

**Terrebonne
Council on Aging**



Terrebonne Council on Aging, Inc.

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November 17, 2009

Commission on Streamlining Government

Re: Proposed Cuts to the Non-Emergency Program (NEMT).

AGEB #41 The Louisiana Streamlining Government Commission recommends to the governor and the Louisiana Legislature that the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals roll back the Medicaid transportation program provider rates to the 2006 level, for a savings of \$13 million.

In October of 1994, at the request of the Louisiana Legislature through an Emergency Rule, the 64 parish Councils on Aging were approached, by DHH, to become Non-Emergency Medical Transportation providers in an effort to stop the rampant fraud and abuse in the Fee Structure of the existing program (reimbursement rate was based on a Flat rate for a trip plus additional reimbursement for Logged Mileage). This Emergency Rule was requested due to the inability of DHH to properly monitor the program. The Terrebonne Council on Aging (TCOA) began its journey as a non-profit Non Emergency Medical Transportation Provider (NEMT).

(NON PROFITS RECEIVE A LOWER RATE OF PAY THAN THE FOR PROFITS FOR THE SAME IF NOT BETTER LEVEL OF SERVICE.)

Rate Schedule

	Ambulatory	Difference	Proposed Reduction	Wheelchair	Difference	Proposed Reduction
Oct. 1994 thru June 30, 2006	\$12.00		-4.02	\$20.00		-7.47
July 2006 thru Aug.31, 2006	\$14.00	+2.00	-2.02	\$24.00	+4.00	-3.47
Sept. 1, 2006 thru Nov 30, 2006	\$14.84	+ .84	-1.18	\$25.44	+1.44	-2.03
Dec. 1, 2006 thru Current	\$16.02	+1.18		\$27.47	+2.03	

Since Non-Profits received four different rates in 2006, which one are you suggesting:

- Is the proposed reduction based on the FY 2006 rates of \$12.00 for ambulatory trips and \$20.00 for wheelchair trips?

- Or is the proposed reduction based on FY 2007 rates of \$14.00 for ambulatory trips and \$24.00 for wheelchair trips?
- Or is the proposed reduction based on the calendar year of 2006 where there were four rates (see Rate Schedule above)?

TCOA has conducted a Needs Surveys in Terrebonne Parish annually for the last 20 years in the community. Last year over 2,000 Terrebonne Parish residents from 18 to 100 were surveyed. Transportation has been the #1 need for the last 20 years.

Terrebonne is a Medical Mecca, however if the residents cannot get to the wonderful Doctors and Clinics it is of no value to them.

In the last 14 years, TCOA has supplemented the NEMT program by \$1,000,000. This program is supplemented because of the great need for this service.

Our drivers have received a 39% increase in their pay since 2006. Even with these increases it is difficult to hire and retain drivers.

Because of my walk in life, as the Terrebonne Council on Aging Director and as an elderly handicapped individual caring for my elderly mother and two grandchildren, I know firsthand the toll the proposed cuts in the Medicaid Programs will have on the elderly and the handicapped and on the lives of their families.

We serve a proud segment of the population (20%) of Terrebonne Parish. Our elderly are not a disposable product and not just numbers on a chart, but our grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, relatives, friends, and neighbors and someday ourselves.

These people are the generation that work so hard and paved the way for us. They sacrificed and made this state what it is today. So instead of helping them in their time of need you are penalizing them by cutting life-sustaining services.

Daily we receive calls from elderly and disabled residents of Terrebonne in need of services which have already been cut. They will experience further reductions in services from the proposed Medicaid Waiver elimination.

The Parish Councils on Aging were the solution in 1994 to the Medicaid Fraud and Abuse and we still are the solution 2009.

I respectfully request the Commission, pull recommendation **AGEB#41** and in instead, ensure that all providers are paid a decent rate for the much needed priority transportation service.

I also request the same rates be paid to the non-profits as the for-profits and increase these rates instead of rolling them back!

Thanks for the opportunity to bring forth our concerns.

Sincerely,



Diana N. Edmonson
Executive Director