COMMUNITY HEALTH CHOICES (CHC) TRANSPORTATION ROADMAP

CARIE Center for Advocacy for the Rights & Interests of the Elderly

A guide to transportation options and services with tips to help you get to where you need to go.

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Overview

As a Community HealthChoices (CHC) participant, you have different transportation options to help you get to where you need to go. Transportation options may vary depending on:

- If the trip is for a medical or other (non-medical) need.
- If you have a service coordinator and get long-term services and supports.
- If you need help to travel and cannot use public transportation.
- Where you live.

Your CHC plan can help you get transportation. If you live in a nursing home, your nursing home will arrange for the transportation you need.

For any transportation need that is not covered by CHC or Medicaid, there may be other options based on your age, disability, or local community programs.

This guide explains some transportation services with tips to help you get to where you need to go. If you have trouble getting transportation, do not give up! You may always contact CARIE with any questions or problems.
Types of Transportation

As a CHC consumer, there are different transportation options depending on where you need to go, where you live, and what services you get.

The two main types of transportation are “medical” and other (“non-medical”). Medical is for when you have a medical emergency or need to go to and from a doctor’s office or medical center. Other (non-medical) is for when you want to go somewhere for a reason other than for medical needs, such as to a grocery store, worship, or to an adult day program.

There are two types of medical transportation – emergency and non-emergency

Medical
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Emergency
If you are having a medical emergency like a heart attack, you get emergency medical transportation by an ambulance as part of CHC. Call 911 for an ambulance in an emergency.
Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT)
Coverage for NEMT includes travel for almost everything related to your health care other than emergencies. Examples are going to and from a doctor’s office, outpatient services, a dentist, or a dialysis clinic.

The Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP) is a NEMT service for all CHC consumers. It is the “payor of last resort” so you may use MATP if there is no other program you can use. MATP is provided in each county in the way it approves for the rider such as by fare reimbursement, mileage reimbursement, and paratransit. There may be limits like how far you can go.

Fare reimbursement is when the MATP provides tokens, passes, or refunds the fare costs for public or private transit services. Mileage reimbursement is when the MATP pays a set rate per mile plus parking and tolls when using a private vehicle. Paratransit is when the MATP provides rides in vans or taxis with other riders going different places. The rides may be “curb-to-curb” or “door-to-door” and must be reserved at least a day ahead of the trip.

If a county MATP approves a service level that is less than what you asked for or denies you a trip, they must give you a written notice. If you disagree, you should appeal it by following what the letter says to do. Call CARIE if you need help with an appeal or making a complaint.

There is no cost to you to use MATP, but you must register. Contact your county’s MATP or your CHC plan’s Participant Services to learn more.
Other Transportation (Non-Medical)
Your CHC plan or other services may also help you travel to places not related to your health. If you have a service coordinator and get long-term services and supports, your CHC plan will pay for these trips if included in your Person-Centered Service Plan. Be sure to let your service coordinator know where you want to go so these trips are included in your service plan.

If you do not get long-term services and supports, your CHC plan will probably not pay for non-medical transportation, although some plans may offer a very limited number of these trips as an added benefit. If you live in a nursing home, your nursing home will arrange for these local trips. Use this guide to see if you can get transportation through other programs or services.

CARIE can help you find transportation not covered by CHC.

Programs and Services
Here is an overview of some programs and services.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit requires public transit agencies that provide fixed-route service to provide "complementary paratransit" service to people with disabilities, including older adults who cannot use the fixed-route system. Once found eligible by the local transit agency, the rider may use the service for any
type of trip. But the transit agency may place limits, if
the rider can use the fixed route system for certain trips.
Check with the local transit agency about the cost to ride.

**Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP)** is free non-emergency medical transportation to
CHC and Medicaid participants when other options are not
available. MATP may be provided by fare reimbursement,
mileage reimbursement, or paratransit.

**Pennsylvania’s Free Transit Program** provides free
transit service on local public bus, trolley, or subway
routes (a reduced fare may be charged on commuter
rails) for those 65 years or older. Riders must show a
senior citizen transit identification (ID) card. Get the ID
card from your local public transit provider. Your state
legislator’s office may also be able to help you get an ID.

**Senior Shared-Ride Program** is a paratransit service
for adults 65 years or older. Older adults pay 15% of the
fare and share the ride with other passengers.
Consumers must apply for the program in advance.

**Transportation for the Elderly** is offered by local Area
Agencies on Aging (AAAs) who may refer to, provide or
fund other transportation services in your county.

**Transportation for Adults with Disabilities** include
different programs available for adults with physical
disabilities, like ADA Paratransit, Person with Disabilities
Program, and Person with Disabilities Half-Fare program.
Contact your local Center for Independent Living (CIL) to
learn more.
Rider Tips

Here are some tips to think about when planning a trip using a free or low-cost program or service.

Fill Out Forms
Most government or community-based programs want you to fill out an application or register before you can use the service. (This is true for MATP, Pennsylvania’s Shared-Ride Program, and ADA Paratransit.) Sometimes you must show proof of your age or have your doctor fill out a medical form. It may take several weeks to complete this paperwork and have it approved. Since you may need to use different programs, you must complete each program’s forms.

It is important to plan ahead to make sure you get to where you need to go.

Where to Call
It may be hard to know which transportation program or service to call when you need a ride. Call your CHC plan, or your service coordinator if you have one, for help finding and applying for the right program. Each CHC plan works with a transportation broker who will schedule your rides with the right program and your plan may help cover fares. CARIE can also help with questions or problems.
Reserve a Ride
Your CHC plan may help you reserve rides. When using a free or low-cost service, you need to schedule your ride at least 1 day in advance of your trip. Some programs may need more time. It is best to schedule once you know you need a ride as programs work on a first come, first served basis. Know the pick-up address and drop-off address before you call. **Be sure to schedule your return trip to get back home!** Let them know if you are using a wheelchair, oxygen, or have other special needs like riding with a service animal. **Write down the time you are told for pick-up** as it may differ from what you asked. Make sure you know **where you need to wait** for your ride.

Here are some questions you may need to ask to be sure your ride will work for you:

- How far ahead do I need to call to reserve a ride?
- How many minutes before and after my scheduled time can I expect my ride to come?
- Where should I wait for my ride?
- How do I cancel a ride and when do I need to call to avoid a penalty?
- Is the service “curb-to-curb”, “door-to-door” or “door-through-door”? (For example, if you need help with steps or for consumers with dementia, it is important to know how much help the driver can provide. You may need to plan to have an escort to ride with you to help.)
- Can I bring an escort, aid, or family member? How does this work?
- I am going shopping. Will the driver help carry my bags? How many bags may I have?
Some people need to go to and from the same place, on the same days and times each week, such as to adult day centers or dialysis. In these cases, you may be able to apply for a “standing order” for these trips instead of calling to schedule each trip. Call your CHC plan or the transportation service to ask if this is an option and, if so, how to reserve a standing order. Some of your providers may also be able to help schedule.

**What You Need to Ride**
Be sure to have:
- Any needed ID (identification) card.
- Your fare or fee if needed. If you must pay with cash, have exact change.
- An escort, if you need special help (and the fare, if you must also pay for them to ride.)
- Any equipment you may need, such as a wheelchair or oxygen.

**Travel Time**
Because trips generally include picking-up and dropping-off other riders, you most likely will not be taken directly to the place you want to go. Your trip time will usually be longer than if you went by car or taxi.

**When to Cancel a Ride**
It is important to call to cancel your ride once you know you no longer need the ride or cannot make your appointment. If you do not cancel, it may be counted against you as a “no-show” and too many “no-shows” may lead to your not being able to use the service.
What If My Ride Does Not Come?
If your ride is more than 20 minutes late, you should call the service provider to let them know and ask when to expect your ride. Be sure to travel with phone numbers. If you do not have a cell phone, ask someone to call for you.

Complaints
If you experience any problems with your ride or driver, you can file a complaint. As soon as you can, write down all the key information about your complaint like:

- The date, time and place/address of when and where the problem happened.
- A summary of what happened. (For example, if about a pick-up include the address, pick-up time given, and the vehicle arrival time or state never arrived.)
- Name(s) of the people involved.
- Name(s) of any people who may have seen what happened.

Complaints are often taken by phone, mail or by an online form. If you call to make a complaint, be sure to write down the date and time you are calling along with the name of the person you spoke with. You should get a written response to your complaint.

Please call CARIE if you have questions or need help to make a complaint.
Other Transportation Ideas

Homecare Agencies
Staff from homecare agencies may provide some CHC participants transportation to non-medical trips like for shopping or worship. Although agencies cannot bill your CHC plan for transportation services or mileage, they are able to bill for personal assistance services (PAS) for the time a worker spends driving and escorting you on these types of trips when included in your Person-Centered Service Plan. This is an important option in rural areas where other transportation options may be limited.

Medicare Advantage (Medicare “Part C”) Plans
Some Medicare Advantage plans offer non-emergency medical transportation benefits. If you have a Medicare Advantage plan, contact your plan to learn if they offer this benefit or contact the APPRISE program for help.

Medical Transportation by Stretcher
Your CHC plan covers non-emergency medical transportation if you need to travel by stretcher.

Exceptional Transportation
This type of non-emergency medical transportation may be provided in rare cases when long distance travel is needed to get to treatment not found in your area. Exceptional transportation includes air travel, lodging, and meals. Talk with your CHC plan to help you get this service.
Local Resources
Some communities have unique transportation options for older adults and persons with disabilities. To learn more, contact your local Area Agency on Aging, Center for Independent Living or CARIE.

Private Ride Share Services
If you have a smartphone, you can download ride sharing apps like Uber and Lyft. The apps let you select a pick-up and drop-off place. Prices will vary and can be costly. There are limited areas where wheelchair accessible vans may be available through these services but may not be reliable. GoGoGrandparent is a service that uses Uber and Lyft for those without a smartphone. (See www.gogograndparent.com)
Contact Information

Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP)
MATP is provided in the county where you live. See http://matp.pa.gov to learn more. Your local MATP contact can be found here: http://matp.pa.gov/CountyContact.aspx. You can also contact your CHC plan for more information.

Area Agency on Aging (AAA)/APPRISE
Local Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) help older adults and their caregivers identify and get connected to needed programs and services, including the APPRISE health insurance counseling program. Local AAAs can be found here: www.p4a.org/aaas or call the Pennsylvania Link to Aging and Disability Resources at 1-800-753-8827.

Local Transit Agency for Senior Free Transit Program and Senior Shared Ride Program
Your local transit agency and providers can be found here: https://gis.penndot.gov/transitmap.

Center for Independent Living (CIL)
Centers for Independent Living (CILs) are consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, nonprofit agencies found in local communities. CILs provide advocacy and an array of services for people with disabilities. Local CILs can be found here: http://thepcil.org/directory-of-cils or call the Pennsylvania Link to Aging and Disability Resources at 1-800-753-8827.
CHC Health Plans

Keystone First CHC/
AmeriHealth Caritas CHC

Keystone First CHC
Participant Services: 1-855-332-0729
(TTY: 1-855-235-4976)
www.keystonefirstchc.com

AmeriHealth Caritas CHC
Participant Services: 1-855-235-5115
(TTY: 1-855-235-5112)
www.amerihealthcaritaschc.com

PA Health & Wellness
Participant Services: 1-844-626-6813
(TTY/TDD: 1-844-349-8916)
www.pahealthwellness.com/
members/ltss.html

UPMC CHC
Participant Services: 1-844-833-0523
(TTY: 711)
www.upmchealthplan.com/chc
The Center for Advocacy for the Rights and Interests of the Elderly (CARIE) is an independent non-profit agency serving older adults since 1977. Please call us for help with any Community HealthChoices, transportation, or other issue.

To get help or information, contact: 215-545-5728 or 1-800-356-3606
www.carie.org and www.caregivergps.org

CHC resources are on CARIE’s website at www.carie.org/chc. Be sure to sign-up to get CARIE’s Advocates Alliance/Grapevine e-newsletter!

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