Community and Public Transportation Needs

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Commission
On Aging
Aging With Dignity And Independence

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Public and community transportation plays an important role for Alaskans with disabilities, behavioral health disorders, dementia, and traumatic brain injuries in ensuring access to employment, completing activities of daily living, accessing healthcare, and meaningfully engaging in the community.

Transportation is essential for all Alaskans, including those with mobility challenges

- Accessible public transportation in the community allows seniors and individuals with disabilities, especially those with significant disabilities, to have independent access to work sites, educational programs, health facilities, and social and recreational activities.

- Without adequate and reliable transportation options Alaskans with mobility challenges cannot access jobs, shopping, and their community, preventing them from making valuable contributions to our society as individuals, workers, consumers, and taxpayers.

- Alaska's investments need to support persons who cannot afford cars or who cannot drive for medical, personal, or legal reasons in addition to traditional vehicle travel on roadways.

- Rural and remote Alaskan communities face even greater barriers to accessible transportation. Most traditional federal funding streams do not anticipate the unique and difficult challenges Alaskans face when it comes to transportation. In Alaska, many non-standard vehicles, including boats, small planes, ATVs, and snowmachines, complicate federal funding opportunities.

Accessible public transportation allows people with disabilities, older adults and their caregiver to live independently, work, and socialize in their community

Adults with disabilities are twice as likely as those without disabilities to have inadequate transportation (31 percent vs. 13 percent). Source: cdc.gov

Travel needs for healthcare and services

- Transportation services are needed to access medical care, therapies, prescription pick-ups, behavioral health services, adult day, habilitation and rehabilitation and many other medical and community-based services.

- For many Alaskans with disabilities, behavioral health disorders, dementia, and traumatic brain injuries travel from their home community to a regional or statewide hub is necessary to access essential care.

- Medicaid-funded transportation services need reform to be more flexible for users and to reduce the administrative burden on providers.

- Challenges and costs related to medical travel and transportation increase when an individual has mobility issues, uses a wheelchair, or needs and escort to accompany them.

Key Points

- Accessible transportation is essential for many Alaskans who cannot use traditional vehicle travel

- Robust transportation options for individuals with mobility challenges supports independence and self-sufficiency

- Investing in creative solutions to accessible transportation improves the quality of life and livability of a community.

Ways to Address Transportation Challenges:

1. **Prioritize Accessible Transportation Services:** Invest in wheelchair-accessible vehicles and door-to-door services, particularly in rural areas where such services are lacking.

2. **Strengthen Coordination and Partnerships:** Encourage collaboration between transportation providers, healthcare organizations, and social services to create a more integrated and efficient transportation network for vulnerable Alaskans.

3. **Implement Alternative Transportation Solutions:** Develop innovative solutions such as ride-sharing programs, taxi vouchers, mileage reimbursement, and volunteer driver initiatives to fill gaps where traditional transportation options are insufficient. These alternatives are particularly important in regions with low population densities or where conventional services are not feasible.

4. **Support transportation services for Alaskans with disabilities and cognitive conditions:** State investments are necessary to address the growing needs of Alaskans with disabilities, dementia, and behavioral health conditions.

For more information, visit:
www.alaskamentalhealthtrust.org

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