



Healthful Services – Transportation Action Meeting

Tuesday, October 22, 2013

3pm – 4:30pm

Ellsworth City Hall Council Chambers – First Floor

Present in Ellsworth: Valeri Webb (Special Children’s Friends), Dyan Walsh (EAAA), Melissa Smith (EAAA), Caroline Zimmerman (MPCA), Mike Cloutier (CTS), Valerie Miller (CTS), Brian Sullivan (MaineCare), Julie Barnes (West’s Transportation Agency), Jolyne Barnes (West’s Transportation Agency), Angela Fochesato (WC:OC), Stacie Roberson (WHCA), Claire Bingham (At Your Service Taxi), Jeff Broad (At Your Service Taxi), Cyndi O’Brien (Coastal Care Team), Jim Fisher (HCPC), Michael Reisman (Beth C. Wright Cancer Center), Gretchen Wilson (Ellsworth Chamber of Commerce), Nina Zeldin (Healthy Acadia), Elsie Flemings (Healthy Acadia), Sandie Dubay, (Healthy Acadia). **Present via phone:** Karen Wilcock (epidemiologist), Linda Belfiore (WHCA), and James Bradney (Bucksport Bay Healthy Communities Coalition).

Introductions & Updates

Dyan thanked the group for agreeing to give feedback on transportation issues in Hancock and Washington Counties.

Melisa’s work at EAAA is focused on delivering information and referral services.

Karen Zimmerman introduced herself to the group as a MPCA representative serving the Bucksport area.

Mike Cloutier and Valerie Miller thanked the group for inviting CTS to the meeting.

Cindy O’Brien reported that the Coastal Care Team’s patients are directly impacted by the new brokerage system.

Julie and Jolyne Barnes shared that West’s Transportation is focused on helping people with transportation needs by providing various bus services in Washington and Hancock Counties.

Sandie explained that the CTG grant is providing funding for several initiatives to increase access to health care services.

Claire and Jeff shared that At Your Service Taxi fills in holes in the transportation system for people who have MaineCare.

Update from CTS Representative (Broker for MaineCare Transportation)

Valerie Miller presented a slide show, summarizing the progress CTS has made in reducing the average speed of calls being answered and the number of abandoned calls since they started providing transportation services in August. CTS is currently providing rides for 7,000 people in

Maine each week. Valerie will e-mail the power point document of her presentation to the Transportation Action Team.

When asked if CTS was concerned about people giving up trying to get through to the call center, Valerie expressed the hope that service and transportation providers will help get them back into the system.

Valerie was asked how many calls are coming in to the call center, and whether or not the people who have given up trying to get through has positively impacted CTS's average speed of answering calls.

CTS representatives explained that the speed in which calls are answered has improved. This is in part due the fact that when CTS first opened in August, the typical conversation for a first time caller lasted 15 – 20 minutes. The number of first time callers has decreased and CTS workers have gained more experience and training related to incoming calls. Abandoned calls are currently at 4%, and CTS is trying to lower that percentage.

The statistics reported in the presentation represent the entire Region 2. CTS agreed to provide the group with information specific to Hancock and Washington Counties.

It was pointed out that call center employees are not familiar with the Hancock and Washington Counties. A suggestion was made to provide them with education about the area, and that perhaps providing a map of the counties would help them plan better. One of Cyndi's clients, who lives in the town of Penobscot, was told by a CTS employee to call the Penquis broker, not realizing that Penobscot was in Hancock, not Penobscot County.

Valeri, from Special Children's Friends, expressed concern that the slides presented did not capture the missed trips her clients have experienced.

Valeri asked for CTS's rationale behind requiring parents of children with special needs to sign a waiver that would enable the child to be transported without an aid or parent, and why CTS was unwilling to transport an aid or a parent with the child. She explained that her clients have autism as well as severe developmental delays that would make it unsafe to be transported without an attending adult, and that the parents she works with have refused to sign the waiver.

CTS representatives responded that it is up to parents to decide, and asked what was the alternative? Valeri explained there are two alternatives: the child does not receive services, or the parents don't go to work in order to take their children to medical appointments.

Brian pointed out that MaineCare does not have a mandate to provide transportation for aids or parents.

Valeri shared that DHHS has told her that an adult needs to be present in order for a child to receive services, and that Child Protection Services (CPS) has said the practice of transporting these children without an adult is child endangerment. Special Children's Friends (SCF) teachers are more than willing to ride with their clients.

Brian said he would reach out to CPS, and encouraged Valeri to work with Valerie and Mike to see if they could help coordinate how to transport aids.

Valeri added that MaineCare would not pay for unloaded miles, leaving it to SCF to transport the teachers to the child's home and back. Brian reported that MainCare doesn't pay for CTS for miles, but rather a dollar amount based on the number of client's CTS will potentially serve. Brian, Valerie and Mike felt that by working together with Valeri and SCF, a solution could be found. They will follow up.

Non-Emergency Transportation Advisory Session – *Provide input to EAAA about Transportation Services in Washington & Hancock Counties; both MaineCare & non-MaineCare*

Dyan asked the group to consider three questions and provide feedback to EAAA:

- Have you identified any duplication of efforts for transportation coordination in Washington and Hancock Counties?
- What do you feel are the largest gaps in coverage for transportation in Washington and Hancock counties including the referral process or transportation provider?
- What constructive feedback would you like to provide to CTS (MaineCare transportation broker) about the transportation referral and delivery system thus far?

Linda (WHCA) reported that she attended a CTS and MaineCare meeting last week where the problem of CTS sending two different businesses to pick up the same client was discussed. Linda gave the specific information about incidents to the CTS representative in order for CTS to better understand the issue. Claire (At Your Service Taxi) shared that this has happened to her business as well, as recently as two weeks ago, when her taxi drove from Bar Harbor to Stonington to pick up a client, but someone was already there. As it turned out, the CTS person who scheduled the ride did not understand that WHCA provided services on Saturdays. Claire (or any other transportation provider) cannot get paid when they reach the client second, but she had to pay her driver for the trip there and back.

CTS representatives explained that the brokerage system is new, and that when case managers and MaineCare members call for same trip, it can be confusing. Mike asked the group to send him information on any duplication they are aware of now, or in the future.

Michael suggested that when the duplication is the error of CTS, wouldn't it make sense for CTS to pay both providers – since they are following CTS's instructions in making the trip? Brian shared that CTS gets paid a fee for every member in the region, not on the miles driven, and that does give CTS some wiggle room.

Claire shared that she factors in a 25% no show rate. It is calculated risk, based on experience.

Valerie expressed the desire to eliminate the duplication of services. She encouraged information be shared as quickly as possible if duplications occur in the future. CTS need to determine whether it is on their end, or with the provider. If a provider has not accepted a call from CTS

within a certain time frame, CTS will find another provider. This may contribute to duplication of services.

Stacie shared that WHCA accepts the calls from CTS, yet duplicates still show up. She also inquired whether CTS had any contract with DHHS to provide transportation for child reunification trips to the United Way, explaining she was asking because CTS is telling WHCA to provide the rides, but those visits are not MaineCare reimbursable.

CTS representatives were unfamiliar with the situation regarding child reunification trips. They will explore this subject further, and get back to Stacie.

Stacie explained that WHCA has a program for people experiencing low income, but who do not qualify for MaineCare. Linda shared that Washington County residents are able to access similar programs, where riders are charged a small fee.

Michael asked if WHCA transportation services are available to private pay people. Linda shared that Washington County does have a program that can accommodate them.

Valeri inquired what might be done to accommodate families who own a car and in which both parents work. She has clients who have been denied transportation services by CTS, with the explanation that owning a car disqualifies them from services, as they are able to transport their child. Brian said he would work with CTS to fix that. He believes using the car to get to work would be considered not being available to drive their child to services, and would therefore allow CTS to broker transportation.

Michael invited the CTS representatives to come to the Transportation Summit, as it would a good opportunity learn about what is going on in the two Counties and find out what the strengths and needs are.

Elsie invited CTS, and the other transportation services present, to bring information about their organizations to the Summit. There will be tables available to set up displays at no charge. West Transportation has already signed up.

Jim suggested CTS provide a greater number of metrics regarding CTS's activities. He suggested tracking passenger trip miles, to get a measure to see if CTS is increasing the number of people being served. Information on a monthly basis would be very helpful.

Claire expressed her concern that when CTS began brokering services, At Your Service Taxi suddenly lost the 25 Bar Harbor area clients they were used to servicing, yet requests to provide services off Island increased. Claire explained that when she signed a contract with CTS she agreed to take on a certain geographical region, but needed to maintain her core customers to offset the risk of "no shows".

Brian explained that originally MaineCare had issues with taxis because they didn't know some taxi companies, such as Claire's, had credentials such as doing background checks on their drivers. Claire will send her list of prior MDI area clients to Valerie. Valerie and Claire will connect to correct the situation.

Transportation Summit Planning

Review of planning process thus far:

Elsie reported that speakers are confirmed, and that close to 60 people have registered for the Summit so far. The Summit has been in newspapers in both Washington and Hancock Counties. The group was encouraged to continue doing outreach to perspective attendees.

When the summit approaches, Healthy Acadia will email the Summit agenda to those who have registered. Sandie and Elsie will be following up with speakers, encouraging them to have materials prepared for participant packages.

Michael was able to secure a sound system person to make sure the sound system works well throughout the day. He was also able to arrange to have Machias High School students video tape the conference.

Speakers will have 30-40 minutes to present (~10 minutes each), followed by a half hour or more for group discussion and questions.

Last week a few of the Team met with Ron Beard, who will facilitate the panel and final discussion portions of the Summit. Ron suggested dividing participants into a few groups during the discussion period to talk about formulating next steps. The groups will meet for 20 minutes, and then reconvene as one group and put all ideas together.

Healthy Acadia will prepare a sign in sheet for participants, a Summit evaluation form, as well as a sign up sheet for those interested in helping with specific activities to strengthen transportation options in Washington and Hancock Counties.

The group was asked to contact Elsie or Sandie if they could volunteer to help out with the following Summit activities:

- Helping Sandie set up tables and chairs in Machias mid-day on November 5th.
- Helping people set up display exhibits at 8:30 am on November 6th.
- “Staffing” the registration table from 8:50 am to 9:30 am (just prior to and through the networking/exhibit period of the Summit). Having two people at the registration table would be most desirable.
- Helping coordinate food during lunch.
- Helping to break down tables at the end of the day (starting at 3:30 pm)
- Timekeepers during each panel

James inquired if there were specific talking points for the volunteer driver panel. The CARE organization plans to briefly describe its history, what it does, and note some strengths and challenges. He observed that Bucksport is an insular community. While people will reach out to immediate family, or some one they know for help, they find it hard to accept a ride from someone they don't know.

The group agreed that discussing successes, challenges, needs, and opportunities, with an emphasis on opportunities for action, were good parameters for speakers, and noted that reluctance to ask for help from a stranger was common throughout Hancock and Washington Counties.

Jim suggested putting the emphasis on what we can do better, as this will move us forward.

Continuing to get the word out:

Michael has asked the University of Maine at Machias to reach out to students and teachers. He has also contacted churches, the Downeast Community Hospital, and the Machias Chamber of Commerce. He has learned that the Sullivan school is in need of a "late" bus, and will probably be sending someone to the Summit.

Gretchen said the Ellsworth Chamber would announce the Summit in an email to its members. She expressed the hope that employers would attend the Summit, noting that campground businesses were curtailed this year by a reduction in services from Downeast Transportation.

Michael observed that improved transportation would help businesses, and wondered if Live Lobster had been invited to the Summit.

Linda shared that WHCA been working with Live Lobster to identify their transportation needs. She anticipates grant funding will provide WHCA with the means to purchase an eight-passenger bus to bring workers to and from Live Lobster. Linda will personally invite Live Lobster to the Summit.

It was noted that Barbara Barnett from Downeast Hospice should be invited to the Summit.

Next Steps

Linda will send the group a link to a Portland Press article that reported discrepancies in CTS logs. She also noted that Hancock and Washington Counties were the only regions in the state that have not agreed to sign waivers that would allow MaineCare clients who are children to receive transportation services without an aid or adult present.

Next Meeting

Due to the Thanksgiving Holiday, the group decided not to meet on November 26th. Healthy Acadia will poll team members electronically to set the date for the next team meeting.