MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM: WAIVER REQUEST FORM

DATE	**06/22/06**				
Name of Requestor/Contact	Cynthia Ann Zerbe	**Phone #**	1 877 877 9021	**Requested Effective Date**	07/01/06
Requesting County(ies)/ Corporation	**Union/Snyder Counties**				
Please cite the requirement for which a waiver is being sought (from the "Scope of Services")	I. Para-transit rule. "Consumers shall be dropped off at the medical provider's office no more than one hour prior to the medical appointment. After the medical visit, consumers shall be picked up not more than one hour later."				
Briefly describe the efficiencies and/or service enhancements that will result from the waiver	USTA has been providing shuttle service to GMC, Danville, an out-of-county medical provider, since 1987. The reason the shuttle was implemented was because the repeated trips to/from GMC (8-10/day) was a financial drain on the agency and an inconvenience to the riders. USTA would deliver people to the facility, continue on with their day and wait for return calls. Many times consumers at GMC are scheduled for one appointment, then transferred to other departments for tests, consults, etc. As it was impossible to gauge when a person would be done, inevitably the van would be halfway back to the service area just at the point another person would call for a return. Customers didn't know when the vans would be returning and therefore were not able to leave the reception area to get a snack or go to the restroom without fear that they would miss the van. More days than not, administrative staff were calling GMC at the end of the day, working with security and GMC staff trying to locate them. Providing a regularly scheduled service to GMC allows customers to schedule their appointments knowing when the bus will return for them.				
Briefly describe the proposed alternative procedure	Consumers with appointments between 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. are scheduled to arrive by 8:30 a.m. The bus returns to GMC at 11:00 a.m. to drop off those with afternoon appointments. At 12:00 p.m. the bus leaves GMC to return those riders that are finished. The bus returns at 4:00 p.m. to return the balance of the riders.				
Approximately how many consumers will be affected?	224	**How will they be affected? What change, if any, will result in the level of service?**	To date in FY 05/06, a total of 294 unduplicated riders traveled to GMC. Of those, 224 were affected (76%). A total of 1,817 one way trips were provided, of which 699 trips were affected (38%). While 76% of the individuals were affected, they were primarily affected either on the delivery or the return. Very few riders were affected on both legs of the trip and 24% were not affected at all. This is the same level of service that has been provided since 1987. The consumers have a higher level of service than they received prior to 1987 as they know when and where they can meet the bus due to the consistency of the schedule.		

Projected savings	$40,500	**How were these savings calculated? Identify assumptions (i.e., fewer trips, shorter trips, shorter wait times)**	The first year this change was implemented USTA reduced the miles traveled 40,000 and in 97/98 the miles traveled was reduced 59,000. Currently USTA travels back/forth to GMC 6 times/daily. It is estimated that USTA would need to travel between 2 and 4 extra times/day without the waiver. The route currently averages 225 miles day for 6 trips. An additional 2 trips would add an estimated 75 miles/day to that route and potentially require an additional vehicle and driver assignment. Based on just 2 extra trips with an average of 37.5 miles/trip * $1.50/mile = $56.25/trip * 2 = $112.50 * 240 days of service = $27,000. Assuming half the time there would be need to travel 4 extra times the additional cost would increase to $40,500.
How will the savings be used?	USTA increased fares in September, 2005. Due to the unexpected spike in fuel and increased workmen's compensation costs, USTA is projecting a deficit in 06/07. Since USTA is currently running the GMC service in the way in which it is described here, a denial of this waiver will result in an increase to the projected deficit. This will not result in a "savings" over 05/06, it will prevent a greater deficit in 06/07 than is already projected. Every effort is being made to balance the 06/07 budget without another fare increase.		
Briefly describe the exception process for consumers who cannot be accommodated by the new requirement	When a person explains to us that they have a reason why they are unable to ride the shuttle, we simply make the accommodation. Some examples: need to be home to receive a minor child from the school bus, need to get to employment, need to get to another medical appointment, caregiver not available to meet needs of the consumer in time for the bus ride. Consumers have not abused this flexibility.		
Briefly describe any local input in this waiver proposal, i.e., consumers, medical providers, etc.	Customer satisfaction surveys have been distributed to consumers. Consumers are asked about waiting times and there have been minimal complaints over the years. USTA's Advisory Board approves all service changes, as do the Commissioners at public meetings. The Advisory Board is comprised of consumers and staff of the County Board of Assistance Offices of both Snyder and Union Counties. Consumers do recognize that GMC is an out of county destination, and because USTA staff do try hard to inform consumers what the term shared ride means, as opposed to taxi service they are satisfied with the service they are receiving. Consumers have benefited by having a more stress free transport. GMC is a big facility and knowing that they can go to GMC, attend to their medical needs and not panic when they are directed to a different department, concerned that the "USTA driver won't find them", they have peace of mind knowing that the bus will be at a specific location at a specific time. USTA has never received a complaint from a medical provider with regard to the shuttle service.		

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Briefly describe the efficiencies and/or service enhancements that will result from the waiver	USTA is requesting a waiver from the 1-hour rule to locations that are not in USTA's immediate service area – Harrisburg/Lebanon area (Dauphin/Lebanon Counties), Williamsport (Lycoming County), State College (Centre County) and Lewistown (Mifflin County). In an effort to coordinate transportation services to areas that are not in USTA's immediate service area, USTA provides service to those out-of-county areas on assigned days. Appointments are accepted between 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. to those locations. USTA does not have the vehicle or driver capacity to provide repeated one-on-one trips to these locations, especially if there are appointments in each area on the same day. In addition to the benefits of being able to provide rides to more than one person at one time, drivers at locations out of the area will always be on the road at a time when staff are in the office and able to respond to an emergency, breakdown, etc.				
Briefly describe the proposed alternative procedure	All consumers with appointments to locations noted above, will be assigned to ride together. One round trip will be provided.				
Approximately how many consumers will be affected?	20	**How will they be affected? What change, if any, will result in the level of service?**	Consumers will be required to schedule their appointments between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.		
Projected savings	$66,000	**How were these savings calculated? Identify assumptions (i.e., fewer trips, shorter trips, shorter wait times)**	Minimal impact to State College in terms of $$ savings, generally only about 1 or 2 requests come in each month. The issue for this situation is having support staff available in the event of an emergency while driver is on the road. 4 less round trips to Williamsport/week – 240 miles 4 less round trips to Lewistown/week – 160 miles 4 less round trips to Harrisburg/week – 480 miles Savings = 880 miles/week * 50 weeks = 44,000 miles * $1.50/mile = $66,000		

How will the savings be used?	USTA increased rates in 09/05, less than a year ago. The cost of fuel and workmen's compensation took an unexpected spike. An effort is being made to balance the budget without having to increase rates again. Currently USTA is projecting a deficit in FY 07/08 and the goal is to hold the line on fares and balance the budget this coming fiscal year.
Briefly describe the exception process for consumers who cannot be accommodated by the new requirement	When a consumer presents a reason why they are unable to coordinate their trip within the defined days and times, USTA will make the accommodation. Some examples: one-day-surgery only performed on certain days, needs to see a specialist that is only available on certain days, caregiver not able to take care of a consumer's needs in time to be ready for the bus, those that require service to therapeutic day programs.
Briefly describe any local input in this waiver proposal, i.e., consumers, medical providers, etc.	USTA's Advisory Board approves all service changes, as do the Commissioners at public meetings. The Advisory Board is comprised of consumers and staff of the County Board of Assistance Offices of both Snyder and Union Counties. Additionally, because veteran's in particular need transportation to the Clinic in Williamsport, the Administrator phoned the Williamsport Clinic and discussed the impact of limiting the hours and days in which consumers would be coming to that facility. The Administrator was advised that the days we decided to choose to come to Williamsport will work with their physicians, and further that the time schedule will pose no problem.