



Community Transportation Association of America Commitment Statement

NAM Opioid Action Collaborative – April 2019

Community Transportation Association of America Statement on Countering the Opioid Epidemic

The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), a national, nonprofit membership association with a well-founded reputation as both innovator and resource in the non-emergency, rural and small-urban public transportation space, recognizes the importance that transportation plays as an ancillary, yet critical, support for countering the opioid epidemic. We believe that any opioid treatment and recovery program cannot be effective without incorporating community transportation into the solution, because no matter how great the service, its quality is irrelevant without the means to reach it.

While a nation-wide public health crisis, the hardest-hit populations in the opioid epidemic largely reside in rural and small-urban areas. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, rural Americans are more vulnerable to prescription painkiller abuse and overdoses. The effects of the opioid crisis are more intense in these communities because employment opportunities are scarce, isolation is pervasive, and access to treatment, recovery and other supportive services is limited. In recent years, opioid mortality rates in rural areas have continued to increase, surpassing rates in urban areas as of 2015.

Individuals in rural communities face longer travel distances to reach treatment centers, health care services, and other recovery and treatment programs that may be critical pieces of their recovery. Furthermore, these groups tend to be low-income, lack access to personal vehicles, and may not have a valid driver's license even if a private vehicle was made available. As a result, without community-based public transit and other entities providing rides, they will not be able to reach essential health care and social services. The nation's more than 1,400 rural and 300 small-urban public transit agencies can assist, evidenced by a 7.8 percent increase in rural transit ridership in the past decade.

The areas that CTAA members serve represent a significant portion of the most heavily affected populations, where transit managers and drivers have first-hand experience with many of the patients traveling across isolated areas to seek treatment, recovery, assistance, and support.

Transportation is a significant contributor to success or failure in patient outcomes – a key social determinant of health – and such factors are especially relevant where substance use disorder and opioid misuse has become a public health crisis. CTAA has the network, experience, and skills to support those who work in addressing the opioid crisis. As an organization, CTAA is fully invested in contributing to positive outcomes wherever possible for communities around the country, and the organization is looking forward to assisting in any efforts to overcome this public health crisis.