



November 1, 2024

Susan Montgomery
Director, Division of Long Term Care
New York State Department of Health
Office of Health Insurance Programs
One Commerce Plaza, Room 1620
Albany, NY 12210

Re: Addressing the Transportation Crisis for SADC Providers

Dear Ms. Montgomery:

We at the New York State Adult Day Services Association (NYSADSA) are writing to bring your attention to a critical issue facing Social Adult Day Care (SADC) providers across New York State. With the implementation of **Managed Long Term Care (MLTC) Policy 24.01** effective January 1, 2025, Medicaid participants will no longer be able to utilize non-emergency transportation services provided via Medical Answering Services (MAS) to attend their SADC programs. This shift will impose significant challenges on SADC providers and lead to devastating consequences for the vulnerable populations these programs serve.

The Importance of SADC Services

SADC provides a supportive community environment where adults with disabilities and elderly individuals can engage in meaningful activities, receive essential care, and build social connections, enhancing their overall quality of life. These elements are recognized as key social determinants of health, as outlined by Healthy People 2030¹, which emphasizes that factors like social connection and access to transportation directly impact health outcomes. Furthermore, the Surgeon General's report on social isolation highlights the profound negative health effects of loneliness, including increased risk of heart disease, stroke, and dementia, all of which disproportionately affect the populations served by SADCs.

Removal of MAS from SADC Package (MLTC Policy 24.01)

Current transportation rates for SADC, typically ranging from \$10 to \$15 per trip, are inadequate to meet the costs associated with vehicle operation, fuel, maintenance, driver wages, and other related expenses. Consequently, many providers depend on MAS to mitigate these operational burdens. Furthermore, Medicaid transportation options frequently lack sufficient coverage in upstate regions, including rural areas of the Hudson Valley, many suburban communities on Long Island, and various neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Queens. With the implementation of MLTC Policy 24.01 and the subsequent elimination of access to MAS, the viability of SADC transportation services will become increasingly untenable.

¹ "Healthy People 2030 | odphp.health.gov.", <https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople>.

Challenges from Stagnant Reimbursement Rates

Compounding this issue is the financial landscape that has developed over the past decade. While MLTC plans benefit from consistent annual rate increases, many SADC providers have seen their rates stagnate for over a decade.

The stagnation of SADC rates has resulted in serious challenges. Providers struggle to hire and retain qualified staff, leading to burnout and high turnover rates. Coupled with substantial increases in costs, such as food, supplies, and other expenses, this situation negatively impacts the quality of care provided to our participants. Without access to MAS, the additional burden of transportation costs will force many SADC programs to cut services or close their doors altogether.

These changes will affect not only clients who rely on the care we provide, but also their families and the broader community. We face the risk of increased isolation and declining health for those in need of SADC. Moreover, families and caregivers will experience greater burdens, impacting their time, job commitments, and economic stability.

We urge you to advocate for the reinstatement of and access to MAS in SADC programs. Furthermore, it is imperative that we secure rate increases for SADC to reflect the rising costs of providing care. We want to ensure the sustainability of the essential services our programs provide and protect the well-being of our most vulnerable populations.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to your support and commitment to safeguarding the future of SADC in New York State.

Sincerely,



Ann Marie Selfridge
President
NYSADSA

cc: Dianne Kiernan
Kate Bliss
Paul Pfeiffer
Robert Schmit