



Connecting You to Community Services

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ELDERCARE LOCATOR CAMPAIGN ADDRESSES TRANSPORTATION CONCERNS OF THE AGING POPULATION

-- 82% of Older Adults Worry They Will be Stranded and Unable to Get Around if Driving is Not an Option; Eldercare Locator Launches Holiday Campaign to Help Older Adults and Their Families Plan for Future Transportation Needs --

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, 21% of Americans over age 65 do not drive and, as Baby Boomers begin to reach age 65, there are concerns about growing transportation needs nationwide. Lack of transportation options can affect people's abilities to maintain independence. According to a survey released by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), nearly all respondents (98%) age 65 or older said that maintaining their independence is "extremely important", and four out of five (82%) worry that they will be stranded and unable to get around when they can no longer drive. Reasons older adults need alternative transportation services can include not owning a car, an injury that prevents driving, and not having the assistance of a family member or friend.

Many older adults and their family caregivers are not aware of alternative transportation options that are available in their communities. "We need to provide transportation options to older Americans and make sure they have information about and access to these important services," said Josefina G. Carbonell, Assistant Secretary for Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Today the Eldercare Locator, a public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging, launched its fifth annual "Home for the Holidays" campaign to encourage families to learn about and discuss transportation options during this holiday season.

(MORE)

The Eldercare Locator is administered by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) and is dedicated to connecting families to local resources that enable older persons to live independently in their communities. This year, the Eldercare Locator and the National Center on Senior Transportation (NCST), which is administered by Easter Seals, Inc., in partnership with n4a, developed the brochure *“Transportation Options for Older Adults: Choices for Mobility Independence.”* The brochure is designed to encourage and assist family conversations about transportation needs and concerns during this holiday season.

The free brochure, available at 800-677-1116, www.eldercare.gov, and www.seniortransportation.net, describes various types of transportation services for older adults, such as Volunteer Drivers, Paratransit, Door-through-Door, Public Transit, Travel Training, and Transportation Vouchers; the availability of these services can vary from community to community. The brochure also lists key questions to ask transportation providers to determine the best option to meet individual needs. “Family gatherings during the holidays often offer great opportunities for conversations about an older loved one’s wellbeing, and transportation certainly can be a critical issue – for older adults as well as family caregivers,” said Sandy Markwood, CEO of n4a, which administers the Eldercare Locator. “Planning ahead and understanding the options available can give older adults and their family members peace of mind knowing that there are options available to address their changing needs.”

Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs), and Indian Tribal Organizations can provide specific information about transportation options available in their communities. Consumers can contact the **Eldercare Locator** at **800.677.1116** or www.eldercare.gov to identify these resources in their local area.

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EDITOR’S NOTE: Fact about age 65+ transportation needs attached



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Facts about Transportation Needs of the Aging Community (age 65+):

- 21% of Americans over age 65 do not drive and half of all American households do not have access to adequate transportation options.
- Almost 50% of older non-drivers (3.6 million people) stay home on any given day because they lack transportation options.
- Older non-drivers have a decreased ability to participate in the community and the economy. Compared with older drivers, non-drivers: make 15% fewer trips to a doctor; 59% fewer shopping trips and restaurant visits; and 65% fewer trips for social, family and religious activities.
(2004 Surface Transportation Policy Project, *Aging Americans: Stranded Without Options*)
- More than 600,000 people aged 70 and older stop driving each year and become dependent on others for transportation
(Cited in 2004 GAO Driving Life Expectancy Report)