

Medical Assistance Transportation Program

Memorandum

MATP OPS # 11-2010-022

Date: November 1, 2010

Subject: New Paratransit Protocol for Transportation to Methadone Maintenance Providers

To: All Statewide County MATP Program Offices

From: Tyrone E. Williams, Director, Division of Medical Assistance Transportation

Purpose:

To notify counties of the new paratransit protocol for transportation to methadone maintenance providers that limits paratransit trips for methadone treatment to one of the two closest in-network clinics from a recipient's residence.

Background:

MATP county offices shall only coordinate paratransit trips for eligible Medical Assistance (MA) recipients up to the distance of one of the two closest in-network methadone clinics from a consumer's residence.

To ensure continuity of care, the Department will grandfather trips for MA recipients currently not going to one of the two closest clinics from their residence.

Additionally, counties will make every effort to limit and avoid the provision of exclusive trips. We define an exclusive trip as a trip where there is only one (1) recipient on a vehicle going to a facility.

Please note that this paratransit trip limitation and exclusive trips are subject to the exception processes described in detail in the Discussion section of this memorandum.

Discussion:

Effective January 1, 2011, MATP county offices shall only coordinate paratransit trips for MA recipients up to the distance of one of the two closest in-network methadone clinics from a consumer's residence.

If a recipient requests a trip to a clinic that is not one of the two closest from their residence, the recipient must request an exception that will explain their need to travel to the clinic.

Example 1:

If Clinic A is 25 miles away from the recipient's home, Clinic B is 30 miles, and the recipient requests to go to Clinic C which is 40 miles away, unless an exception is granted, the recipient has to choose to receive services at either Clinic A or B to receive paratransit service.

Grandfather Provision

To ensure continuity of care, the Department will grandfather trips for MA recipients currently not going to one of the two closest clinics from their residence. Prior to December 1, 2010, MATP County offices will verify any recipient not going to one of the two closest clinics from their residence. If a recipient is confirmed as not going to one of the two closest clinics, they shall be approved as eligible to continue to receive transportation. Each recipient will receive a notice stating the new policy, that they have been grandfathered, and that their paratransit trips will not be impacted unless or until they choose to travel to a different clinic.

In the event that a recipient has been discharged (either voluntarily or involuntarily) from a facility, then are admitted to treatment again, the recipient would not retain their grandfathering status.

Exception process

The Department is allowing an exception process for those recipients who may not have the option to choose between one of the two closest clinics for reasons that include, but not limited to:

- the facility is not accepting new patients
- the recipient does not meet the intake criteria for the facility
- Medical reasons

A recipient must provide in writing a request for an exception to this policy that includes one of the reasons above or another valid reason that the Department will review in conjunction with the recipients BH-MCO. The MATP county office will identify staff that will help a recipient write their request for an exception, if the recipient requests assistance. If the Department grants an exception, the recipient may receive paratransit transportation to either of the two next closest facilities.

Example 2:

Clinic A is 10 miles away, Clinic B is 20 miles away and Clinic C is 30 miles away. The Department verifies and approves the recipient's exception request that Clinic A is not accepting new patients. The recipient may choose to receive paratransit transportation to Clinic B or Clinic C.

A consumer notice (which the Department will supply and county MATP offices will copy and send) will instruct all recipients to send their requests for exceptions to the following address:

**DPW MATP Exception Request
DGS Annex Complex
PO Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17105
Fax-(717)705-8112**

Consumer Notices

MATP county offices will send notices to:

- 1) all current recipients **within the standard of the new policy** notifying them of the new policy, but clarifying that based on their trips, their paratransit trips will not be impacted unless or until they choose to travel to a different clinic

- 2) all recipients **who are traveling distances outside the standard of the new policy**, prior to December, 1, 2010, notifying them of the new policy, that they have been grandfathered, and their paratransit trips will not be impacted unless or until they choose to travel to a different clinic.

These notices must be sent at least 30 days prior to implementation of this policy. In addition, MATP offices shall emphasize the new paratransit protocol to all new methadone maintenance recipients at initial application.

Exclusive Trips

When a recipient requests a trip to a methadone clinic, county MATP offices should review the trip based on the closest provider protocol and make every effort to integrate trips under the existing shared ride program.

County MATP offices will make every effort to limit and avoid the provision of exclusive trips except in the following instances:

- A trip is necessary due to an urgent care need as defined by the MATP Instructions and Requirements
- There are no available shared ride transportation resources to accommodate the recipient
- An exclusive trip is more cost effective than providing that same trip as shared ride.

Please be advised that exclusive trips reported by the county and/or identified by the Department is subject to review and audit. All exclusive trips should have the necessary documentation to support its coordination.

Next Steps:

County MATP offices should begin to take the necessary actions to comply with this policy by January 2011. This includes identifying the number of MA recipients that would be affected by this policy, per the description above, for the purposes of mailing.

Should you have any questions, please contact your program manager or advisor for your respective county.