



## Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation A Critical Benefit at Risk

### What is NEMT?

Non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) is a required Medicaid benefit that provides transportation to and from health care appointments that are for non-medical emergencies. Currently, NEMT serves over 7 million Medicaid enrollees across the U.S.<sup>i</sup> Many of these enrollees use NEMT to access services such as substance use disorder/behavioral health care, preventive care, specialist visits, physical therapy/rehabilitation, dialysis and adult day health care.<sup>ii</sup> Additionally, NEMT is particularly important to older adults, individuals residing in rural areas and individuals who have recently sustained injuries or are recovering from surgery.

### Why is NEMT Important?

Every year, almost 4 million adults miss medical appointments due to transportation issues<sup>iii</sup>, demonstrating the importance of this benefit to the health of low-income people. In a recent survey of NEMT recipients, 58% reported that they would not be able to make any medical appointments without NEMT.<sup>iv</sup> Medicaid NEMT is also cost-effective. Helping individuals get to their routine medical appointments helps them receive preventive care and adhere to treatment regimens that in turn avoid medical emergencies and hospitalizations. More specifically, Medicaid spends less than 1% of its total budget on NEMT,<sup>v</sup> but yields a significant return on investment. Recent data has shown that NEMT has resulted in a specific return on investment for both wound care for diabetics and dialysis.<sup>vi</sup> Additionally, one Florida study estimated that 1% of all medical transportation trips prevent a one-day stay in a hospital, resulting in a return on investment of 11:1.<sup>vii</sup>

### What is the Threat to NEMT?

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has signaled that they will propose a regulation in May<sup>viii</sup> to make the benefit optional for states. States could then amend their State Plan Amendments and implementing regulations to eliminate the benefit if they saw fit. Since transportation is a critical component to accessing health care, changing the benefit from mandatory to optional would likely have negative – and expensive – consequences for the health of Medicaid enrollees, including individuals with disabilities, older adults, pregnant women, individuals with complex health needs and individuals undergoing treatment for substance use disorders.

### What Can I Do?

- Talk to your members of Congress about the importance of the NEMT benefit
- Talk to your state Medicaid office about the importance of NEMT and the current threat to the benefit
- Collect stories from consumers who depend on NEMT or who have transportation challenges

- Build relationships with providers in your state who provide services to Medicaid enrollees. Examples include Children’s Hospitals, Community Health Centers and Dialysis Clinics

## Where Can I Find Out More Information about NEMT?

- Contact Andi Mullin at [amullin@communitycatalyst.org](mailto:amullin@communitycatalyst.org) or Madison Tallant at [mtallant@communitycatalyst.org](mailto:mtallant@communitycatalyst.org)
- Take a look at [the Center’s NEMT web page](#)<sup>ix</sup>
- Take a look at [our NEMT Brief](#)<sup>x</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Letter from the Congressional Black Caucus to Chairwoman Rosa L. DeLauro and Ranking Member Tom Cole of the House Committee on Appropriations, February 15, 2019.

<sup>ii</sup> MaryBeth Musumeci, Robin Rudowitz, *Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation: Overview of Key Issues in Medicaid Expansion Waivers*, Kaiser Family Foundation, February 2016, <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/medicaid-non-emergency-medical-transportation-overview-and-key-issues-in-medicaid-expansion-waivers/view/footnotes/#footnote-177328-15>

<sup>iii</sup> Amelia Myers, *Non-Emergency Medical Transportation: A Vital Lifeline for a Healthy Community*, National Conference of State Legislatures, January 2015, <http://www.ncsl.org/research/transportation/non-emergency-medical-transportation-a-vital-lifeline-for-a-healthy-community.aspx>

<sup>iv</sup> Medical Transportation Access Coalition, *The Value of Medicaid’s Transportation Benefit – Results of a Return on Investment Study*, <https://mtacoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/NEMT-ROI-Study-Results-One-Pager.pdf> and <https://mtacoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/NEMT-ROI-Methodology-Paper.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> Transit Cooperative Research Program, *Impact of the Affordable Care Act on Non-Emergency Medical Transportation: Assessment for Transit Agencies*, October 2014, [http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp\\_rrd\\_109.pdf](http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rrd_109.pdf)

<sup>vi</sup> Medical Transportation Access Coalition, *The Value of Medicaid’s Transportation Benefit – Results of a Return on Investment Study*, <https://mtacoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/NEMT-ROI-Study-Results-One-Pager.pdf>

<sup>vii</sup> The Stephen Group, *Volume II: Recommendations to the Arkansas Health Reform Task Force Re: Health Care Reform/Medicaid Consulting Services*, October 2015, <https://www.stephengroupinc.com/images/engagements/Final-Report-Volume-II.pdf>

<sup>viii</sup> Office of Management and Budget, *Non-Emergency Medical Transportation in Medicaid - CMS-2481-P*, <https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/eAgendaViewRule?pubId=201810&RIN=0938-AT81>

<sup>ix</sup> Community Catalyst’s Center for Consumer Engagement in Health Innovation, *Non-Emergency Medical Transportation: NEMT at the Crossroads*, <https://www.healthinnovation.org/work/building-advocacy-capacity/non-emergency-medical-transportation>

<sup>x</sup> Community Catalyst, Justice in Aging, *Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation: An Overlooked Lifeline for Older Adults*, October 2016, [https://www.communitycatalyst.org/resources/publications/document/Medicaid-Non-Emergency-Medical-Transportation\\_An-Overlooked-Lifeline-for....pdf?1478106742](https://www.communitycatalyst.org/resources/publications/document/Medicaid-Non-Emergency-Medical-Transportation_An-Overlooked-Lifeline-for....pdf?1478106742)