

Commission on Aging
Information for Legislators & Candidates
TRANSPORTATION

This is the number one need as identified by elders in Nevada in the rural communities and the urban areas. The Legislature can evaluate NDOT funding and regulations for local and intercity transportation in the rural communities. A Medicaid non-medical transportation can be included in the Medicaid State Plan.

Need – Transportation is the means by which people access the goods, services and social interactions necessary for an acceptable quality of life. It is a critical component of the ability of people to maintain independence as they age in their communities. Many seniors do not own a car or aren't capable of driving. They have to rely on friends, family or public transportation in order to buy groceries and medications, attend to non-medical necessities, or participate in social functions. A lack of transportation can lead to depression, isolation, loneliness, and self-neglect. Their health will suffer. The cost of public transportation, lengthy route stops or inaccessible bus stops are barriers to using existing transportation systems.

Potential Model – A waiver for non-medical transportation can be included in the State Medicaid Plan. This would allow for reimbursement of costs related to a participant's access to the community. It can be used to obtain services, use necessary community resources, and to participate in community life. Additionally, NDOT could expand their existing program of providing vehicles to rural areas for transportation. Programs can be developed and supported by the State to create additional transportation coalitions within the urban areas and between the rural communities.

Benefits – Elders who are able to get out of their homes have a much higher level of independence, better health, and as a result use much less public money to provide health care and housing. The state and counties spend significant resources to develop programs and events to help seniors stay active and healthier. However, these are not always available to people that cannot take advantage of the opportunities because they are isolated in their residences.

Implementation – Nevada's Medicaid State Plan can be amended to include a non-medical transportation waiver, as other states have done. A program has been started by the Aging and Disability Services Division to improve transportation coalitions throughout the state. This effort is hampered by a lack of resources, which could be eradicated with a modest amount of funding from the state. Finally, NDOT can work with the coalitions to use some of their existing funding to further the goal of better coordination among transportation providers.