§ 523-a. Driver improvement clinic programs. In addition to the driver rehabilitation program authorized by section eleven hundred ninety-six of this chapter, the commissioner may establish, by regulation, guidelines for alcohol and highway safety programs. The purpose of such programs should be to inform participants of the effects of alcohol on driving, to discuss problem drinking and its effects, to provide assistance to individuals with referral to alcoholism treatment agencies and to provide instruction with respect to proper driving techniques and driver attitude. The commissioner shall establish criteria for requiring attendance at such clinics, and may, pending attendance at such clinic, suspend the driver's license or privilege of any person who fails to attend such clinic as required by such regulations. Such criteria may provide for the required attendance at such clinic of any person who, as a result of the conviction for a moving traffic violation, is referred by the trial court for such attendance. The commissioner shall establish a fee to be paid by any person who attends any such program. Such fee shall be used to defray the ongoing expenses of the program. Where the commissioner has approved any driver improvement program conducted by local authorities, any such fee shall be paid to the agency conducting such program.