

## Connecticut Department of Social Services

Update about Non-Emergency Medical Transportation in the HUSKY Health/Medicaid program  
Medical Assistance Program Oversight Council meeting

April 12, 2019

- Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) is a vital HUSKY Health service that is a key means of enabling effective access to our extensive array of covered health services.
- DSS pays for, and current contractor Veyo brokers, nearly 400,000 trips for Medicaid members each month.
- Recognizing the importance of NEMT, Connecticut HUSKY Health covers a broad array of transportation options, from mileage reimbursement to specialized ambulance transport.
- And - we believe it's worth taking a moment to note – Connecticut has historically been, and remains, in strong support for this service.
- Some states are moving away from NEMT as a covered benefit under Medicaid - an option offered by the Trump administration under its administrative authority over 1115 research and demonstration waivers.
- Significantly, Connecticut continues to affirm its support for coverage of NEMT. We're proud of that, and we thank you for your advocacy, leadership and support for the scope of covered services in HUSKY Health.
- Given the current approach of the federal government, however, existence of NEMT should not be taken for granted.
- I think that it is well known to everyone that NEMT is an inherently challenging service to provide. This is the case for Connecticut and all other states. NEMT is a frequent topic of conversation for my peer Medicaid directors, and no one feels as if there is a standard set of best practices to which to point in this area.
- This is a service that provides millions of rides to our members. There is no magic wand here in Connecticut - or in any state - that can make it a perfect program. But we are extremely serious about high-quality program design, contractor performance, local transportation provider performance, contractual oversight, customer service, and collaboration with legislative oversight and advocacy partners.
- This has been why we have striven to reinforce that constructive, problem-solving approach is most valuable for both HUSKY Health members and the Department.
- This body, and the larger community of HUSKY Health members, health providers, transportation providers and advocates, have for the past several years made recurring

observations about the capacity, quality, and consistency of Non-Emergency Medical Transportation services.

- The Department has also made its own observations about the operation of NEMT, and has information from many other sources – notably, member focus groups, complaints and grievances, and utilization data.
- Collective concern about NEMT crystallized over time, over the course of several predecessor models, including regional brokers and a statewide ASO approach.
- The Department responded to these observations by widely circulating a Request for Information on March 24, 2016. The intent with the RFI was to, “broaden [our] perspective regarding potential strategies and solutions to enhance efficiencies and management of non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) services.”
- Also in spring 2016, the legislature enacted Special Act 16-8, which required the Department, by September 1, 2016, to initiate planning for implementation of a new service delivery model for NEMT, and by November 1, 2016, to issue an RFP for the same.
- The Department fulfilled these requirements, and through procurement, Veyo was selected as the statewide broker for the program.
- Acknowledging that the January 1, 2018, mid-winter, transition from LogistiCare to Veyo was extremely challenging – due to weather, poor data quality, and need to redetermine members’ particular modes of transportation – since inception, the Department has been right here, working with Veyo.
- Veyo’s first 15+ months as statewide Medicaid rides contractor follows four years by an Atlanta-based statewide contractor—and, before that, several years of regional contractors providing transportation coordination. Each system has had its challenges, but we have continued to provide millions of rides per year in our Medicaid program.
- What has occurred since transition?
  1. We have seen Veyo build its engagement with HUSKY Health members:
    - a. We have seen Veyo produce an effective and straightforward member guide, and Connecticut specific web pages. This is markedly better than what was provided in the past to educate members on the benefit.
    - b. We have seen Veyo fully meet call center timeliness requirements, even in times of high volume and weather.
  2. We had a difficult start, and had to really pay attention to a number of areas of particular concern (dialysis rides), but we have seen quality and completion of rides improve:

- a. We have seen transportation provider capacity significantly increased, as compared to experience under the previous broker.
  - b. We have seen documented improvements in timeliness and rate of completion of trips.
  - c. We have agreed on a protocol for hospital discharges with the CHA and ambulance providers.
  - d. We have carefully monitored and have seen high satisfaction with and timeliness for rides that have been provided by Independent Driver Professionals. Note that less than 1% of total rides are provided by IDPs.
3. We have used a range of tools to monitor and oversee the contract with Veyo:
- a. We have real time access to Veyo's information platform.
  - b. We regularly have Department staff on site in Veyo's Connecticut operations center.
  - c. We have required plans of corrective action and detailed quarterly meetings. As a result, Veyo has used training, plans of corrective action, reduction of trip referrals, development of new transportation providers and termination of transportation providers to support quality improvement.
  - d. The Department has received, investigated and responded to each and every complaint about NEMT that has been raised, from members, advocates and legislators. In every circumstance that was confirmed, we intervened to ensure that a remedy was offered. Often, however, we learned that complaints did not accurately reflect actual experience.
  - e. We have also used money sanctions. We have done so judiciously because those are passed down to local transportation providers.
4. We have an unprecedented level of transparency of operation:
- a. The Department has consolidated all NEMT-related materials in a single web page, and has made the extensive array of data reported by Veyo publicly available monthly.
  - b. We have participated in the NEMT Work Group, and many public information meetings.
- We have great respect for the participation of members, providers, advocates and legislators in dialogue concerning, and accountability around, NEMT.
  - NEMT is a top priority for HUSKY Health and we will do all we can to ensure continuous improvement and a high level of service for members.
  - In light of pending litigation, both the Department and Veyo will have to limit our remarks today to questions from the council on the monthly data report that you see before you.