



Talking to your patients about transportation challenges

Missed appointments not only hurt the physician-patient relationship, but they are also connected to higher medical costs for patients, delayed care and more emergency room visits.¹

According to the American Hospital Association, the leading cause of patient no-shows is a lack of medical transportation.¹ When your patients can't get a ride to their appointments, lab tests or the pharmacy, they may not follow through with their recommended treatments and medications.

For seniors and those with chronic illness, transportation matters¹



Nearly 8.4 million seniors depend on others for their transportation.



3.6 million Americans are unable to obtain medical care due to transportation barriers.

A lack of transportation can impact healthcare access, leading to poorer management of chronic illness, and thus, poorer health outcomes.²

It can also exacerbate other health-related social needs, such as accessing healthy foods, limiting participation of social activities with others and obtaining employment.¹

Screening your patients for transportation barriers

During annual wellness exams or regular appointments with patients, use the questions below to screen them for transportation barriers:³

1. In the last 30 days, has a lack of transportation kept you from medical appointments?
A. Yes B. No
2. In the last 30 days, has a lack of transportation kept you from attending social events (such as going to church or your nearby senior center) or obtaining things needed for daily living (such as shopping for groceries or clothes)?
A. Yes B. No

Calculation: A response of “yes” to either question should trigger a transportation referral. Take note whether a referral is needed for medical or nonmedical transportation because support services may vary.

When patients screen positive for transportation barriers, you can help

If your practice doesn't offer transportation services, consider screening and evaluating your panel for transportation needs. If the need is significant, there are often community programs you can partner with to offer transportation services to your patients. Not only will this provide access to healthcare services, it can also create more opportunities to boost healthy activities and behaviors.

You can refer patients to the following resources:

- **Patients' medical insurance**
Some health plan benefits may provide nonemergency medical transportation. The patient should call the number on the back of their medical insurance ID card to see what benefits or community resources may be available.
- **Eldercare and Area Agencies on Aging**
Alert your patients to these resources. They address the needs and concerns, including transportation challenges, of all older persons at the regional and local levels.
www.eldercare.acl.gov
800-677-1116 (TTY: 711),
Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 9 p.m.,
Eastern time
- **Humana Community Navigator®**
Search within your community to connect to transportation programs, utility services, food resources, housing support and more.
humana.findhelp.com
- **211 Helpline Center**
Patients can find community information and referrals to social services for everyday needs and in times of crisis, including transportation challenges. Calls are free and confidential.
www.211.org
Dial **211** from any phone



To learn more about Humana's health equity strategy, visit Healthequity.Humana.com.

References:

1. "Social determinants of health series: Transportation and the role of hospitals," Chicago, IL: Health Research & Educational Trust (2017, November). Accessed: Dec. 12, 2023.
2. Syed, et al., "Traveling Towards Disease: Transportation Barriers to Health Care Access," J Community Health. 2013 Oct; 38(5): 976–993., last accessed Dec. 11, 2023., doi: 10.1007/s10900-013-9681-1.
3. "Senior-Specific Social Needs Screener," www.westhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/SHC_Social-Needs-for-Seniors_Screener_WHI_UCI_FINAL.pdf, last accessed Dec. 11, 2023.