

January 8, 2020

The Honorable Earl L. “Buddy” Carter
2432 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: January 8, 2020 hearing on H.R. 3935 by the Subcommittee on Health of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce

Dear Representative Carter:

Georgians for a Healthy Future would like to thank you for sponsoring H.R. 3935, the "Protecting Patients Transportation to Care Act" and express our support. As an organization whose mission is to build and mobilize a unified voice, vision, and leadership to achieve a healthy future for all Georgians, we are acutely aware of how important non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) is to helping patients access the care they need.

We primarily serve Georgia consumers especially those who experience disproportionate disparities in health care access and care (e.g. low-income Georgians, people of color, Georgians with Medicaid coverage, patients with complex care needs, and others). Without NEMT, Georgians covered by Medicaid would not be able to access critical health services, like dialysis, primary care, preventive care and care for substance use disorders. It is especially important for Georgians living in rural counties where distances to providers are longer and public transportation is scarce. Therefore, we strongly support making NEMT a statutorily mandated Medicaid benefit.

Non-emergency medical transportation is both a critical and cost-effective benefit. In a recent survey of NEMT recipients, 58 percent reported that they would not be able to make any medical appointments without NEMT.¹ By helping patients access routine and preventive care, NEMT helps prevent avoidable medical emergencies and costly hospitalizations. More specifically, while NEMT provides transportation to 10 percent of, or about 7 million, Medicaid enrollees, it only constitutes 1 percent of Medicaid's total budget.² Recent data has also shown that NEMT has resulted in a return on investment for both wound care for diabetics and dialysis.³ Additionally, one Florida study estimated that if just 1 percent of all medical transportation trips prevent a one-day stay in a hospital, the resulting return on investment would be 11:1.⁴

¹ Medical Transportation Access Coalition, *The Value of Medicaid's Transportation Benefit – Results of a Return on Investment Study*, <https://mtacoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/NEMT-ROI-Study-Results-One-Pager.pdf> and <https://mtacoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/NEMT-ROI-Methodology-Paper.pdf>

² Letter from the Congressional Black Caucus to Chairwoman Rosa L. DeLauro and Ranking Member Tom Cole of the House Committee on Appropriations, February 15, 2019

³ Medical Transportation Access Coalition, *The Value of Medicaid's Transportation Benefit – Results of a Return on Investment Study*, <https://mtacoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/NEMT-ROI-Study-Results-One-Pager.pdf> and <https://mtacoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/NEMT-ROI-Methodology-Paper.pdf>

⁴ The Stephen Group, *Volume II: Recommendations to the Arkansas Health Reform Task Force Re: Health Care Reform/Medicaid Consulting Services*, October 2015, <https://www.stephengroupinc.com/images/engagements/Final-Report-Volume-II.pdf>

In recent years, both the benefits of NEMT as well as the consequences of not providing NEMT have been demonstrated across states. While providing NEMT has been shown to help patients stay healthy and states save money, as explained above, forgoing NEMT has been shown to be a barrier to receiving care and maintaining overall health.⁵

For all of these reasons, we support H.R. 3935 and thank you for your leadership on this issue. By codifying NEMT as a required Medicaid benefit, all Medicaid enrollees, including those that we serve, will be able to access this critical health care service that will help them lead healthy, productive lives.

Sincerely,



Laura Colbert
Executive Director
Georgians for a Healthy Future

Cc: The Honorable Frank Pallone, Chair, House Committee on Energy and Commerce
The Honorable Greg Walden, Ranking Member, House Committee on Energy and Commerce
The Honorable Anna G. Eshoo, Chair, House Subcommittee on Health
The Honorable Michael C. Burgess, Ranking Member, House Subcommittee on Health
The Honorable Tony Cárdenas
The Honorable Tom Graves
The Honorable Sanford D. Bishop Jr.

⁵ The Lewin Group, *Indiana HIP 2.0: Evaluation of Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) Waiver*, March 11, 2016, <https://www.in.gov/fssa/hip/files/Indiana%20HIP%202.0%20NEMT%20Report%20Updated%203-11-16.pdf>