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Driver performance: What to do when your driver has diabetes

by Pat Weaver

That phone call from Mrs. Jones was the second one today. She called to complain about the near miss they'd had earlier that morning on Bus 6. She reported that Mary, the bus driver, just pulled right out in front of a car. They'd almost been hit.



*Insulin dependence
raises the level
of concern.*

You know that Mary has diabetes, but don't know if she takes insulin. In thinking back, you also realize that she's had several appointments with her eye doctor lately. Mary has worked for you for several years, all without incident except a minor fender bender when she backed into a pole a couple of years ago. But now, two complaints in one day...

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Get with the (travel training) program

by Nishtha Mehta

Transit agencies are frequently on the lookout for programs and tools to create a wider and more varied passenger base. This article will describe how travel training can help increase ridership and provide freedom and mobility for more residents in your community.

How does it work?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) recommends many tools and

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3 weeks at most, Zillinger says, but that depends on the payroll agency.

Some individuals may require more monthly trips than others; Zillinger says it varies from person to person. "The case managers look at what is needed. It is based on needs, not wants," she says. A disabled person's case manager builds a plan for transportation either through family and friends or specific contracted transit agencies. An individual may be covered to go to the grocery store 4 times each month, with one or two extra trips built in to allow for flexibility.

Other possible destinations include the drug store, dry cleaners, SRS office, or church. "We would even cover a trip to the movies once in awhile, or to a social event," says Zillinger. "We would not pay for someone to go out every day, but we would for a couple of times a month." The case worker monitors the end-of-month expenses to make sure the system is not abused.

For more information about Medicaid waivers for transportation services, contact Margaret Zillinger, director of Community Supports and Services at Kansas SRS at (785) 296-3561 or at mmz@srskansas.org.

Sources:

"A Guide to Medicaid and Medicaid Waivers," *The Arc of Indiana*, Summer 2003.

Medicaid Transportation: Assuring Access to Health Care, CTAA, January 2001, www.ctaa.org/data/report.pdf.

"HCBS—Not just another acronym," by Rocky Nichols, *Topeka Capital Journal*, Feb. 17, 2002, www.cjonline.com/legislature/2003/diaries/nichols_021703.shtml. ▲

Travel training program,

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programs for transit agencies to provide independent, comfortable and accessible public transportation to all persons with disabilities. Travel training is one such program. It prepares participants in traveling safely and independently using their local fixed-route transit system or paratransit system. Members of a community who may not be comfortable traveling alone or people who want to learn more about their local transit system can participate in this program. Specially trained transit personnel work with participants to help them acquire the travel skills necessary for following particular routes in the safest, most direct way.

Travel training provides an opportunity for participants to gain more freedom and flexibility in choosing what kind of transportation they wish to take and when. According to Rachel Cornish, Marketing Coordinator for Public Transit Department at the Lawrence Transit System, this program is usually structured in one of three ways.

One-on-one training, the most common travel training format, usually consists of trained volunteers from the community traveling with program participants on fixed route systems. These volunteers help in familiarizing participants with routes, schedules, stops and fares. The volunteers also assist participants in learning necessary travel skills such as reading and understanding route maps, recognizing bus numbers and landmarks, safely boarding and dismounting from vehicles, using wheelchair lifts, and transferring to other buses.

Group workshops are another way travel training programs can be organized. These workshops consist of

trained volunteers providing instruction to a group of participants on trip planning, scheduling and safety. The information provided in the one-on-one sessions is provided in these workshops, though without the hands-on training.

A blend of the one-on-one sessions and the group workshop is the third construct for such a program and is becoming increasingly popular.

Who benefits?

Riders and care-givers. Because travel training provides participants, and especially persons with disabilities, seniors and youth, with an increased confidence and self-reliance, the training supports an active lifestyle and encourages social interaction.

For example, in Orange County, Calif., a resident with Friedreich's Ataxia, a disease that causes progressive damage to the nervous system, says she can now travel independently on the local fixed-route system after receiving travel training. In Nevada, another travel training participant claims that the program has made transportation easier and lifted the burden on his care-givers.

Transit agencies. Because participants of travel training programs learn to use transportation means other than private vehicles, this can help transit agencies in acquiring a wider passenger base and serving the community.

The community. Travel training participants can become more involved in their communities and can enjoy a wider access to jobs, health care services, shopping facilities and social events. An increase in public transportation use can also increase safety on roads, as both congestion and vehicular pollution decrease.

A local example

Rachel Cornish has been instrumental in designing and implementing

a travel training program, called "T" Time Travel Training, for Lawrence, Kan. This travel training program aims to make it easier for residents of the Lawrence area to use public transit. According to Cornish, "T" Time has been designed to provide travel training instruction to persons with disabilities, youth and elderly as well as other citizens, to foster a safe and comfortable travel environment.

The program is a combination of several successful national models construct-



interested. Enrollment began February 1, 2005.

One size does not fit all

Travel training programs can be adapted to serve a specific part of the community's population. Successful

travel training programs have been initiated at local schools to

encourage the use of public transportation among youth. These programs aim to teach the younger members of the community the best and safest ways to travel independent-

ly. Travel training programs can be constructed to specifically

serve the needs of seniors and persons with disabilities. Such programs can focus on training participants

to use wheelchair lifts when appropriate, and familiarizing them with routes, buses and drivers.

Easter Seals models for different types of programs can be found at the Web site www.projectaction.easterseals.com. (Click on "Free Resources," then click on "Order and Download Free Publications" and then select "Travel Training.") This Web site provides descriptions of models that have been successfully implemented in different communities nationwide. It includes specific programs implemented for youth, visually-impaired individuals, persons with other disabilities, and seniors.

Make it work for you...

Many travel training program participants have gained greater indepen-

dence from the experience. Adapting this tool according to the specific needs of a community can further the use of public transit, create self-reliant and confident riders, and help organize a well-functioning transportation system for that area.

For more information on Lawrence's travel training program, contact Rachel Cornish, Marketing Coordinator, Public Transit Department, Lawrence Transit System, at (785) 832-3471.

For more information on Easter Seals Travel Training Models, contact Easter Seals Project ACTION at (800) 659-6428 or email at project_action@easterseals.com

Sources:

"T" Time Travel Training Lawrence Transit Systems www.lawrencetransit.org/reroutes/Ttime.shtml.

News Releases about "T" Time Travel Training Workshops, City of Lawrence, KS, January 7, 2005.

Lawrence Transit System's Travel Training Program set to begin, City of Lawrence, KS fact sheet, December 2004.

Easter Seals Project Accessible Community Transportation in Our Nation (ACTION) <http://projectaction.easterseals.com>

You Can Really Go Places, Easter Seals. Project ACTION. June 2002.

"Stories of Changed Lives," *The Personal Impact of Transportation Access*, Easter Seals. Project ACTION, July 2003.

"Buses and Trains for Everyone," *Instructor Training Guide*, Easter Seals, Project ACTION, 2002. ▲

Travel training programs benefit riders, care-givers, transit agencies, and the community in general.

ed by the Easter Seals Project Accessible Community Transportation in our Nation (Project ACTION). It is based on the format that blends group workshops with one-on-one training sessions. It includes workshops that help individuals attain skills in order to maintain self-reliant travel habits. The workshops focus on providing instruction regarding planning of trips, travel economics and safety. The other part of the program involves practical application of the newly-acquired travel skills.

"T" Time participants are paired with a volunteer "ambassador" to go on individual trips where they can learn to comfortably navigate the city's transit system. The program is free and open to all those who are