

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **National Seniors Month: Safe Driving and Seniors**

**Burnaby, B.C. / June 10, 2010** -- In B.C. there are approximately 575,000 drivers over 65 years of age. That population is expected to triple over the next 20 years.

During National Seniors Month, the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation is encouraging mature drivers and their families to follow safe driving practices and think about possible transportation alternatives.

“Most seniors are safe drivers. They are cautious and conscientious,” says David Dunne director of road safety for the foundation. “We know that the ability to drive safely depends on factors other than age, such as driving skill, your abilities and habits; your vehicle; and your driving knowledge.”

While age alone is not a good predictor of driving ability, the changes that occur as we age do affect our ability to function safely as drivers, putting us, and other road users at risk.

Each year nearly 60,000 Canadians over the age of 70 stop driving. Unfortunately, few seniors or their families ever plan ahead in preparation of driving retirement, says Dunne. Driving retirement is currently associated with a decrease in personal mobility and participation in out-of home activities, along with increased depressive symptoms.

For those individuals for whom driving is no longer an option, their situations need to be addressed in a compassionate, supportive, and community-minded way with the guiding principle that mobility is a right and a major contributor to greater independence and overall quality of life.

Alternative transportation options can help seniors maintain their mobility and involvement in the community once they stop driving.

Public transit alone cannot meet all the transportation needs. Families and communities need to adapt to the changing requirements as well.

The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation has hosted Seniors' Alternative Transportation Roundtable discussions with the goal of finding more effective ways to address the current and future mobility needs of seniors.

The foundation also offers the *Living Well, Driving Well* mature drivers workshop which is designed to help mature drivers assess their own driving skills, habits and knowledge in a peer group environment while getting tips and strategies to help change and improve their driving. Over three thousand drivers have participated in the *Living Well, Driving Well* workshop.

For more information about seniors and driving visit [www.MatureDrivers.ca](http://www.MatureDrivers.ca).

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**About BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation**

The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation is a non-profit registered charity working with families, communities and business partners to reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes and injuries in B.C. For more information visit [www.BCAATSF.ca](http://www.BCAATSF.ca) or call 604-298-5107.

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