



# Opportunities for Innovation to Improve Transportation for People with Disabilities

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# Presenter



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# Presentation Content



1. The importance of transportation for seniors and individuals with disabilities



2. Mobility management strategies for urban, suburban and rural areas



3. State-level transportation coordination and mobility management

# The Important Role of Transportation



- The purpose of the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Settings Rule is to ensure that people receiving services are provided personal choice and control over the services in which they participate.
- The goal is to provide people the opportunity to control personal resources and achieve integration into their local communities in the manner, and to the degree which the person chooses.
- This includes opportunities to seek employment, work in competitive and integrated settings, engage in community life, control personal resources and receive services in the community to the same degree as people who do not receive Home and Community Based Services.




# GOAL: Achieve Full Community Integration

- The CMS HCBS Settings Rule is an unprecedented opportunity to realize the full intent of the Olmstead decision
- Living, working, recreating and being a full member of the community
- Choice of options for individuals with disabilities should be the same as for those without disabilities



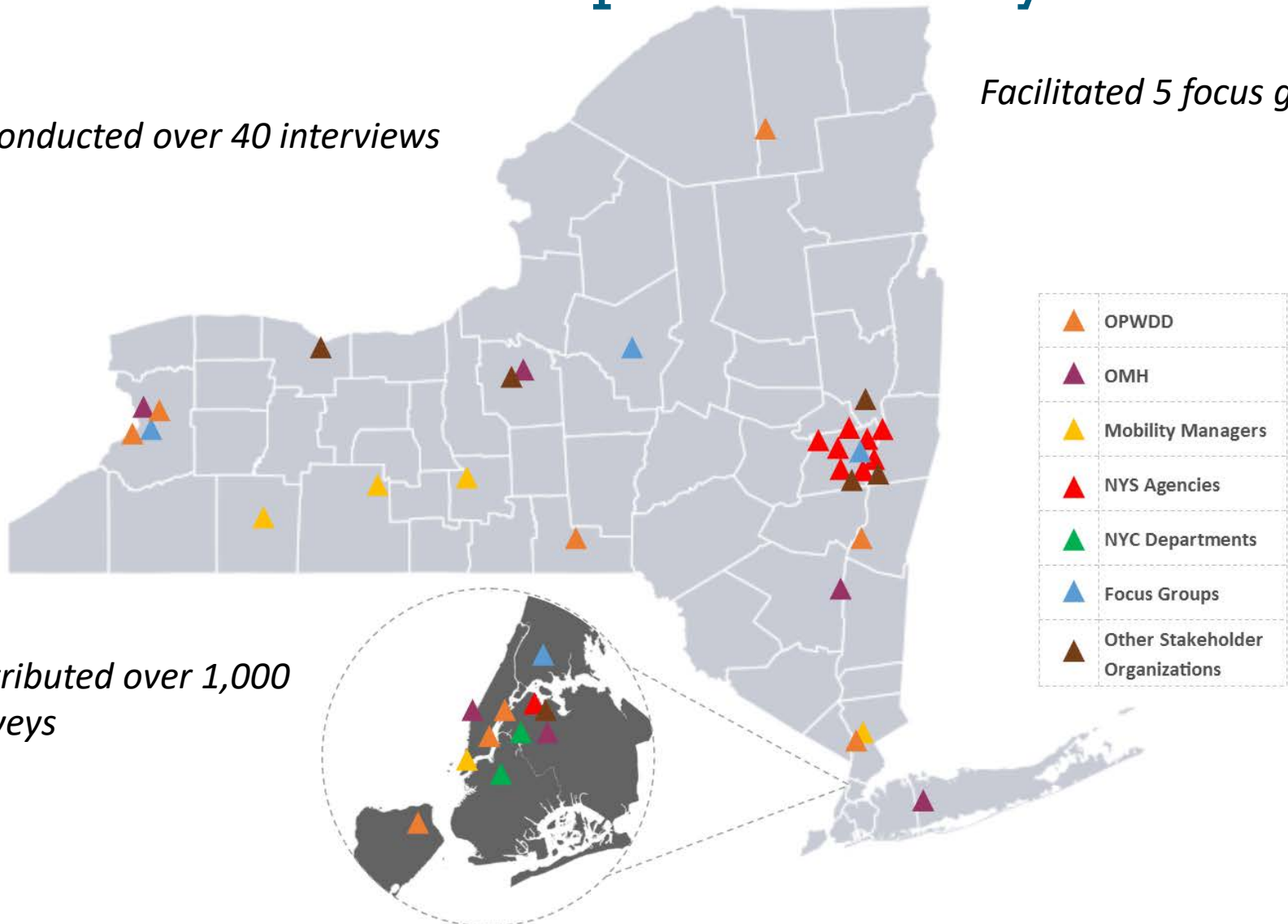
# Challenges in the Current Environment: Transportation

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- Transportation is often included in the rate paid for a unit of service
  - Vehicles are often assigned to locations or staff use their own vehicles
  - Staff levels are tied to service design not individual wants and desires
  - Use or availability of public transportation is not an option or is extremely limited

# New York State Transportation Study

*Conducted over 40 interviews*

*Facilitated 5 focus groups*



*Distributed over 1,000 surveys*

# High Level Observations in NY

- No consistency or clarity in transportation or funding mechanisms
- Limited or nonexistent data on transportation costs, rates, number of trips provided and individuals served
- Limited mobility management best practice sharing
- Restricted transportation options in rural areas



# NY Findings



## Transit Infrastructure Gaps

- Availability and Accessibility of Public Transit
- Availability and Affordability of Paratransit and Accessible Taxis
- Access to Employment Opportunities
- Long and/or Unreliable Trips



## Laws and Regulations

- Restrictions on Hiring Drivers and Who Can Transport Specific Individuals with Disabilities
- Difficult to Meet Funding Source Requirements
- Medicaid-Only Transport Available

# NY Findings



## Vehicle Use Gaps

- Age of Fleet
- Replacement and Back-up Vehicle Availability
- High Mileage on Vehicles
- Vehicles Not Maximized
- Accessibility of Vehicles



## Business Operations Gaps

- Staffing and Driver Challenges
- Increasing Costs
- Decreased Funding
- Data Management
- Insurance Cost and Liabilities

# State-level Transportation Coordination and Mobility Management



# Two-Pronged Approach

1

Mobility management strategies for urban, suburban and rural areas

2

State-level transportation coordination and mobility management

# Definitions

**Mobility management** is a customer-focused approach that **CONNECTS** riders with transportation services so that seniors, people with disabilities, low-income workers, and youth can access the trips they need to get to jobs, services and community life

**Human Service Transportation Coordination** programs for individuals with disabilities, seniors and persons with low income are usually state and/or federally funded and **PROVIDE** critical transportation services to individuals who are unable to access either public or paratransit services

# Mobility Management Strategies

## One-Call/ One-Click system



System with a centralized information repository on a range of transportation services, which occurs along a spectrum of functionality and may provide program information, transportation itinerary planning, trip eligibility assistance, available transportation service information, and trip booking.

## Vehicle sharing among providers



Human service agencies with complementary needs can share vehicles with one another to lower overall transportation costs for each organization. Program can operate in a variety of ways depending upon who owns the vehicle and how it is shared. Typically, two agencies purchase a vehicle together and use at complementary times.

## Agency tailored transit



Human service and transit agencies work together to request routing changes (such as closer to residences/agencies) or improvements (such as better bus stop location) that better serve customers. Can decrease reliance on costly agency-operated or contracted paratransit service.

# Mobility Management Strategies

## Travel training



Training provided to individuals or groups to use public transit services for a particular trip, or to better understand the transit system so individuals feel comfortable with the system. Includes one-on-one travel training for those with cognitive disabilities and volunteer bus buddy programs for older adults.

## Volunteer driver programs



These programs are commonly used for rural transportation. Volunteer drivers use their own cars or operate agency vehicles (such as the Disabled American Veteran program). These programs can use new technologies such as digital ride boards to connect users and riders, and can be consolidated or combined into a centrally managed/coordinated service.

## Flexible transportation voucher programs



Individuals are issued or sold vouchers, according to eligibility, that can be used to pay for transportation services (e.g. taxis, transportation network companies, volunteer drivers). Particularly useful in rural areas. Sponsoring agencies can subsidize trips but also cap contribution amounts.

## Taxi/ Transportation Network Company (TNC) voucher programs



Municipalities, transit agencies, and human service agencies use taxi voucher and subsidy programs to provide real-time on-demand service for customers, often partnering with transportation network companies. Can divert trips from more expensive paratransit services.

# State – Level Coordination Case Studies



## Massachusetts

- Statewide coordinated, brokered transportation system for multiple state human service agencies including Medicaid non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT)



## Florida

- Human service transportation and community transportation coordination, excluding Medicaid non-emergency medical transportation



## Georgia

- State Department of Human Services transportation coordinated regionally; Medicaid NEMT coordinated regionally as well, but separately



# Human Service Transportation Coordination



Primary **responsibilities** of a broker include:

- Contracting for services with local transportation providers
- Arranging consumer trips – trip authorization and processing, call center
- Monitoring and ensuring service quality (on-site inspections, consumer surveys, etc.)
- Developing routing and other strategies to increase system efficiency (trip consolidation among agencies) and cost effectiveness
- Tracking and reporting system usage and costs and monitoring performance benchmarks

# Human Service Transportation Coordination

**Benefits** to states, to participating human service agencies and to customers:



- Agencies know what they're spending, who they're serving and what services people are accessing via state-funded transportation
- Agencies can specifically budget for transportation for upcoming years and respond to programmatic changes
- States can identify dollars, people and services to which transportation is being utilized in the human service space
- Economies of scale and efficiencies achieved can result in additional dollars saved, which can be translated into more people served or creation of unique programming options
- Customers always know who to call with questions or concerns – single point of contact

# Human Service Transportation Coordination



Potential **challenges** to consider:

- States may not have an overarching state-level HST Office or the appropriate “housing” to establish one
- Agencies may be reluctant to participate in a coordinated system due to “ownership” of in-house transportation programs or fear of losing control
- State level coordination may require legislative action
- Political implications/ advocacy groups

# Takeaways



- Transportation continues to be a key and critical component for seniors and individuals with disabilities to access the services they need and to be active members of their communities
- There are many ways to address transportation issues including local mobility management strategies and large scale state reform – and everything in between
- State level coordination efforts support local mobility management strategies
- States can customize human service transportation coordination and mobility management programs to fit their needs – not a one size fits all approach
- Although transportation will continue to be a challenge, states are beginning to put more focus on coordination and also support local mobility management strategies (New York)

# Questions, Discussion and Other Ideas



# Contact Information

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