The Birth of a Brokerage

By Christy Lane, MTM Program Director–Kansas

Learn how Kansas has transitioned to a new way of providing non-emergency medical transportation, statewide.

Establishing a statewide Medicaid Transportation Broker in Kansas took many years to implement: 12 years in fact. Discussion about the topic started in 1996, in response to a Kansas Trans Reporter article that described initiatives by two states to improve Medicaid transportation service and improve costs. Last year we became Kansas’s statewide transportation broker. We at MTM are excited that the State of Kansas and its managed care providers have transitioned toward improving its non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) services and lowering transportation costs to the State through the use of brokers. This article will explain MTM’s duties as a statewide Medicaid transportation broker, what our successes and challenges have been during the first year, and the advantages to you of being a transportation provider contracted with MTM.

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Work with Your Workforce Investment Board to Coordinate Transportation

By Matt Baker

Kansas workers are going without vital transit links, but a resource exists to help with that. Across the United States, rural transit providers are collaborating with local workforce investment boards (WIBs) to create transit links between home and the workplace.

Because many unemployed persons may not have access to a working vehicle or money to fill it with gas, they may be unable to get to skills training, interviews, childcare centers, and the workplace itself. WIBs are statutory organizations created in 1998 by the federal government that facilitate job training and placement for the unemployed.

Many WIBs have found that they can further their mission by setting up partnerships with local transit providers to close the transportation gap. Partnerships

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What spurred the transition?
The Kansas Health Policy Authority (KHPA), the State's Medicaid Agency, has faced some significant challenges in administering the NEMT program. In 2008, KHPA completed a review of its Medicaid programs and services including NEMT. Its report titled 2008 Medicaid Transformation details some of those challenges, including:

- Increased transportation expenditures for the elderly and disabled populations anticipated in the near future;
- Increased documentation requirements by the federal government; and
- Fluctuations in fuel costs for transportation providers are not linked to reimbursement rates.

That report recommended that KHPA outsource the management and provision of statewide transportation services to a broker.

Before 2007, there was no medical transportation broker of any kind in Kansas. That changed in 2007 when two Medicaid Managed Care Organizations for children's services—Children's Mercy Family Health Partners and UniCare—contracted with transportation brokers for the needs of their clients participating in CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program)—see sidebar on page 3. However, the rest of the Medicaid-eligible population did not have access to a broker for their transportation needs until 2009, when the KHPA contracted with MTM to become a statewide transportation broker.

Steps in setting up the brokerage
KHPA first needed approval from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Medicaid Services (CMS), before issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a Kansas Medicaid transportation broker. The federal government provides approximately 60 percent of the cost for Medicaid services and the State of Kansas provides 40 percent. The KHPA received approval from CMS in early 2009 and issued a RFP shortly thereafter. Last summer, MTM was awarded a three-year contract with two, one-year extensions.

MTM has a fully capitated contract with KHPA and is paid a “per Medicaid member per month” (PMPM) rate. The contract with KHPA is risk based, which means MTM takes on a higher financial risk because it pays for the transportation costs and must find efficiencies and ways to create cost savings by eliminating fraud and abuse and ensuring the appropriate mode is assigned for each trip. The other type of contract is a fee for service contract, where the broker has low risk because they are not responsible for the transportation costs.

Getting the brokerage underway was daunting. MTM and KHPA had just 90 days to prepare for the implementation of the brokerage for approximately 120,000 eligible Medicaid members. On November 1, 2009, the brokerage went live and MTM started taking calls and providing trips. A new Medicaid transportation brokerage was born.

What are the duties of MTM as Kansas’s statewide Medicaid Transportation Broker?
MTM arranges transportation for Medicaid eligible individuals to services covered by Medicaid and provided by a Medicaid enrolled provider. The contract with KHPA does not include transportation to Home and

MTM requirements for transportation providers

**Insurance items**
Certificate of Liability:
1. Auto liability policy ~ $300,000 combined single limit
2. General liability policy ~ $300,000
3. Workers Comp, and if not applicable, a letter with a copy of the state law and why you are exempt.

MTM must be listed as a Certificate holder and as additionally insured on all three policies.

**Driver’s information needed**
1. Legible copy of driver’s license.
2. Criminal background check (KBI) – statewide within the last 12 months and updated yearly.
4. Drug test – if submitted to Kansas Medical Assistance Program (KMAP) prior, those results can be submitted; Kansas Department of Transportation providers that are in that pool are exempt.
5. Any other certificates such as for CPR or defensive driving.

Sources
Three years ago, two Medicaid Managed Care Organizations were awarded contracts to administer the Kansas Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Children who are younger than 21 who live in the Eastern two-thirds of the Kansas have the option to select either Children’s Mercy Family Health Partners (CMFHP) or UniCare as their Managed Care Organization. Children enrolled in CHIP and that live in the Western third of Kansas are automatically assigned to UniCare. Both CMFHP and UniCare act as the gateway for all of the health care services for their plan-members, and they currently contract with NEMT brokers to arrange transportation services. MTM is the transportation broker for CMFHP and LogistiCare is the transportation broker for UniCare. The remainder of the Medicaid population in Kansas is eligible for fee-for-service care through the State’s traditional Medicaid plan and these individuals have the opportunity to use MTM as their transportation broker.

MTM is already seeing success. More people are accessing needed health care than before the Kansas Medicaid brokerage was established, especially in rural areas.

What successes have been achieved in this first year?

There have been several successes so far. Chief among them is this: More people are accessing needed health care than before the contract, especially in rural areas with few transportation providers. Also, Medicaid members are being transported by drivers who have had background checks and in vehicles that have been inspected. When Medicaid members call to schedule a ride, customer service representatives set up trips for persons eligible for Medicaid-covered services to Medicaid providers.

What challenges has MTM faced?

Communication. Communication has been the greatest challenge of implementing the brokerage in Kansas. Good communication is vital to ensuring that Medicaid members have access to the health care services they need. MTM has worked to improve communication with Medicaid members, providers, and other stakeholders to address this challenge.

Medicaid Transit in Kansas: A Closer Look
How does MTM assign transportation modes for Medicaid trips?

**Public transit is assigned:**
- If the Medicaid member lives within 3/4 of a mile of a fixed bus route and is physically and mentally able to do so.
- If a member states an inability to ride the bus, the Care Manager will request and verify the member's level of need through the member's physician or other health care professional.

**An ambulatory/sedan vehicle is assigned:**
- If the member can transfer from a wheelchair to vehicle seat and the wheelchair fits in the trunk. This category includes sedans, cabs, vans and minibuses without wheelchair lifts.

**A wheelchair lift-equipped vehicle is assigned:**
- If the member uses a wheelchair and he or she cannot transfer from the wheelchair to the sedan.

**A stretcher vehicle is assigned:**
- If the member must lay prone during transport, but does not require medical attention/monitoring.

WANTED: Regional, rural transportation providers

While there are plenty of local rural transportation providers in Kansas, MTM seeks to partner with agencies that want to provide regional medical transportation. MTM is prohibited by federal and state rules from providing this service directly—it must be contracted-out. This is why we are looking for providers that can transport members to regional health care centers in Kansas and bordering states.

Specifically, right now we are looking for providers in Northwest Kansas to transport passengers to McCook, Nebraska and also to Hays, Kansas, which have the...
Clearly, there is a mobility gap that needs
and friends with vehicles, or on transit.
their workplace, be dependent on family
must live within walking distance of
vehicle. Persons in these households
Many more rely on a chronically unreliable
Kansas households do not own a vehicle.
According to 2009 estimates, 60,000
first place.
have the opportunity to get a job in the
interviews, or career centers may not even
individuals who have difficulty getting to job training,
barriers to transit for commuters
Access to transportation is a vital link
to employment. What’s more, individuals
who have difficulty getting to job training,
and on transit. Many more rely on a chronically unreliable
vehicle is certainly not going to stop long
serves all these destinations and the transit
bus going to come? Is it worth waiting?
shopping for groceries, when is the next
on a daily basis, fewer than
7,000 Kansans take transit to work. Transit
does not serve the needs of a significant
number of Kansans. Why?
Especially in rural areas, the hours
during which transit operates are often
not conducive to commuting. If service
only runs from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., most
workers will be unable to take the bus
to work. Third shift employees must find
other transportation, and the bus does not
run early enough for an 8 a.m. start time
at the job. By collaborating with WIBs and
employers and tailoring service hours to
workplaces, transit can begin to chip away
at the mobility gap.
Another barrier is lack of flexibility. A
worker with a private vehicle often bundles
trips together during a commute. It is not
unusual for a working mom to drop off a
child at day-care on her way to work, pick
up that child on the way home, and stop
at the grocery store too. But, without a car,
this kind of convenience is hard to come
by. It is doubtful that a fixed transit route
serves all these destinations and the transit
vehicle is certainly not going to stop long
enough at each one to allow a commuter
to run an errand. After 20 minutes of
shopping for groceries, when is the next
bus going to come? Is it worth waiting?
Transit agencies and WIBs can step
up and facilitate conversations with
employers, businesses and services such
as childcare centers that serve commuters.
The WIB can help identify the day-to-day
transportation needs of their clients. Transit
providers can reach out to their local
WIB to spur such collaboration and then
widen the scope to a larger community
dialogue—with the goal of making transit
a workable option for commuters. One
possible improvement, for example, would
be to co-locate transit stops and day
care facilities. We’ll identify a few other
continued on next page

Workforce investment boards, Continued from page 1

Climb on board
Clearly there are many advantages to participating
as an MTM transportation provider, and just a few
minor disadvantages. Setting up the contract will take
a little extra time, but the benefits to your agency and
individuals who need medical transportation are well
worth it.

We at MTM have developed a Web resource for
transportation providers and medical providers and
partners that schedule trips for patients. Go to: http://
mtm-inc.net/kansas/

I encourage you to use our Web site as a resource
and contact our staff with any questions. We are very
excited to have the Medicaid Transportation Brokerage
contract in Kansas and are here to serve you.

Below is my contact information if you have any
questions or concerns. Do not hesitate to contact me.
Christy Lane, MTM, Inc., Program Director, Kansas,
(888) 561-8747 ext. 5557, clane@mtm-inc.net.

If you have questions about becoming an NEMT
transportation provider, contact Dana Tuepker,
MTM, Inc., Network Management Representative,
(888) 561-8747 ext. 5030, dtuepker@mtm-inc.net.

We look forward to working with you as we
continue to improve access to medical transportation
for Medicaid recipients in Kansas.
Workforce investment boards  
Continued from page 5

examples of collaborative solutions below.

Build awareness first

Before looking to expand transit services, transit providers should maximize the awareness of the services they already provide. This can be done easily through promotion, especially at a WIB’s local One-Stop Career Center. Also known as workforce centers, these provide unemployed individuals with skills assessments, job search and placement services, education about the local employment market, information on funding for job training programs and filing for unemployment benefits, and information about and help with supportive services related to employment. Supportive services include transportation options available in the local area.

This is a perfect opportunity for transit providers to get involved with their local WIB. Promotion can be as simple as providing brochures explaining transit service (and perhaps other transportation options) available in your community. Not only does the WIB benefit by being able to more easily place job-seekers in transit-accessible jobs, but also transit providers benefit by attracting new riders.

Another simple way to promote your service is to provide free service for One-Stop Center clients looking for jobs. For example, in Salina, the CityGo transit system provided transportation as a public service to job interviews for Kansas WorkforceONE clients who do not have access to a personal vehicle. CityGo provided either a free bus pass for the day or dial-a-ride service tailored to the individual. This amounted to one or two passengers per week; not a big outlay, but a great way to help job-seekers and introduce them to transit as an option for commuting.

In addition to promoting the use of current transit services, it may be reasonable to explore expanding transit services. Through collaboration with a local WIB, transit providers also can develop a relationship with local employers and learn about their needs and those of their employees. Service might be made more functional for commuters by altering a route, shortening headways, or by changing service times altogether to better reflect the operating hours of the workplaces. New stops could be added where needed. For instance, in Hutchinson, Kansas WorkforceONE worked with Reno County Public Transportation to place a new bus stop that serves the local One-Stop Career Center.

The type of service might also be altered. Instead of providing traditional fixed-route service, it might be more practical to provide a “service route”—one that collects employees and takes them to

Sources

• Interviews with: Bob Dalke, Executive Director, Kansas WorkforceONE and John Flanagan, Supervisor, Salina CityGO.
• Nielson 2009: Demographic Updates [Kansas], PCensus for ArcView.
a particular workplace. An employer might even help fund such service if it means the company can consistently count on employees being at work on time when they were previously relying on friends, family, or a car that broke down more often than it ran.

In the Missouri Bootheel region, the Workforce Investment Board of Southeast Missouri previously worked with transit providers to do just that. Some people who could find jobs were still unable to actually get to those jobs. Looking for creative solutions, the Southeast Missouri WIB took a multi-pronged approach, getting employers, workers, and transit providers together to tailor an impressive transit solution that fit their needs.

The WIB worked to find employers who would pay a living wage and benefits. They then contracted with local transit agencies to provide vanpool service from homes (or more-centralized locations within easy walking distance of homes) to workplaces. The Missouri Bootheel Transportation Outreach Program connected workers in seven highly impoverished counties with workplaces in Missouri, Arkansas, and Tennessee. Workers who used the Bootheel program paid directly for transit passes or their employers paid after deducting the amount from an employee’s earnings. Either way, the state used Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to reimburse workers, effectively subsidizing the service.

As a result, everyone benefited. Transit agencies in the region were able to carry more passengers and hundreds of workers no longer required public assistance. While this program eventually succumbed to funding problems, being unable to locate additional local matching grant funds, this is an excellent example of what can be achieved through a productive and collaborative partnership between a local WIB and transit providers.

How to get started
While there is no set formula for creating a collaborative partnership between your transit agency and a local WIB—every case is unique—these are some helpful steps that can be taken:

- Get prominent players to the table. Create a task force of local stakeholders. These include major employers in the community, WIB representatives, elected officials, the WIB’s unemployed clientele, transit providers, etc. Everyone has a slightly different angle from which to attack the problem. The most successful partnership is the one that best combines each stakeholder’s interest.

- Mix and match transit services. It
Grateful riders “tell the story” of transit’s benefits like no one else can.

It affects lives and livelihoods every day. People with disabilities, older adults, teenagers, family members, caregivers, and representatives of organizations and companies that provide accessible transportation are invited to write about how accessible, reliable public transportation made someone’s life better.

Two success story examples

Success Story 1 was submitted by the Executive Director of the Partnership Transportation Management Association of Montgomery County, PA, about a travel training program. “The transition students at North Penn High School in Lansdale, Pennsylvania had completed two semesters of travel training with the Partnership Transportation Management Association of Montgomery County (PTMA). They had successfully learned how to ride the bus and the rail line [train], but they didn’t want to stop learning! How about going to see their beloved Phillies at Citizens’ Bank Park? So the PTMA designed a class for them that reviewed the rail line and how to make connections, taught them about the Broad Street subway line, and had them plan their trip to the Park. As a surprise reward, the PTMA arranged...
for the students to have a private tour of the Park. The training went off beautifully, even including a dose of reality when the students had to move quickly to make a connection back to the high school. On the way back, they discussed with their trainer where they want to go next year—although the trip to the ball park will be hard to beat!”

Success Story 2 was submitted by an Ohio resident.

“For nearly a decade, I’ve relied on Laketran to get around Lake County on my own. I live with my parents, but being as independent as possible is always on my mind. Laketran has helped me to work, shop, attend medical appointments, visit friends, and so much more—more than I may ever do if only relying on my family for transportation. As a young professional, it’s also enabled me to serve my community, volunteering at an after-school program and acting as a board member for a local disability-related organization. No matter where I am going, Laketran’s drivers are always ready with a smile and excellent service, even in bad weather and other stressful situations. Over the years, the drivers often become friends, making the ride an even more enjoyable experience.

Besides giving me independence, Laketran has helped me to achieve life’s goals in ways I never thought possible. When I chose to go to Case Western Reserve University for law school, I didn’t want to rely on my family to drive me every day, but I had no idea how else I was going to get there. Laketran stepped up in a big way by agreeing to drive me, and their immeasurable support during those years is a main reason why I was able to earn my law degree. For that, I will be eternally grateful.

Clearly, Laketran has supported me in accomplishing major life goals as well as the mundane tasks of life. It’s not, however, just me getting this support. Laketran has thousands of customers, and it supports every one of them just as it has supported me. Because of Laketran, people with disabilities are able to feel like independent, valuable members of society. To me, that’s the greatest gift of all.”

ESPA plans to use all or parts of the stories in its publications to underscore the importance of accessible transportation. The staff has found, however, that gathering success stories is an effort that takes time and patience because riders are not quick to share their stories. During various events related to ESPA’s mission (e.g., in-person technical assistance events, presentations at national conferences), staff describes the accessible transportation success story project and invites the participants to submit such stories. ESPA continues to use its current methods for collecting stories, but also seeks new ways to encourage transportation customers and providers to add their stories.

How to submit a story
Stories can be up to 300 words. Provide your name, address, and telephone number at the top of the page. Stories for the project can be submitted online at the Easter Seals website below or emailed to Marie Maus at ESPASuccessStories@easterseals.com. If you email it, you can either attach the story as a file or put it directly into the body of the email. Be sure to type “Success Story” in the subject line. All submissions will be acknowledged, and Easter Seals Project ACTION will let you know if your story will be used on the Success Stories site or in an ESPA publication.

Sources
- Marie Maus. Personal interview. 7-29-10.
Transit as Part of a Community’s Emergency Response Plan

By Anne Lowder

Do you have written protocols for drivers, dispatchers and supervisors to be used during an emergency? Do you share these protocols with external stakeholders? Do employees train and practice the written protocols for taking emergency action? What do you do after an emergency?

On February 14, 2010 these and other questions were discussed after a freak snow storm created a massive crash on Interstate 70 between Bonner Springs and Lawrence. The westbound lanes of the highway were closed for hours as emergency crews freed trapped passengers. Over 40 vehicles were involved in the crash. Luckily no one was seriously hurt, and none of the vehicles involved was a transit vehicle, but transit vehicles needed to help keep people warm and to also transport them to central locations for pickup by family and friends. To help in this emergency transportation, Tiblow Transit, located in Bonner Springs, was called upon to respond.

Plan ahead for emergency response

The moment of a crisis is not the time to decide who can be called, what type of equipment is available, who the responsible personnel are and what steps should be taken during the emergency. Instead, be proactive and create a written emergency preparedness plan. The plan must first address the transit agency’s responsibilities and protocols before, during and after an emergency and secondly, the plan needs to outline relationships and responsibilities within your agency and with other community stakeholders such as first responders (e.g. fire, police, EMS, public works).

Implementing a good plan starts with an agency self-assessment that evaluates your agency’s strengths and gaps regarding safety, security and emergency preparedness. Once known, the gaps can be prioritized by: 1) impact they would have on employees, passengers and the community, and 2) the reality of the hazard or risk compared to the limitations of staffing and budget constraints.

An old saying goes “You never reach the mountaintop, you only experience the climb.” Similarly, an emergency preparedness plan is a living document constantly being redeveloped as new resources become available. To help in building your agency’s action plan go to www.bussafety.fta.dot.gov. The Federal Transportation Agency (FTA) web site offers templates to help you create policies and procedures, operating and maintenance protocols, employee training programs, human resource practices and developing external stakeholders.

Coordinate with emergency responders

It has been said more than once: “My agency has not been invited or asked to participate in the community’s local emergency preparedness planning meetings.” So what do you do? Be proactive. Introduce yourself to the members of the planning committee and sell your agency as a valuable transportation resource within the community. It is important that your agency develop a strong ongoing relationship with the emergency management team and the local fire/police and EMS. Without these relationships, your community lacks critical knowledge from your expertise. For instance, do you maintain a list of individuals (who have voluntarily signed-up) that would need transportation assistance during an emergency such as a flood or tornado?

Your agency is the transportation expert in your community. You know how to transport persons with mobility disabilities and you have the equipment (wheelchair lift and securement) that will be needed during an emergency evacuation.

Example of transit participation

An example of a transit agency being involved in the community’s emergency planning and response is “The T” in Lawrence, KS. The T’s department head is a member of the Douglas County Emergency Management’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) team. The EOC team, composed of heads of city and county departments (fire, police, medical and transit), acts as central command

Sources

• Hoag, Rita (personal communication, June 8, 2010).
in an emergency. The first responding agency at an emergency designates a field commander who communicates with and takes direction from the EOC team. This person is the team’s eyes on the scene.

The EOC team decides what resources to provide to the scene, whether personnel, equipment, food, water, portable toilets, or vehicles. If the field commanders say that several types of transportation vehicles are needed, including some with lifts, the EOC team would reach out to its transportation contacts with those resources. The transit manager is a key resource for this information and these decisions.

The team plans ahead of time how they will respond to certain situations of different durations. For example, if an incident is projected to last 6 to 8 hours, what will be needed? What if recovery is expected to be much longer, like 6-8 months? If shelter is needed for victims, the EOC would contact the Red Cross to provide shelter. During an emergency the EOC team has the responsibility for determining when local resources are not sufficient and will call the Kansas Division of Personnel Management for additional support. If federal assistance is needed, the state has the responsibility for requesting that.

**Some key considerations in emergency response for transit**

In making sure transit is included in your own community’s emergency response plans, several aspects of transportation need to be considered, from communication to insurance to training. Here are some of the key points:

**Communication.** Working with and exchanging information with other first responders such as fire and police is also an important part of planning and training for an incident. Do all personnel responding to an emergency use the same communication language and follow the same emergency protocols? Cohesiveness among stakeholders in emergency preparedness protocol and communication is an essential tool taught online under the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

**Contingency plans.** It’s important to think through how an emergency could change how you operate. What about alternative routes if roads become blocked? Have shelter-areas been identified in which to take cover in case a transit vehicle needs to evacuate?

**Liability.** What if transit vehicles

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Transit as part of emergency response  Continued from page 11

Benchmarks for Security and Emergency Preparedness

**Management.** Management should develop the agency’s mission statement that includes an organizational chart, written policies concerning safety, security and procurement, formal contractual agreements for safety and security mechanisms, proper insurance coverage and written labor/management protocols.

**Equipment and Systems Operations and Maintenance.** Equipment and systems operations and maintenance need to be tasked under the oversight of an individual. Policies should be written to be in compliance with federal and state regulations and standards, that building design and equipment procurement is acquisitioned with safety and security considerations, hazard material training and that vehicles have a written maintenance plan, documentation forms for inspections/defects and that formal records are maintained. A written policy should be available to passengers, operators, stakeholders and the community on related safety concern, radio and communication equipment and policies and to evaluate the driver through supervisor on-board audits.

**Human Resources.** Human resources should have written agency policies procedures for drug and alcohol, workplace violence, wellness/fitness for duty, operator/employee recruitment and selection and training, a drivers’ handbook, a dispatcher handbook and a customer service handbook.

**Safety Activities and Security Activities.** Safety activities should identify individual’s roles and responsibilities for safety activities for hazard management, accident reporting, internal safety audit and contractor safety audit. Security activities should be identified though a security assessment which will establish strengths and weaknesses of reporting and revenue collection procedures, vehicle storage and facility protection and internal security audit.

**Emergency/All Hazards Management.** Emergency/All hazards management is externally working with stakeholders in your community to participate in local written protocols for emergencies that include incident management, recovery analysis, coordinate with first responders and simulations. Internally, your agency should develop protocols for drivers, dispatchers and supervisors ensure NIMS certification and identify essential employees.


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Contractual agreements. Have you made contractual agreements with the local emergency preparedness committee for reimbursement of expenses? Pre-incident agreements establish funding guidelines for your agency’s cost of labor and equipment that would be incurred during an emergency. Some vehicles used in the Katrina National disaster did not have coverage or contractual agreements and were not able to be reimbursed for expenses. The funding flows from Homeland Security through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) to the local government for pre-identified and credentialed resources.

**Training.** Training and more training is integral to effective incident management. Transit is a community resource and it is important for your agency to participate in community emergency management exercises. Participating in emergency simulations helps you to evaluate your strengths and weaknesses. Then lets you adjust and edit your agency’s written protocols and become bettered prepared to react to an emergency. Managers, supervisors and frontline employees need to participate in practice drills and simulations.

Your staff also need agency-specific training. For example, you might have an instance of a threatening passenger on your vehicle and police would need to be called. Are emergency radio protocols in place for both the dispatcher and the driver? Have they practiced these protocols to ensure that the skill set is there to react to the emergency? What about cross-training? Who would dispatch if your one dispatcher is unavailable? Training exercises will ensure that written protocols are not only followed by your employees but that they are viable. If something doesn’t work well in the training, it can be remedied before an actual emergency.

Practice makes perfect. What else can be said?

**Job descriptions.** Finally, have you reviewed your employees’ job descriptions to cover work as an essential employee? An essential employee is required to report to work in emergency situations.

Post-incident de-briefing

What do you do after an incident? Go have a cup a coffee and talk about it? That’s actually a good strategy. Stakeholders need to come together—not to criticize or brag but to acknowledge the strengths and recognize the gaps that occurred during the incident. Formal action reports need to be completed about the emergency event and submitted to all members of the local emergency preparedness planning committee. The reports should document vehicle use, staff on duty, and who among them were designated as “essential” employees.

(An essential employee is defined by the Federal Transit Administration as...
Taking the Fear Out of New Technology

By John Elias

In this space we often discuss how to improve transit service with new technology. But what about the employees using the technology? New technology can present thrilling possibilities for some and represent a chilling fear of the unknown for others. How can transit managers most effectively implement new technology and ensure their employees get the most out of the promise of new computers, software and services?

Employee readiness
First, how ready or willing are they to use technology? No two employees are the same. A good way to determine the “tech readiness” of your employees is to ask questions. Pam Ward, transit manager at 10-15 Transit (Ottumwa, IA), and veteran of several information technology (IT) installations, recommends asking a few simple questions to determine employee familiarity with technology in general:
- Do you have a computer at home?
- What tasks do you use it for?
- Do you have a cell phone?
- Do you use it for just emergencies?
- How often do you check voice mail, take pictures or send text messages on your phone?

Ward has found that comfort with technology is not necessarily tied to age or gender. “We have older employees who love to work on the computer and are very comfortable with the whole process,” she said.

Managers and trainers with a working knowledge of employee tech readiness can better develop training for their employees. Ward suggests selecting key individuals with high tech readiness, peer respect, leadership and an innovative attitude to act as beta testers in initial pilot programs. These individuals become implementation “early adopters” and can help direct the training and discover changes that must be made to processes. Early adopters also bring their expertise as users of the current system as a good first test for the new technology and can act as peer mentors after the initial staff training.

Gaining acceptance
Trainees, augmented with early adopter peer mentors, then roll out the new technology to the staff. Tom Jones, operations manager at 10-15 Transit, orients all employees, regardless of readiness, to the basics of the new system. Some will immediately grasp it while others may need one-on-one instruction or help from peer trainers.

When developing training, Jones recommends concentrating on actual tasks the employee will perform. In a mobile data terminal training session, he input the driver’s actual schedules into the training module to increase familiarity. “The driver could see that Ruth was ready to be picked up on the terminal screen, just like before. Some of the employees that were most concerned about using new technology responded, “This isn’t as bad as I thought it would be,” said Jones.

Overwhelmed employees
Early adopters’ jobs don’t end after the training sessions. Some employees may still feel uncomfortable or even actively hostile to the new technology. Enthusiastic and knowledgeable peers become valuable assets in the day-to-day use of the new technology. Peer trainers should be on the lookout for any employees in need of encouragement and mentoring. Vigilant mentors can resolve coworker concerns and struggles without costly technical support or consultants.

In sum
Initial work identifying your employees’ tech readiness will continually reap benefits. Development of peer mentors and a well-planned course of training can take the fear out of new technology. Transit managers with an informed understanding of their staff’s readiness can help their employees embrace new technology and cope with the inevitable concern change can bring.

Sources
- Interview: Pam Ward and Tom Jones, 10-15 Transit Ottumwa, IA.
Emergency response Continued from page 12

More About NIMS Training

Are your agency’s supervisors and managers National Incident Management System (NIMS) certified?

As mandated by Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5, beginning in FY 2005, adoption of NIMS will be a condition for the receipt of federal preparedness funds, including grants, contracts and other activities.

NIMS education and training is directed towards all emergency management and response efforts by individuals on an executive, managerial, or first-hand level. The training is not required for all employees.

The online training program is composed of a core curriculum of courses that range from beginner to advanced. This training provides managers and supervisors with a comprehensive approach to incident management as well as provides first-line employees with the basic protocols of NIMS. The online training provides core sets of concepts, principles, terminology and organizational processes for all hazards.

Basically, NIMS creates a proactive system to assist those responding to incidents or planned events. The five components of the NIMS training include:

• Preparedness
• Communications and information management
• Resource management
• Command and management
• Ongoing management and maintenance

Two vital courses are ICS 100 and ICS 800. ICS 100 teaches the basics of NIMS protocol. The ICS 800 is a course for emergency response and prevention workers. Training and certification for the National Incident Management System (NIMS) is at: http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/NIMSTrainingCourses.shtm.

“an employee whose duties are of such a nature as to require the employee to report for work or remain at the work site to continue agency operations during an emergency situation.”

In your discussions with the emergency preparedness planning committee, also ask: Does there need to be a contractual element to your agency’s vehicles and personnel during an emergency? (Who’s paying the bill for maintenance, equipment and personnel during the emergency?) Were the written protocols followed or did they fail and why?

Once these reports are completed, it’s back to the written emergency planning stage to revise the plans based on the information learned during the incident.

Summary

For effective emergency response, it’s important to start at the beginning and know your agency’s baseline for emergency response. This is done with a self-evaluation of your agency’s safety, security and emergency preparedness.

Once the baseline is established, any gaps/needs can be prioritized based on community impact, possibilities of certain types of emergencies occurring and the resource limitations of your agency. Create an action plan using Web resources for templates. Look at all areas of your agency: management, equipment and systems operations and maintenance, human resources, safety activities, security activities, emergency/all hazards management and develop benchmarks for each of these areas (see sidebar on page 12). Integrate and share your agency’s working emergency preparedness plan with the community’s local emergency planning committee.

And practice! Make sure that your agency is involved and participating in community and internal drills, simulations and exercises. Then evaluate. Have you reached your benchmarks? Did training follow protocol? Finally, edit and re-engineer your written protocols so that they stay current with new information, resources and technology. Your community will be better able to respond to emergencies as a result.
Web Sites and Downloads of Interest


This policy brief examines Medicaid's assurance of medical transportation in the context of medically necessary but non-emergency health care.


This report provides information about the roles, responsibilities, challenges, and contributions of paid drivers; examples of what they do to meet the transportation needs of older adults; and data on transportation services and programs that employ them.

Address Change?

Send us this form with your corrected address, or fax your changes to (785) 864-3199.

Name _____________________________________________________________  Title _________________________________________________

Agency ___________________________________________________________ Phone _______________________________________________

Street Address _____________________________________________________ E-mail address ________________________________________

City __________________________    State ___________________________ Zip + 4 __________________
The Kansas TransReporter is an educational and technology transfer newsletter published quarterly by the Kansas University Transportation Center (KUTC), under the umbrella of KU’s Transportation Research Institute. The newsletter is free to rural and specialized transit providers and others with an interest in rural and specialized service. The Kansas TransReporter is co-sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration under its Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) and the Kansas Department of Transportation.

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SWTA Annual Conference & Expo – Joint conference with Texas Transit Association
February 28–March 3, 2011
Austin, TX
http://www.swta.org

APTA Legislative Conference
March 13-15, 2011
Washington, DC
http://www.apta.com

**To register for a Kansas RTAP workshop, go to http://www.ksrtap.org. Click on “Register to attend.” Questions? Contact Kristin Kelly at (785) 864-2594 or kbkelly@ku.edu.**

### Rural Transit Training and Conferences

#### 2010 Driver Training:

**Kansas RTAP Driver Training: Defensive Driving and Emergency Procedures**
- October 7 in Garden City, KS
- Contact Kansas RTAP

**Kansas RTAP Driver Training: Defensive Driving and Passenger Assistance Skills**
- October 14 in Pittsburg, KS
- October 21 in Newton, KS
- Contact Kansas RTAP

**Please note!** The 2011 Kansas RTAP driver training calendar is being planned now. Spring offerings will be announced in December. If you have requests for locations convenient to agencies in your area, please contact Anne Lowder at Kansas RTAP, alowder@ku.edu.

### Additional Training:

**APTA Annual Meeting**
- October 3-6, 2010
- San Antonio, TX
- [http://www.apta.com](http://www.apta.com)

**19th National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation**
- October 24-27, 2010
- Burlington, VT
- [http://www.trbruralconference.org](http://www.trbruralconference.org)

**Tribal Transit Conference**
- November 21-23, 2010
- Fort McDowell, AZ
- [http://conference.navajotransit.com](http://conference.navajotransit.com)

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