

Public Pulse: E-scooters and common sense

Written by Liene Topko

On Sept. 15, the Omaha World-Herald published the editorial “Omaha leaders face big challenge in ensuring public safety for scooter use,” outlining the injuries and concerns surrounding e-scooters in Omaha.

As the city begins to evaluate this service, I wanted to share recent research that should be considered on how best to move forward.

A 2019 study evaluated 103 hospital patients with scooter-related injuries to determine alcohol and drug involvement.

Of those individuals who were tested for alcohol, 48% (39) had a blood-alcohol level above 0.08 (the legal limit), and 52% (32) tested positive for drugs.

People have the misperception that e-scooters are a safe way to travel when inebriated.

Based on Nebraska Medicine data, scooter riders can be a danger to themselves.

However, they can also endanger others by operating under the influence, which can lead to crashes with pedestrians or bicyclists, as well as erratic driving on our streets, which can cause vehicle traffic to swerve into oncoming traffic.

The best way to deter this type of behavior is to enforce our drunken driving laws.

If riders are required to be in the street, they should be required to follow the rules of the road, including not driving under the influence.

We're one of the worst binge drinking and DUI cities in the country, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

This is one common sense solution that will help better protect public safety.

Liene Topko, Omaha