

Public Dialysis Transport Efficiency using Digital Media

Abstract

The objective of this research is to investigate para-transit availability for dialysis patients in counties in North Carolina. The scope of this study will span all 100 counties but focus primarily on the more rural counties where para-transit is limited. Sources of information will include the county, state, and federal agencies that fund para-transit as well as the major dialysis chains. Para-transit provides indigent dialysis patients transport to life-saving dialysis centers. These patients are identified as in need of such transport by their social workers. North Carolina provides paratransit services in some but not all of its 100 counties. North Carolina is a state where the counties with the most resources are in the central, Piedmont area of the state. The Appalachian area and the Eastern part of the state are largely agricultural areas with a very low tax base. The poverty existent in these areas does not provide much funding for county government and many residents have limited means for transport. In some counties public transport is mostly non-existent for short distance travel. In this age of dwindling support for health care and related services, needed is a follow-on study to one conducted 10 years ago regarding these transit services for dialysis patients without other means of transportation. The level of support for dialysis transport will be compared to the previous study results in terms of funding and efficiency of such systems. Also changes in policies and funding levels for para-transit will be addressed. The researchers will also address the large dialysis chains Davita and Fresenius to see if they are helping to fill this gap in transportation in the poorer counties in North Carolina. Methods to address these issues will include quantitative and qualitative research to address metrics of funding along with para-transit system efficiency while qualitative interviews with the stakeholders will add to the depth of this research.

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