

Helping Older People to Maintain Independence

(NAPSA)—For most older adults, the ability to live independently is associated with the ability to drive. That's one reason the prospect of eventually "giving up the keys" can be a frightening one.

To help, the experts on aging at the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) developed a brochure called "Before You Give Up the Keys: Create a Roadmap for Transportation Independence" that may lessen those fears by empowering older adults to evaluate their mobility needs, identify the transportation options in their community and develop a plan customized to their unique circumstances.

"A too-familiar scenario is that older adults wait until they're involved in some sort of emergency, like a traffic accident, before they really think about their driving ability and the other transportation options available to them in their community," said n4a CEO Sandy Markwood. "Our goal is to shed light on a critical issue that will likely affect most families with an older loved one who may need to limit or eliminate their driving, and to provide a catalyst for discussion, and hopefully, action," Markwood also noted.

The n4a represents America's national network of 623 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs). It helps older adults and people with disabilities live with dignity and choices in their homes and communities for as long as possible.

To that end, it created the Eldercare Locator. This serves as an essential, trusted gateway to help older adults, caregivers and health professionals navigate the maze of aging programs and services, as well as to assist them in



Many older Americans fear giving up their car keys means giving up their independence—but this can be overcome.

identifying and accessing the resources that match their needs best. The National Call Center operates five days a week from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET and can be reached at 800-677-1116 or www.eldercare.gov.

According to recent research by the Federal Transit Administration, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, n4a and the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center, the rise in the 65-plus population—some 45 million and growing—has triggered a corresponding spike in the number of nondrivers of more than 1.1 million between 2001 and 2009.

"This is a major issue for older adults because when they lack access to transportation, they can't get to the doctor, the grocery store or see friends and family as much, which means their overall well-being is likely to suffer," added Kathy Greenlee, Assistant Secretary for Aging.

Free Brochure

To download the free brochure, go to www.n4a.org/files/ResourcesForOlderAdults.pdf. Reach the Eldercare Locator at www.eldercare.gov and (800) 677-1116.