

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
December 9, 2005

CONTACT: Rob Black  
301-652-6611 x2963  
cell: (202) 288-3702  
[praota@aota.org](mailto:praota@aota.org)

## **OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS DEMONSTRATE PROPER “FIT” OF AUTOMOBILE FOR TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY MINETTA**

### ***CarFit Program Highlights Safety for Senior Drivers at White House Conference on Aging***

(Washington, DC) — Occupational therapists attending the White House Conference on Aging demonstrated proper methods for ensuring the personal fit of an automobile to U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Norman Minetta today. The program is designed to help mature drivers find out how well they currently fit their car and what actions they might take to improve their fit.

“A proper fit in one’s car can greatly increase not only the driver’s safety but also the safety of others,” said M. Carolyn Baum, President of the American Occupational Therapy Association. “The White House Conference on Aging is an important place to emphasize programs like CarFit, which can enable seniors to continue doing meaningful and enjoyable activities.”

The CarFit program is a joint venture by AOTA, the American Society on Aging, AAA Auto Club, and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). CarFit reviews 12 key areas of the driver’s fit to the car. These criteria are important to road safety and include:

- Proper adjustment of rearview mirrors to minimize blind spots for drivers
- Correct foot positioning on the gas and brake pedals. If the driver is reaching with their toes to press on the pedals, it can cause fatigue in the leg and slow reaction times.
- Distance from the steering wheel. Sitting closer than 10 inches to the steering wheel can increase the driver's risk for serious injury.

“The great thing about CarFit is that many of these preventive measures are easy to take,” added Baum. “By increasing safety for senior drivers, we increase safety for everyone.”

**The American Occupational Therapy Association**, established in 1917, represents nearly 40,000 members. AOTA is an active advocate for the profession, and for individuals who can benefit from occupational therapy services.