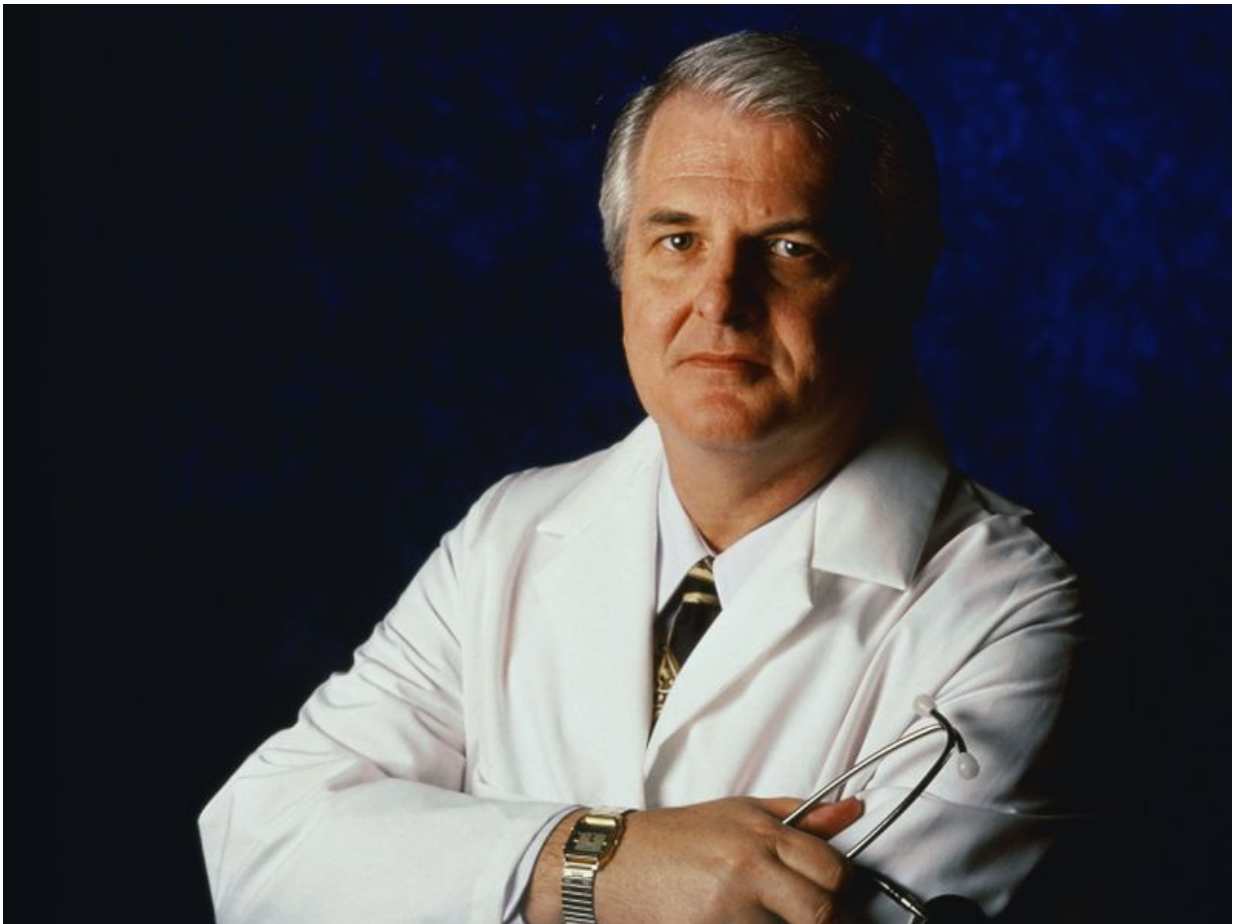


# Are guidelines needed to assess competence of aging physicians?

April 4 2016

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(HealthDay)—The question of whether national guidelines need to be

developed for assessing the competence of aging physicians was discussed during a recent meeting of key stakeholders, according to a news release from the American Medical Association (AMA).

Noting that the number of [physicians](#) aged 65 years and older has increased more than four-fold since 1975, reaching more than 241,000 in 2013, representatives from key physician, hospital, and patient safety organizations discussed the growing trend of assessing the competence of aging physicians.

Nearly three dozen representatives from physician, hospital, and patient safety organizations examined the evidence relating to physician assessment and competence. Discussion of issues and challenges relating to development of guidelines included [legal implications](#) of screening physicians based on age; variability of the effect of age on physician competence; uncertainty of how to interpret tests of cognitive or [motor function](#) in physicians; and confounding effects of other variables on competence and performance of physicians.

"Self-regulation is an important aspect of [medical professionalism](#), and helping colleagues recognize their declining skills is an important part of self-regulation," according to a recent report from the AMA Council on Medical Education. "Therefore, physicians must develop guidelines/standards for monitoring and assessing both their own and their colleagues' competency."

**More information:** [More Information](#)

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