



Open Discussion on Transportation: Key Points & Insights for Stark County

March 13, 2025



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Addressing Transportation Barriers: A Community Discussion on Access and Solutions

As part of the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHA), the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) subcommittee—focused on reducing non-treatment barriers to behavioral health access—examined social barriers in greater depth. To support this effort, a survey was developed to assess the social barriers impacting Stark County residents. The survey was administered through organizations during the fall and winter of 2024.

The final report included detailed responses from 137 residents, all of whom were at least 18 years old and actively receiving services from one or more of the participating organizations. These organizations included Access Health Stark County, CommQuest, Aultman Generations, Stark County Health Department, Massillon City Health Department, and Alliance Family Health Center.

Limited transportation remains a major challenge, preventing many residents from accessing medical care, grocery stores, and other essential services.

On March 13th, the Stark County Health Department hosted an open discussion focused on transportation barriers in Stark County. The goal was to explore potential solutions and share insights to improve access to transportation services. The conversation was guided by four main categories of questions.

This report presents selected results from the Social Barriers Survey, along with key points and insights from the open discussion.



Social Barriers Survey Snapshot

46%

Listed Transportation as something that has ever kept them or someone from their household from attending a doctor or health related appointment

34.6%

Reported they were unable to get where they need to go because of transportation more than once a month or more often; 15% reported they had this issue several times a year.

76.9%

Experienced at least one (of about 15) transportation related issues in the past year.

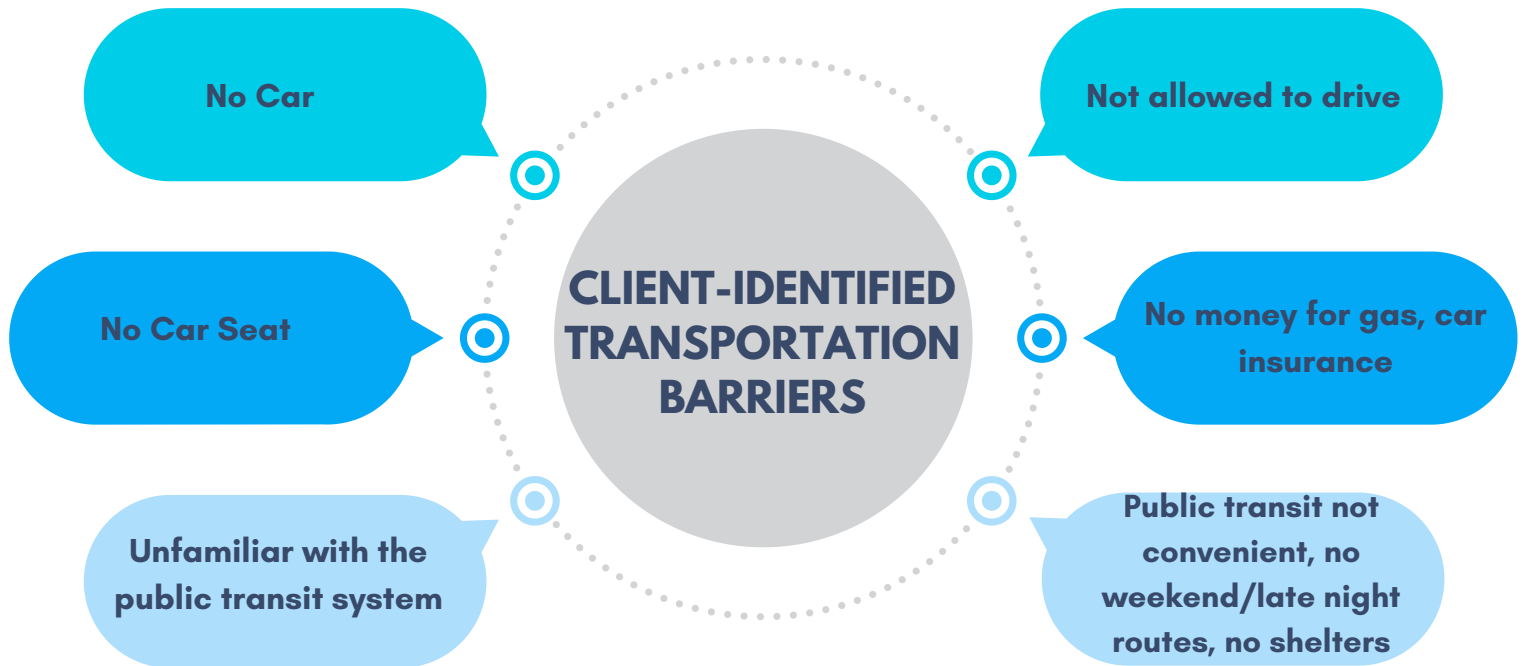
THE MOST PREVALENT TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES

Unable to afford Uber, Lyft, or cab services	35%
Difficulty maintaining or repairing a vehicle	34.3%
Difficulty buying a vehicle because of credit	29.2%
Do not have others to rely on for a ride	29.2%
Unable to afford a car payment	27%
A ride from friends or family fell through	27%
Not having a valid driver's license	26.3%



A car or vehicle and gas money or gas card were mentioned most often when asked what they need to make sure that they and their families can get to the places they need to be at like a job or doctor's appointment.

Q1. WHAT ARE YOU HEARING (FROM YOUR CLIENTS)? WHAT ARE THE MAIN ISSUES WITH TRANSPORTATION IN STARK COUNTY?



PRIMARY TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES IN STARK COUNTY

- Case manager/navigators no longer able to transport clients due to liability
- Not enough knowledge on what managed care plans offer/provide
- No longer able to obtain student/adult bus passes (agency cost match no longer offered, cannot get ahold of anyone at SARTA)
- No funding for transportation available
- Not all clients eligible for Medicaid/other resources (Hispanic/above poverty line)
- Unable to schedule same day appointments – most of the time
- Workforce capacity – dedicated staff/police/EMT secure transport
- Language barriers/interpretation

Q2. WHAT ARE THE TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN STARK COUNTY?

Alliance Family Health Center

Patients only

- \$20 gas cards (prenatal only)
- Free Rx delivery
- Bus Passes

CHW's

- Connect clients with transportation resources and explain Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) to ensure they understand their options.

Community Legal Aid

- Assist with driver's license suspensions

Managed Care Plans

- Offer some same day rides for specific treatments
- Rides for curb side groceries
- Gas mileage reimbursement

Mercy Cleveland Clinic

- Bus Passes
- Uber Health (Oncology patients only)

SARTA

- Travel training
- Community shopping days
- Student Bus Passes
- Proline

United Way

- Auto Repair Program

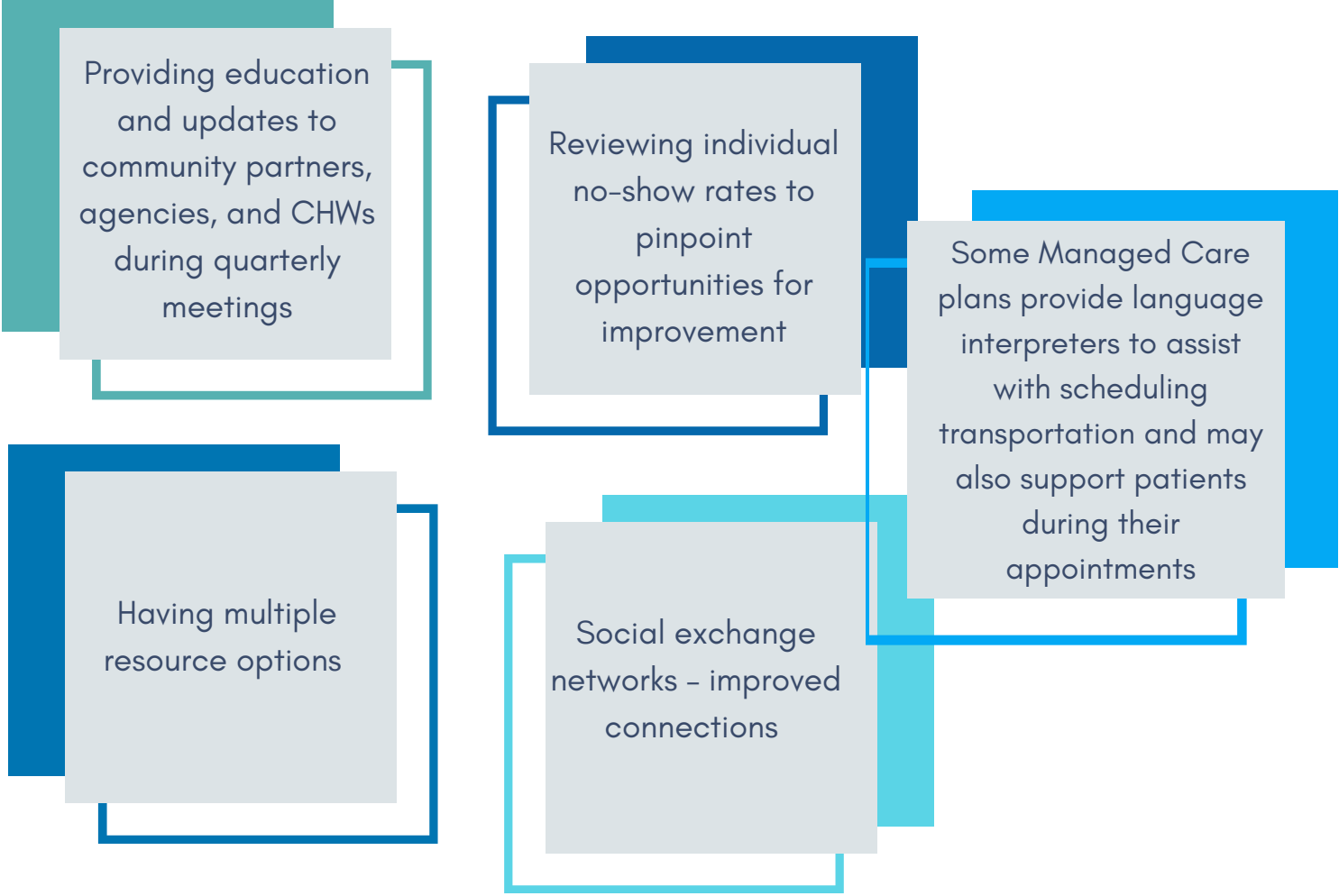
Walgreens

- RX Delivery through DoorDash

Other Resources

- StarkHelpCentral.com
- Pocket transportation guide
- Uber Health
- Uber Youth

Q3. WHAT IS CURRENTLY WORKING?



Providing education and updates to community partners, agencies, and CHWs during quarterly meetings

Reviewing individual no-show rates to pinpoint opportunities for improvement

Some Managed Care plans provide language interpreters to assist with scheduling transportation and may also support patients during their appointments

Having multiple resource options

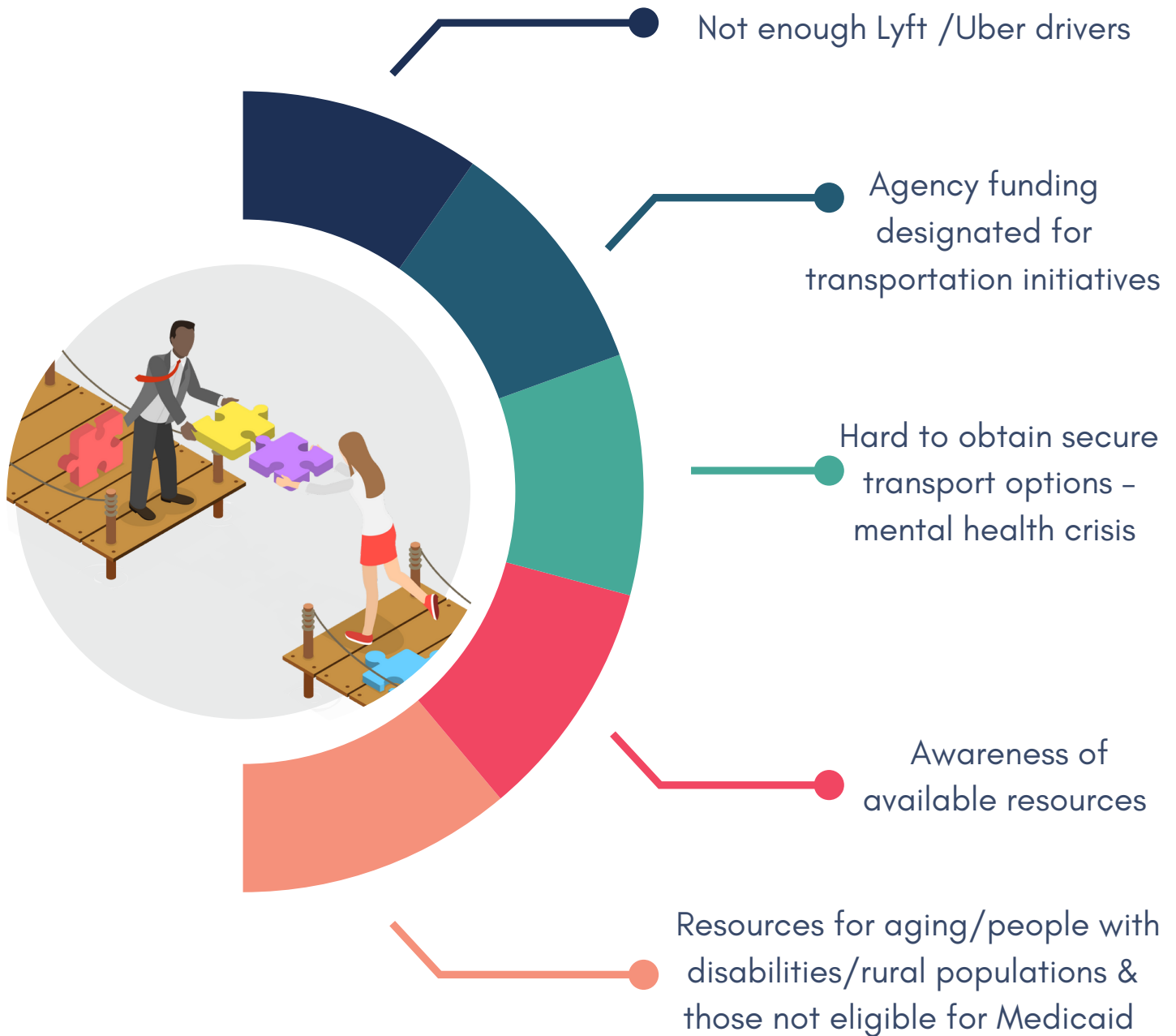
Social exchange networks – improved connections

WHAT NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED?



Providing community members with resources isn't enough. A dedicated employee should be assigned to guide clients through the process and help them navigate systems, especially during their first few experiences.

Q4. WHAT ARE THE GAPS IN STARK COUNTY?



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase Awareness of Free Travel Training from SARTA
- Encourage clients to report any transportation challenges they experience, as their feedback helps SARTA identify and implement meaningful improvements
- Enhance Education on Managed Care Plans to community agencies and members
 - Explore opportunities for Lucas Live (Lucas Tindell) to facilitate an informational session on managed care plan options
- Offer additional training to equip transportation providers with the knowledge and skills to better support passengers with behavioral health needs
- Host a Transportation Provider Fair
- Collaborations with local organizations to explore cost-saving strategies, such as reducing expenses for Uber Health services



AGENCIES PRESENT AT OPEN DISCUSSION MEETING

Access Health Stark County
AHEAD Inc.
Alliance Family Health Center
AmeriHealth Caritas
Buckeye Health Plan
Canton City Public Health
Care Source
Cleveland Clinic Mercy
CommQuest
Community Members
Direction Home
Domestic Violence Project Inc
Massillon City Health Department
North Canton Medical Foundation

Ohio State University Extension
Phoenix Rising
Provide A Ride
SARTA
SCCAA Head Start
Shipley Clinic
Stark Community Foundation
Stark County Educational Service Center
Stark County Family Council
Stark County Health Department
StarkMHAR
United Healthcare
United Way of Greater Stark County



