

Protect the Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Benefit

State Medicaid programs are required to provide necessary transportation for beneficiaries to and from providers through the non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) benefit, which facilitates access to care, and positively impacts an individual's health care outcomes.

- Medicaid non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) is an essential component of our nation's health care delivery system, especially in rural areas.
- Over half of Medicaid transportation services are utilized by patients with the highest burden of chronic diseases, including those diagnosed with Cancer, HIV, Mental illness, substance abuse, and end-stage renal disease.
- Without the transportation benefit, these individuals could not access chemotherapy, dialysis, and other services that allow them to remain home and out of the hospital.
- Currently, NEMT is utilized by approximately 10 percent of Medicaid enrollees and accounts for 1% of total Medicaid spending.
- The NEMT benefit is reserved for beneficiaries who have no other means of transportation to and from their medical appointments.

Despite the positive outcomes from providing transportation, there have been gathering threats against the benefit that could potentially eliminate an important benefit for millions of Medicaid beneficiaries, impacting access to care, and damaging health care outcomes.

- **2017:** HHS and CMS Joint Letter to the Nation's Governors, called out waivers of the non-emergency medical transportation benefit as a potential reform for states to consider when looking at Medicaid's design and benefit structure.
- **2018 – 2020:** Each of the past three President's budgets, have called for the NEMT benefit to be made optional
- **2018 – Present:** the HHS and CMS Unified Agenda has repeatedly included a proposal to re-examine current regulations under which states are required to assure NEMT for all Medicaid beneficiaries.
- **2020:** Expected release of an HHS/CMS Request for Information for public input on whether the Assurance of Transportation in the Medicaid program remains administratively necessary given the delivery of healthcare both in terms of technological advances and the commercial market design.

Given the important role that Medicaid NEMT plays in supporting the health of at-risk Medicaid enrollees, we are asking congress to pass companion bills H.R. 3935 and S. 2846 which seek to write the longstanding Medicaid NEMT into statute.

Protecting Patients Transportation to Care Act - Amends Title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide for the continuing requirement of Medicaid coverage of nonemergency transportation to medically necessary items and services, and for other purposes.

- **H.R. 3935** - Bi-Partisan language introduced by Representatives Buddy Carter (R-GA), Tony Cardenas (D-CA), Tom Graves (R-GA) and Sanford Bishop (D-GA)
- **S. 2846** - Bi-Partisan language introduced by Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Johnny Isakson (R-GA)

CTAA is currently tracking developments around NEMT is working with a number of key stakeholders in this arena to lead an advocacy and policy strategy to protect the NEMT benefit. Contact CTAA Health Care and Transportation Associate, Alex King at king@ctaa.org or 202-340-5284 for more information.