How Can We Better Meet the Unmet Transportation Needs of Seniors in Urban, Rural, and Remote Areas of Alberta?

VISION 2030 SENIORS SERVICES SYMPOSIUM
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Presenters:
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Panel Support:
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Session Overview

1. Introductions

2. Presentations
   - Overview of Alternate Transportation Services in Alberta
   - ATS Providers 2017/2018 Survey Selected Results
   - Insights/Learnings from ATS Service Providers
     - Wainwright & District Handivan Society (WDHS)
     - Drive Happiness

3. Q & A
Session Objectives

**Learning Objectives**

- To gain an understanding of the “alternate transportation for seniors (ATS) service providers landscape” in Alberta and changes in ATS service provision over time

- To become familiar with the “challenges and rewards” in developing, implementing, and sustaining ATS services with insights from a provincial survey and two service providers in the province
What is MARD?

A Research and Knowledge Translation Centre at the University of Alberta

Three of MARD’s Priority Areas:

• To implement and evaluate innovative solutions that support the transportation safety and mobility of our target audiences
• To develop and disseminate educational materials that inform and promote community engagement on issues related to transportation safety and mobility
• To develop knowledge, solutions, practices, and services that recognize and address the differences in transportation mobility between rural and urban communities
ATS Survey

• Compendium of Alternate Transportation for Seniors (ATS) Service Providers in Urban and Rural Alberta 2017/2018 Survey

• Purpose:
  1) To update the list of ATS service providers in the province.
  2) To identify changes, trends, and deficiencies in ATS service provision through a comparison of the 2017/2018 and the 2008/2009 results.
  3) Organizations providing ATS services were contacted and asked to participate in a two-part survey. The first part consists of a telephone interview, which took ~ 10-15 minutes. The second part was an email questionnaire which was sent to participants to complete and return within a two week period.

• Ethics approval from the University of Alberta’s Research Ethics Board
An Overview of ATS in Alberta (2019)

223 ATS Service Providers

174 ATS Only (78%)
- 136 Not-for-Profit Providers
- 38 For-Profit Providers

32 Homecare (14%)
- 2 Not-for-Profit Providers
- 30 For-Profit Providers

17 Paratransit (8%)
- 17 Not-for-Profit Providers
ATS in Alberta: Greatest Challenges

Themes

- Capacity & Demand
- Clients
- Organizational Constraints
- Insurance & Liability
- Funding
- Drivers
- Operating Costs
- Cost to Clients
- Partnerships & Collaborations
- Low User Awareness & Demand
- Vehicles
- Scheduling
ATS in Alberta: Greatest Challenges

In thinking about your service, what are some of the greatest challenges your organization faces in providing this service?

- Lack of funding
- High operating costs
- Can't keep up with demand
- Not able to accommodate last minute requests
- Not having enough resources
- Difficulties recruiting and maintaining volunteer drivers
- Cost of maintaining and replacing vehicles
ATS in Alberta: Greatest Challenges
(All ATS Providers)

- Capacity and Demand: 22%
- Cost to Clients: 9%
- Drivers: 29%
- Funding: 24%
- Low User Awareness: 2%
- Operating Costs: 10%
- Organizational Constraints: 16%
- Partnerships and Collaborations: 4%
- Scheduling: 6%
- Vehicles: 11%
- Other: 4%
Greatest Challenges: ATS Only Providers

- Capacity and Demand
- Clients
- Cost to Clients
- Drivers
- Funding
- Insurance & Liability
- Low User Awareness & Demand
- Operating Costs
- Organizational Constraints
- Partnerships and Collaborations
- Scheduling
- Vehicles
- Other

Percent

Not-for-Profit
For-Profit

- 22%
- 25%
- 35%
- 35%
- 29%
- 10%
- 10%
- 16%
- 16%
- 30%
- 6%
- 3%
- 10%
- 10%
- 10%
- 10%
- 10%
- 6%
- 0%
- 0%
- 0%
- 0%
- 0%
- 0%
- 0%
- 0%
- 0%
- 0%
Greatest Challenges: Homecare Providers

- Drivers: 50%
- Cost to Clients: 25%
- Other: 17%
- Clients: 8%
- Capacity and Demand: 8%
- Low User Awareness & Demand: 0%
- Insurance & Liability: 0%
- Operating Costs: 0%
- Organizational Constraints: 0%
- Partnerships and Collaborations: 0%
- Scheduling: 17%
- Vehicles: 8%
- Other: 17%
Greatest Challenges: Paratransit Providers

- Capacity and Demand: 45%
- Low User Awareness & Demand: 36%
- Funding: 45%
- Scheduling: 9%
- Other: 9%

Percent
Addressing the Need for Transportation Mobility in the Province
Wainwright & District Handivan Society
Wainwright & District Handivan Society
*Note: From inception to October 2013, approximately 53 rides were provided by WDHS. The number of rides has been averaged across the first three months.*
What is Drive Happiness?

• Drive Happiness is a non-profit charitable organization that provides assisted transportation services to low-income, mobility-challenged seniors in the greater Edmonton area.

• We have been providing service to Edmonton seniors since 1998.

• We provide over 2,100 rides a month for over 1200 riders through our network of volunteer drivers.
Our Mission

Our mission is to assist seniors in remaining independent. Through our safe and reliable transportation service, we are able to support an independent lifestyle for our riders.
How the Program Works

• Eligible riders must complete an application and pay an annual fee before booking rides.

• Riders can then purchase tickets that give them 90 minutes of driving or up to 40km, whichever comes first.

• Once applications have been approved and tickets have been purchased, rides can be booked through the office as far in advance as possible.
Eligibility

Seniors need to meet several eligibility criteria:

• 65 years of age or over
• Able to enter and exit a vehicle with limited assistance
• Unable to utilize commercial/public transit due to health or mobility challenges
  • We are not equipped to handle large/heavy wheelchairs or motorized scooters
Booking Rides

Getting seniors where they need to go!
We drive our Riders anywhere they want to go, whether that be to medical appointments, to the grocery store, or to visit friends and family.

We just need to know:
Date of the ride
Pick-up and destination locations
Time they need to arrive at the destination
Length of time they will be at the destination
What our Riders Say:

“You really get to know the drivers. I couldn’t believe how much better I started to feel.”

-Rider
“Before, everything was just too hard so I stayed at home. It was lonely, but now this makes it so easy!”

-Rider

“Having people I can call and schedule rides for my appointments is a real stress reliever.”

-Rider
How do we Provide Rides?

Drive Happiness provides rides through volunteer drivers

Each and every one of our volunteer drivers are thoroughly:

• Interviewed
• Screened
• Vetted
• Oriented and
• Trained
Our Volunteers

• Must provide a clean driving abstract and a Vulnerable Sector Criminal Records Check

• Can make their own schedules – they drive as much or as little as they choose, selecting the rides they want to take with no minimum requirement

• Receive a tax-free gas reimbursement for their rides

• Are passionate about helping our seniors remain independent
What our Volunteers Say:

“I like meeting the seniors and it makes me feel great to help them accomplish what they need to do.”

-Volunteer
“I volunteer because it is important to bridge the gap between our seniors and youth because we can learn a lot from each other.”

- Volunteer

“I hope to give back until I need the service myself.”

- Volunteer
In the Community

• In 2015, Drive Happiness averaged 333 rides per month.

• In 2018 we completed 1,500 rides per month and 17,692 rides in total!

• Last year our volunteers donated 21,000 hours of their time and drove over 216,000 kilometres.

And demand is only growing!
Discussion/Questions
Contacts

- MARD: mard@alberta.ca | 780-492-0374 | www.mard.ualberta.ca
- WDHS: mrbee4@telus.net | https://wainwright.ca/town-services/transportation/
- Drive Happiness: liza@drivehappiness.ca | 780-424-5438 | www.drivehappiness.ca
Provincial Listing of Organizations Providing Alternate Transportation for Seniors in Alberta

Complete the following search form:

1. Select a zone name from the drop-down list provided.
   Zone

2. Select a community from the drop-down list of communities in the selected zone.
   Community

3. Type the name or part of the name of the organization you are searching for. Leave this field blank if you want to see all organizations in your selected community.
   Organization

https://mard.med.ualberta.ca/mard/db