

State variance seen in requirements to report medically impaired drivers

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There is considerable variance in state reporting requirements regarding medically impaired drivers, according to a study published online Jan. 5 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Elaine M. Tran, M.D., and Jeffrey E. Lee, M.D., both from the University of California, San Diego, investigated state reporting requirements and the availability of confidentiality and legal immunity for physicians who report medically impaired drivers.

The analysis included a review of all 50 U.S. states' Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) websites, a telephone survey of DMV staff from each state, and a [review](#) of each state's legal codes for driver licensing.

The researchers found that one-third of state DMV websites (34 percent) lacked instructions regarding physician reporting. Six states had mandatory reporting requirements (with four of these states only requiring reporting of conditions related to lapses of consciousness), three states accepted anonymous reports, and seven states deemed physician reports of medically impaired drivers confidential without exception.

Overall, 30 percent of states deemed reports by physicians confidential, although reported drivers could find out who reported them if they asked for a copy of the reporting form. Nearly three-quarters of states (74 percent) had statutes that protected [physicians](#) from liability related to reporting medically impaired [drivers](#).

"We also encourage state DMVs to improve the delivery and reliability of website and telephone-based information on issues important to [physician](#) reporting, including confidentiality and legal immunity," the authors write.

More information: Elaine M. Tran et al, Reporting Requirements, Confidentiality, and Legal Immunity for Physicians Who Report Medically Impaired Drivers, *JAMA Network Open* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.50495](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.50495)

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