



Ohio Association of Adult Services



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Re: Transportation

The Ohio Association of Adult Services (OAAS) and the Privatized Support Group (PSG) appreciates the opportunity to provide commentary and feedback on the changes in which our membership will provide direct care services, specifically on the important and complex subject of transportation.

## TRANSPORTATION

### ISSUE 1:

- > The focus of the system redesign seems to be on cities where transportation resources and options are more available. Transportation is limited in many areas.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

- Acknowledgement of this situation by state decision makers.
- Perhaps something similar to the Cost of Doing Business modifiers could be applied, taking into account size of service area or statistical designation as rural vs. urban area (or any other consistent factors that impact accessibility to transportation services).

### ISSUE 2: RATES

- > Current standards for the nonmedical transportation “per trip” rate require a vehicle that is modified, or will transport at least nine passengers, which is too large for the new smaller group sizes, and is not mindful of our environmental footprint. There are many anecdotes regarding the lack of cost-effectiveness due to transporting one or two people in a large van, or modified van, and the distance of the trip.
- > The rates must cover all of the expenses associated with operating a fleet of vehicles – fuel, maintenance, insurance, safety equipment, and parking costs when not in use. Additional cost factors include wages for logistics planning, fleet coordination, and drivers.
- > The driver, in many areas, will be the same staff person who is delivering employment services or integrated day services, therefore, wages must be maintained across services.
- > It is not cost-efficient to provide transportation services only when utilizing job coaches and other employment staff, who are paid at a higher rate than drivers or facility-based staff; it is only cost-efficient when the individual is receiving active job-coaching on the same days that transportation is provided. There seems to be an assumption that we are transportation providers. We provide transportation because it is a necessary tool for the fulfillment of our mission. For example, one of our member agencies has provided transportation for newly-placed individuals, just to make sure they did not miss the employment opportunity, but after the job coach fades and the individual is fairly independent, it is still expected that they would transport. Most of our member agencies do not offer transportation as a stand-alone service, but many jobs would fail if transportation is not continued.
- > The rate must also include a sustainability factor for the reinvestment in new vehicles and other capital needs.
- > It is challenging for member agencies to establish data on costs and revenue. The range of costs has an 80 cent variance, depending on the vehicle; and not all trips are reimbursed.

**Recommendation(s):**

- The transportation rate should not be included in the day service rate – mileage, options and resources are too varied between communities, and will limit skill building and choice to use other sources of transportation if service is not contiguous. Another option would be to allow billing of both a transportation mileage rate and a staff rate during the same period of time as is currently possible with HPC billing.
- The rule must allow for multiple trips per day. A person could be transported to work, then to more than one wraparound service.
- The rule must allow for more than 240 days of billing annually; perhaps not for wraparound services but certainly to accommodate work schedules. Rules and rates should allow for vehicles that align with group size and need – offering maximum flexibility.
- Rate per person – pro: provider may want to maximize number of people in vehicle, good for environment; con: contrary to individualized, group philosophy.
- Multiple rates depending on the size of the vehicle, such as: five person vehicle (driver, passenger in front, three passengers in back); six and up vehicle; modified vehicle.
- Maintain current per trip option for Nonmedical Transportation up to 15 miles, or the number of miles on which that rate was built, with per mile rate thereafter.

**OTHER ISSUES & SUGGESTIONS:**

- > There is a need for the State of Ohio to develop and support a variety of transportation options in order to promote inclusion of people with disabilities in our communities.
- > It seems that the root of transportation issues is more of an entitlement issue. We cannot persuade capable, mobile families/caregivers to take responsibility for getting their family member with disabilities to/from any service site (job, volunteer, or even sheltered workshop) because they firmly believe it is the responsibility of the provider or county board. So while we agonize over how to afford adequate numbers of appropriate-size vehicles, secure adequate reimbursement, coordinate driving/maintenance/logistics, and all the other complicated details, it seems reasonable to expect that there will be some initiative on the part of the state to promote shared responsibility rather than entitlement (by those families/caregivers who are capable of it). There is an unrealistic, unsustainable dependence on providers or system-supported transportation services - family supports need to be an expectation, not merely a vague request.
- > A way to encourage a planning process that accommodates consideration for work location and residence to be in close proximity would be practical. Many times, most decisions on where to live give no thought whatsoever to where jobs can be found.

Again, the opportunity to provide input from an operational standpoint on the service provision of transportation is appreciated. Please feel free to call on our membership for expertise on the day-to-day reality, challenges, and solutions.

Best Regards,

**The Ohio Association of Adult Services Board of Directors and The Privatization Support Group**