Bringing Transportation into the Conversation: A Holistic Approach to Individual Needs

Eileen Miller, Senior Program Associate, NCST
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
Today’s Panel

• Eileen Miller, Senior Program Associate, NCST

• Melisa Lopes, Caregiver Specialist, Eldercare Locator

• Thelma Samuel, Harris County Area Agency on Aging, Houston, TX
Session Outline

• **Why** transportation is important in the lives of seniors (Eileen Miller)

• **What** we are learning from consumers (Melisa Lopes)

• **How** one community is putting this into practice (Thelma Samuel)
NCST Organization

**Partnership:**
Easter Seals and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

**Mission:**
To increase transportation options for older adults and enhance their ability to live more independently within their communities throughout the United States.

**Funding:**
Federal Transit Administration with guidance from the U.S. Administration on Aging

**Functions:**
- Technical Assistance: Guidance, information, resources, and referrals
- Outreach
- Training
- Applied Research
Why is Transportation an important part of the conversation?

Transportation can support an older adult’s independence and choice

- The number of older adult non-drivers has grown by more than 1.1 million

- Older adult non-drivers make 15% fewer trips to doctor; 59% fewer shopping or restaurant outings and 65% fewer trips for social, family, religious or other life-enhancing purposes
Transportation is an issue beyond a ride from location A → location B

• Many services and opportunities depend on affordable, accessible transportation to locations outside of the homes.
• Transportation is related to health outcomes, isolation, employment, housing, etc.
• Data can inform practice: **Secondary call reason may become a future primary reason**
Integration of Mobility Management concepts with Information and Referral

- Mobility Management may have different functions, including but not limited to:
  - Information and Referral Services;
  - Trip Service Connections or Provisions; and
  - Transportation coordination planning among and across public and private transit/transportation providers, large and small, and health and human service.
NCST’s I&R Work

NCST - in collaboration with the Eldercare Locator - identifies promising practices and innovative solutions for transportation providers and connects callers to local resources.

Toll Free Phone Line and email address for both Providers and Consumers

866-528-NCST

NCST@easterseals.com
AIRS CONFERENCE, 2015- DALLAS, TX

May 29th, 2015
Melisa Lopes, CIRS-A
Team Lead, Caregiver Services
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)
THE ELDERCARE LOCATOR CALL CENTER

- The Eldercare Locator is administered by n4a.
- The Eldercare Locator is a public service of the Administration for Community Living that assist older adults, families, and caregivers in locating resources in their local area.
- Provides information and Referral to callers.
- Educates callers on programs and services that are available nationwide.
Eldercare Locator Contacts in 2014

- Total Contacts 271,234
- 3,492 Written Correspondence
- Average 22,00 inquiries a month
- On average 1,000 a day
- Total NCST calls 8,046
CALLS RECEIVED PER STATES
PROFILE OF CALLERS

Profile

- Over age 60
- First-Time Callers
- Female
- Calling about services for themselves
- If a boomer, calling about caregiving

How do they contact us?

- 97% Phone calls
- 2% Online chats
- 2% Emails
TOP FIVE PURPOSE OF CALLS

- Legal and Tax Assistance
- Health Insurance /Medical services
- In-Home services
- Housing Options
- Transportation Options
Types of Transportation Need

- **77.5%** Medical Appointment (non-urgent, routine, dialysis/chemotherapy/radiation, etc.)
- **8.7%** Non-medical rides (grocery shopping, church, etc.)
- **5.5%** Long-distance or county-to-county transport
- **3.4%** Special needs (disability, unusual medical situations)
- **3.0%** Durable Medical Equipment (DME wheelchair, Stretcher/ambulance transport; Vehicle safety)
- **1.9%** Financial assistance for transportation/Travel
TRANSPORTATION
IMMEDIATE OR FUTURE NEED

- 36% were planning for a future need
- 64% had an immediate need
Eldercare Locator and NCST Calls

- In 2012, The Eldercare Locator and the National Center on Senior Transportation began exploring enhanced Information and Referral Assistance (I&R/A) services.

- Consumers gain new knowledge of local transportation resources available in their local area.
TRANSPORTATION TEAM

• Assist callers who are in need of special transportation services: ADRC, long-distance services, county-to-county, and medical transportation.

• Track and Trend transportation calls.

• Collaborate with National Center on Senior Transportation (NCST) to provide I&R to callers.

• Provide enhanced services to callers who are in special need of additional resources.
Escalated calls are handled by our Enhanced Services team. These calls may involve complex situations of a serious nature, multiple issues or long-term care planning.

- **37%** Long-Term Care Information (Assisted Living, Nursing Homes, Education and Information).
- **29%** Caregiver Services/ Resources
- **27%** Elder Abuse (reporting abuse, and sets for following-up on reported abuse)
- **6%** Transportation Options (such as difficult transport or long-distance travel)
- **1%** Crisis (defined as an emergency situation such as housing, food assistance, and suicide risk)
Crisis calls (defined as an emergency situation such as housing, food assistance, and suicide risk) are handled by the Enhanced Services team.

Majority of the crisis calls are about emergency housing (shelters or short-term housing).

For shelter calls, callers have an immediate need for transportation options.

Callers need wheelchair transportation services or are in need of financial assistance to help pay for gas.

Majority of callers are over the age 60.
CASE STUDY

Critical Thinking and Probing questions

Resources

Local Area Agency on Aging

Connect
RESOURCES CONNECTED TO

- Local Area Agencies on Aging
- Aging & Disability Resource Centers
- Social Security
- State Health Insurance Programs
- Social Services Agencies
- Disease- Specific organizations (Alzheimer's Association, American Cancer Society, Diabetes Association, etc.)
QUESTIONS?
Considerations for Transportation Calls

• Listening for transportation needs
• Correlation between need for community services and access to those services

**Breaking down the Transportation assessment:**
- Accessibility
- Affordability
- Availability
- Acceptability
- Adaptability
Family of Transportation

**Modes:**
- Driving
- Walking/Biking
- Public Transit: Fixed Route, Dial-a-Ride
- Paratransit
- Shuttles
- Taxi
- Volunteer Driver Programs

**Services:**
- Assisted Transportation
- Ride Share
- Older Driver Safety Programs
- Mobility Management/Transportation Options Counseling
- Travel Training
- One-Call/One-Click Resource Centers
Ladders of Opportunity Grant Program

• NCST grants totaling $100,000
• Five Communities developing interventions to increase seniors’ access to public transportation
• Each project is connected to Aging in Place Initiative: Senior Housing with Services, Long Term Services and Support, Care Transitions Programs, or Chronic Disease Self-Management Programs
• Information and Referral is an essential part of these projects
Grant Recipients

- Community Concepts, Lewiston, ME
- Dane County Department of Health and Human Services, Madison, WI
- Mountain Empire Older Citizens, Big Stone Gap, VA
- WSOS Community Action Commission, Fremont, OH
- Harris County Area Agency on Aging, Houston, TX
Federal Mandates

- Determine the need for social and nutrition services with special attention given to older adults in greatest economic or social need.

- Advocate for the older adult by increasing the awareness of service providers, elected officials, civic groups and the corporate and volunteer sectors regarding the needs of older adults.

- Utilize federal funds to fill identified service gaps.

- Provide technical assistance and training to service providers and private sector organizations relating to aging programs and services.
Mission:
We sponsor programs that provide a sense of well being, dignity, independence, and the free exercise of individual initiative to older adults and their caregivers in planning and managing their lives through access to and participation in community based services and programs provided for their benefit, health and safety.
WE operate under the City of Houston Health & Human Services, as our grantee agency.

WE are the largest of 28 AAA’s in Texas.

- Housed in City Health & Human Services Dept.
- Service Area – all of Harris County
- State (Monitor) TX Dept of Aging & Disability Services (DADS)
- Funded Administration for Community Living (ACL)
We provide a comprehensive array of community-based, long-term care services, including evidence based services, to appropriately sustain older people in their communities and in their homes, including support to family members and other persons providing voluntary care to older individuals.
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Transportation need, identified....

Information & Referral Requests:

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<td>21,293</td>
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Transportation Requests:

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<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>FY2013</td>
<td>1,286</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY2014</td>
<td>1,316</td>
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2 major Transportation Providers –

- Houston METRO (Metropolitan Transit Authority)
- RIDES (Harris County Transit Authority)

- We provide Non-Emergency Transportation Services via Harris County RIDES when public transportation is either unavailable or inaccessible.
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AND

We also have a Care Transitions Program

Transportation need, ‘NOT’ discussed....
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Aging in Place Initiative

Care Transitions Program (CTP) utilizes transition coaches who work with hospital patients from pre to post discharge, to develop strategies and identify help and supports that aid in reducing hospital readmissions.

- Program: FY2013 – 371 enrollees
  (FY2015 – 303 enrollees, to date)
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Connecting the dots……

- RIDES   TRANSPORTATION   SERVICES……
- CARE   TRANSITIONS   PATIENTS..............
Mobility management & transportation options counseling to positively affect individual health outcomes for Care Transitions Program Patients via Care Transitions Coaches and RIDES – Harris County Transit Mobility Counselor.
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- Harris Health System Oncology Patients
  - 3 Hospitals
  - 34 Clinics

Mobility management & transportation options counseling to positively affect individual health outcomes for Harris Health System Oncology Patients via

- Social Worker
- Nurse
- HCAAAA Transportation Coordinator
Questions
HCAAAA

http://www.houstontx.gov/health/Aging/


http://harriscountryrides.com/index.php
Questions?

• What is a challenge that some of the seniors and people with disabilities in your community may face when trying to access services?

• Are there consistent unmet transportation needs you are hearing from callers—accessibility, affordability, availability, etc.?

• How can you better serve callers seeking transportation options?

Thank You!