



**Aurora Health Access  
Pediatric Access Work Group**

**ISSUE PAPER**

*July 2015*

**Issue: Non-Emergent Medical Transportation as a Barrier to Care**

**Subjective**

Many Medicaid patients are unable to travel to medical appointments due to lack of transportation and/or limited transportation options that are time-consuming, complicated or unreliable. The Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing has contracted with Total Transit to provide non-emergent medical transportation (NEMT) to patients, however challenges remain that often result in lack of access to care and may lead to over-utilization of emergency departments (EDs) in lieu of medical homes. Some key issue areas include:

- ***Car seats***
  - Families with children must provide their own car seat when travelling in privately contracted vehicles, posing a financial barrier to the lowest-income families
  - For parents, the burden of lugging a car seat into the clinic during appointment may discourage them from accepting assistance (including food bags or diapers) during clinic visit
  
- ***Scheduling***
  - Urgent rides (less than 48 hours' notice) are not guaranteed and require provider input, posing a logistical barrier to scheduling and potentially encouraging ED use for acute primary care problems
  - Same-day well-child checks (WCCs) do not qualify for Medicaid transportation
  - Unreliable rides arrive late to pick up patients resulting in patients missing scheduled appointments or waiting for hours at the clinic
  
- ***Narrow definition of medical appointments***
  - Appointments focused on social determinants of health (housing, food, etc.) do not qualify for NEMT, thereby neglecting to address the underlying causes of financial insecurity

[Type here]

**INCREASE ACCESS!**

**EXPAND COVERAGE!**

**BUILD COLLABORATION!**

## Objective

The Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing and Total Transit are not currently collecting or publicizing data regarding transportation demand and use at this time.

- According to the Colorado Health Institute, 24.9% of Adams County residents
- Increased data are required to accurately assess the need for and use of NEMT services in Aurora, and to measure the impact of changes to the NEMT program

## Assessment

Health insurance coverage and access to care are both important components of ensuring good health on an individual and population level. While Aurora has seen progress in the number of eligible people enrolled in Medicaid, barriers to care still exist. Health care providers in Aurora have shared that lack of access to reliable transportation to urgent and non-urgent medical appointments is often responsible for many missed appointments, leading to delays in health care, increased ED use, and places an administrative burden on clinics serving Medicaid patients. Assessment of Medicaid's NEMT program, including enhanced data collection and review of services, is essential to improved patient outcomes, patient satisfaction, and reduced ED use.

## Plan

The Aurora Health Access Pediatric Access Work Group is discussing the impact of Medicaid's NEMT program on the health of children and families in Aurora and surrounding communities. This Work Group has agreed that accessible and reliable transportation is a critical component of access to care, and members seek to engage any stakeholders who have experience or expertise pertaining to non-emergent medical transportation. The Work Group has established connections at the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing and is collaborating with key stakeholders in the region to craft a plan for future action. At this point, Total Transit staff members have been receptive to recommendations to address challenges and continued partnerships among stakeholders will be vital in resolving issues faced by community providers and patients.

For further information regarding this issue, please contact:

Amara Frumkin, Care Navigator, Rocky Mountain Youth Clinics  
[afrumkin@rmyclinics.org](mailto:afrumkin@rmyclinics.org)

**AHA's Pediatric Access Work Group** engages groups and organizations in discussing, better understanding, and collaboratively addressing access to care issues for Aurora's children and families. Key partners include Children's Hospital Colorado, Colorado Children's Healthcare Access Program, Colorado School of Public Health, Metro Community Provider Network, Rocky Mountain Youth Clinics, Tri-County Health Department and others. To learn more, or to get involved, visit the AHA website at [www.aurorahealthaccess.org](http://www.aurorahealthaccess.org).

[Type here]

**INCREASE ACCESS!**

**EXPAND COVERAGE!**

**BUILD COLLABORATION!**