

PO. Box 339
Scotrun, Pennsylvania 18355

MONROE COUNTY
MCTA
TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Phone: 570.839.6282
Fax: 570.839.8205
mcta@ptd.net

Teleta Nevius, Deputy Secretary for Social Programs
Room 533, Health and Welfare Bldg.
Harrisburg, PA 17120

April 15, 2004

Dear Ms. Nevius:

The Monroe County Transportation Authority has applied for a waiver regarding pick-up and drop off times as stated under Section VI.22 of the Medical Assistance Transportation Program Instructions and Requirements of July 1, 2001. We request that our waiver be granted thirty days from the date of notice to MCTA by the Department of Public Welfare, Office of Special Programs, Medical Assistance Transportation.

It is the intent of the MCTA to handle inquiries for Medical Assistance Transportation callers in the following manner:

1. Fixed Route bus tickets will be offered when and where origin/destinations and times allow.
2. When Fixed Route bus tickets are not an option, mileage reimbursements will be offered.
3. Should mileage reimbursement not be possible, client requests will be referred to Shared Ride. Shared Ride offers timely and cost efficient transportation choices on certain days of the week to designated areas within Monroe County (see February, 2004 request letter). Additionally, out of county transportation is also offered on a limited basis on designated days of the week. Client trips will be grouped with other riders to provide maximum accessibility to all riders within Monroe County. Shared Ride suggests late morning or early afternoon appointments, and mid to late afternoon pick-ups when scheduling return trips home. Due to the size of our service area we strive to make reasonable accommodations to pick-up and drop-off times without compromising the ability to access the ride.
4. When clients request transportation on a day of the week where no regular services are provided, clients will be offered mileage reimbursement or the option to reschedule.
5. Clients who cannot reschedule transportation, but, still need transportation on days/times of the week other than those already offered by Shared Ride will be placed on taxi services, however, only after the inability of the physician to reschedule transportation has been verified. Verification will be made by Monroe County Transportation Authority representatives by phone, and documented for data support in log form.
6. Clients with last minute requests, or who have not been determined eligible will be referred to the Monroe County Assistance Office for further support.

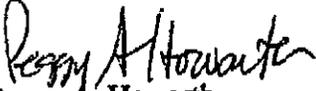


7. When the MCAO is unable to accommodate a request, Shared Ride will endeavor to provide the ride if possible based on driver and vehicle availability.

By grouping trips MCTA will be providing maximum accessibility to all riders while working to the best of our ability to greater strides in areas of cost containment.

Please review the above and contact me at your earliest opportunity with any further questions you may have.

Respectfully Submitted,


Peggy A. Howarth
Executive Director

Pah/ms

Cc: MATP file FY03/04

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Teleta Nevius, Deputy Secretary for Social Programs
Room 533, Health and Welfare Bldg.
Harrisburg, PA 17120

April 8, 2004 (modified)

Dear Ms. Nevius:

This letter comes to you as a supplement to our February 28, 2004 letter explaining in more detail the need and advantages for the waiver requested.

Our waiver request letter addressed several concerns. Particularly, Section V.10 of the Medical Assistance Transportation Program Instructions and Requirements waiver of time limits for Pick-up/Drop-off will be addressed here.

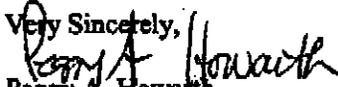
Due to the size of Monroe County and the extreme distances our Shared Ride Program covers (611 square miles), it is unreasonable for our drivers to meet the suggested limits. Of our 5,000- 6,000 riders per month, 35% of those riders are Medical Assistance. MCTA groups trips of all riders to make the runs more efficient. By grouping runs we can offer services to all areas of our county fairly.

MCTA also desires to serve as many clients as possible in the Medical Assistance Program. By grouping runs and waiving the restrictive times for Pick-up/Drop-off, we may be able to group more riders, thereby offering greater service opportunity to one and all throughout our vast service area.

A substantial note is required here about the budgetary impacts in addition to service impacts presented above. The month of October, 2003 was taken as a sample to determine what current percent of rides were traveling on 'non-designated' days, and what impact that has had on the Medical Assistance Program costs. We found that of the 2,008 in-county Medical Assistance trips provided on Shared Ride, 12.5% of those were provided on 'non-scheduled days'. Additionally, of the \$28,656.50 in-county Medical Assistance cost, 16% of that was due to operating vehicles on non-scheduled days. It is important to realize that the only service other than Shared Ride to provide this volume of service is one local taxi provider. The cost per trip for Taxi during the 1st quarter of fiscal year 2003-2004 was \$54.87/trip, while the Shared Ride cost per trip was \$18.16/trip. The 2nd quarter of fiscal year 2003-2004 average cost for a Taxi trip was \$58.27, while the Shared Ride cost was \$16.53 per trip. These staggering costs of Taxi services are serious implications to not grouping riders as presented above.

We believe that by waiving Pick-up/Drop-off times and grouping trips on designated days of service we can offer greater availability for all Medical Assistance riders, while saving overall costs at the same time. MCTA firmly believes that grouping trips makes sense.

Please advise us as soon as possible regarding this waiver status so we may begin to notify our clients of the proposed changes. We would like thirty(30) days to appropriately communicate this information to our riders (originally requested for April 5, 2004).

Very Sincerely,

Peggy A. Howarth
Executive Director

Pah/ms
Cc: FY2003/2004 MATP



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Teleta Nevius, Deputy Secretary for Social Programs
Room 533, Health and Welfare Bldg.
Harrisburg, PA 17120

February 28, 2004

Dear Ms. Nevius:

Monroe County Transportation Authority (MCTA) is requesting a waiver of section VI.22, based upon the most current Medical Assistance Transportation Program Instructions and Requirements dated July, 2001 (MATP I&R rev. July, 2001), as required, for the following reasons:

1. Sec V.10 Pick-up/Drop-off Requirements.

MCTA provides services to many Medical Assistance (MA) clients within the 611 square miles of Monroe County and out of county. Additionally, MCTA also provides services to subsidized clients that are transported to locations further removed from the county borders as well. As resources in the county are limited regarding drivers and vehicles, and in order to provide greater opportunity for all clients to utilize transportation to and from providers, we respectfully request a waiver from this requirement. The grouping of riders such as Lottery clients (50%), MA clients (35%), Work related riders (5%), and other funded and non-funded clientele (10%) creates a situation in which constraints imposed upon client drop-off and pick-up render compliance with the regulation both temporally unrealistic and cost inefficient as it forces the transportation provider to operate in an exclusive manner, as opposed to a Shared-Ride scenario.

2. Sec. II.5 Trip Boundaries.

Although a waiver is not required for this issue specifically, MCTA would like to address it here.

Section II.5 states "MATP agencies are to establish service areas that accommodate the transportation requests of clients. Service areas are not limited to the agency's home county. Counties are responsible for arranging transportation outside the county or prime contractor's designated service area." As a consequence of this grouping of riders, it has been a successful past practice to schedule Shared-Ride transportation to certain geographical areas on a per diem basis in order to ensure all riders have an opportunity to ride. In an attempt to compensate for a combination of increasing enrollments, remarkable increases in paratransit ridership (see Fig. 1), and increasing out-of-county transport requests, MCTA offers the following service areas for the benefit of all MATP riders:

Barrett Township:	Monday, Wednesday, Friday
Tobyhanna/Tannersville:	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
West End:	Monday, Wednesday, Thursday
Bushkill:	Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday
Pocono Pines:	Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
Route 512:	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday



Allentown/Hershey: Monday, Wednesday, Friday
 Wilkes-Barre/Scranton: Tuesday, Thursday
 Philadelphia: Wednesday, Friday
 Danville: Monday, Wednesday, Friday

(Fig. 1)

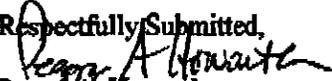
	1 st Quarter Paratransit Trips:	2 nd Quarter Paratransit Trips:
FY2002/2003	5,101	4,906
FY2003/2004	6,258	6,378

The above matrix follows Section V.13 MATP I&R rev. July, 2001 by integrating services. Clients requesting transport beyond regular service areas will first be offered the opportunity to reschedule their medical appointment, or, if not possible will be offered mileage reimbursement. In the event this is not possible, and MCTA has an available vehicle and personnel capable of providing this exclusive service, then a premium fee double that of the standard hourly out of county rate will apply. In the event MCTA is still unable to accommodate the needs of the client, then he/she will be referred to the Monroe County Assistance Office (MCAO) as directed in Sec. V.15, 3.d.

MCTA is requesting an effective date for the waiver of April 5, 2004, so that we may provide ample notice to our current MATP clients. Our goal to notify Medical Assistance participants, and other involved parties with a need to know, will be achieved in the following four ways on or before March 15, 2004.

1. A Laminated placard will be displayed in all MCTA vehicles.
2. A presentation to all Case Workers of the Monroe County Assistance Office will take place on their next Agenda for March 2004.
3. A written letter of notification will be sent to the Monroe County MHMR Administration so that their staff may be informed of how our services may be of benefit to their MATP clients.
4. A written letter of notification will be sent to any taxi providers of MATP services during the fiscal year 2003/2004.
5. An updated notification of procedures will be sent to all riders who have used the MATP services with the MCTA during this current fiscal year 2003/2004 along with the new updated brochure reflecting these enhancements.

As you know, costs for this program in Monroe County have escalated dramatically over the past three years. It is my belief that in order to achieve maximum benefit for all MATP participants, cost containment for the Department, and an improved means as service delivery, the above steps will be necessary.

Respectfully Submitted,

 Peggy A. Howarth
 Executive Director

Pah/ms
 Cc: MATP FY2003/2004
 Attachment (revised Forecast FY2003/2004)