

Non-Emergency Human Service Transportation Task Force



Executive Office of Health & Human Services

**September 22, 2022
11:00 am - 12:30 pm**

Zoom



Agenda



- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Approval of 6/28 Meeting Minutes**
- 3. Initial Discussion of Draft Task Force Recommendations**
- 4. Upcoming Meetings and Events**



Task Force Charge



Legal Authority: Section 134 of Chapter 24 of the Acts of 2021

Task Force on Non-Emergency Human Service Transportation

Goal: Explore ways to **better collaborate, improve service, and achieve operational and cost efficiencies** through the brokerage system and **provide the highest quality outcomes for consumers utilizing these services** in the Commonwealth.

1. The Task Force shall make recommendations and propose guidelines on non-emergency human services transportation with the goal of examining and better understanding the human services transportation brokerage program and identifying opportunities for improved service and productivity that provides a strong safety net for vulnerable populations in both rural and urban areas.
2. The recommendations and guidelines shall include, but not be limited to:
 - a. **the use of existing routes when available,**
 - b. **the provision of bus passes to eligible individuals, and**
 - c. **the need to have strong, transparent, and consistent cost allocation systems in place to ensure that the capital and operating costs for both the brokerage and public transit systems are assigned to the appropriate cost center for reimbursement.**
3. The recommendations and guidelines shall be used by the Human Services Transportation office to develop non-emergency human services transportation broker services.

The Task Force shall file a report of its study and its recommendations with the Clerks of the House of Representatives and Senate, the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means, the Joint Committee on Transportation, the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities, the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Transportation not later than **December 1, 2022.**



Draft Recommendations



1. Improve wheelchair securement

Background and Actions Taken:

- New requirement of annual wheelchair securement training by a certified trainer and mid-year evaluation of all drivers of wheelchair vehicles
- Brokers retraining all wheelchair drivers immediately with deadline of November 30, 2022
- HST compliance officers inspecting all wheelchair vehicles – to be completed by January 1, 2023
- As a part of inspections, inspectors now required to sit in the wheelchair and have drivers to secure them during inspections
- Placards to be posted in all wheelchair vehicles by October 1, 2022 demonstrating proper securement



Draft Recommendations



1. Improve wheelchair securement (cont.)

Background and Actions Taken:

- Corrective Action Schedule of fines and suspensions implemented for drivers and vendors for failing to properly secure wheelchairs
- Brokers sent email communication to all vendors reminding them of progressive penalties for failure to secure wheelchairs



2. Improve driver training and professionalism

Background and Actions Taken:

- Trainings added:
 - Annual Human Rights and Sensitivity Training
 - Annual Sexual Harassment Training
 - Annual Defensive Driving by Certified Trainer
 - Annual wheelchair securement training
- Require drivers to wear nametags visible to consumers
- Greater collaboration with The RIDE to share successful strategies and/or protocols that HST could adopt



3. Conduct more frequent and unannounced vehicle inspections

Background and Actions Taken:

- Following the procurement in 2021, HST hired an additional two Compliance Officers. The HST Office is hiring two additional Compliance Officers.
- GATRA and MART each hiring an additional inspector.
- HST Compliance Officers and Broker Inspectors conduct unannounced field inspections at programs, homes and facilities. Brokers have a monthly inspection goal of .05% of the total volume of one-way trips and must be reported to the HST Office. Inspections must include the HST Vehicle Safety Checklist.
- HST and Brokers coordinated and scheduled inspections of every wheelchair vehicle.
- Additional inspections will be focused on vendors with high complaint volumes.



4. Improve complaint process and communication of complaint resolution

Background and Actions Taken:

- HST Compliance Team conducts random telephone surveys to offer consumers the opportunity to share feedback
- Call Center staff have been trained to immediately exclude vendors upon request by a consumer
- Brokers have Quality & Assurance units that resolve and communicate complaint resolution to consumers via phone and text. Additional follow-up is provided per customer request.
- Consumers can submit complaints in the smart phone app and in the member and facility portals with resolutions sent via email and text.



5. Improve on-time performance

Background and Actions Taken:

- MART and GATRA implementing GPS tracking of on-time performance. Required to have 90% of trips tracked by GPS by December 2022
- MART and GATRA are required to report on-time performance measured by GPS to the HST office monthly and the data will be posted publicly on an online dashboard.
- On time performance incentive is earned if 90% or more trips are performed on time (pick up and arrival times must be within 10 minutes of the scheduled time)



6. Improve accessibility and adoption of online booking through apps and portals

Background and Actions Taken:

- Postcard with QR codes promoting the apps and portals sent to all consumers that used transportation in the past year.
- Automated Call Center message provides new short URL for the apps and portals
- Postcard included a reminder that three-day advance scheduling is recommended but not required.
- EOTSS engaged to do a review of HST's Mass.gov website, broker websites, and apps and portals, and make recommendations.



6. Improve accessibility and adoption of online booking through apps and portals (cont.)

Background and Actions Taken:

- Engaged EOTSS to do a review and make recommendations for HST's Mass.gov website, broker websites, and apps and portals. EOTSS conducted consumer interviews to inform improvements to website and apps.
- EOTSS has recommended changes to improve website and app accessibility.
- EOTSS and Brokers created a "Single Source of Truth" page on HST and Broker websites with link to "Know Before You Go."
- EOTSS conducting usability testing with consumers and facilities on the apps and portals to map the user journey and make recommendations for improvements.



7. Improve call center wait times and professionalism

Background and Actions Taken:

- MART added additional call center capacity through contract with external call center support. GATRA in process of doing the same.
- MART's voice recording and website now informs consumers of call hold time. MART also added a "call back" feature allowing consumers to leave a call back number if they do not want to remain on hold. MART's phone message also provides the website address for on-line booking.
- HST is reviewing call center training and will make suggested improvements.



Broker Corrective Action Plan



EOHHS has issued a Corrective Action Plan with MART and GATRA to include:

- Revised Welcome Letters to include directions for online booking **(Completed)**
- Postcard mailing to all consumers who have used transportation in the past year to promote online booking through the apps and portals **(Completed)**
- Improve functionality, accessibility, and support of the apps and portals **(November)**
- Consistent branding of the apps and portals **(November)**
- Improvements to the Brokers webpages to make the “Know Before You Go” more visible and a “single source of truth” page with all of the information needed to receive transportation **(Completed)**
- Improvements to the Call Center’s automated messaging to include URLs for on-line booking and call hold times **(November)**
- Additional reporting metrics to the HST Office to include the number of trips cancelled, on-time performance percentages as measured by GPS, etc. **(November)**
- Progressive roll-out of GPS adoption by vendors and drivers to achieve 90% by December 31, 2022
- Periodic review of the Corrective Action Plan to assess progress



Upcoming Meetings and Events



| Meeting Dates | Time | Location |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <i>November 2022</i> | <i>TBD</i> | <i>TBD</i> |
| <i>December 1, 2022 – Submission of Task Force Report to the Legislature</i> | | |