

Medical Chaperone Program



Agency on Aging
OF SOUTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT
Your Advocate for Independence®



Beverly Kidder
August 2023

Medical Chaperone Program Objectives

1



Reduce incidences of missed medical appointments caused by transportation barriers

2



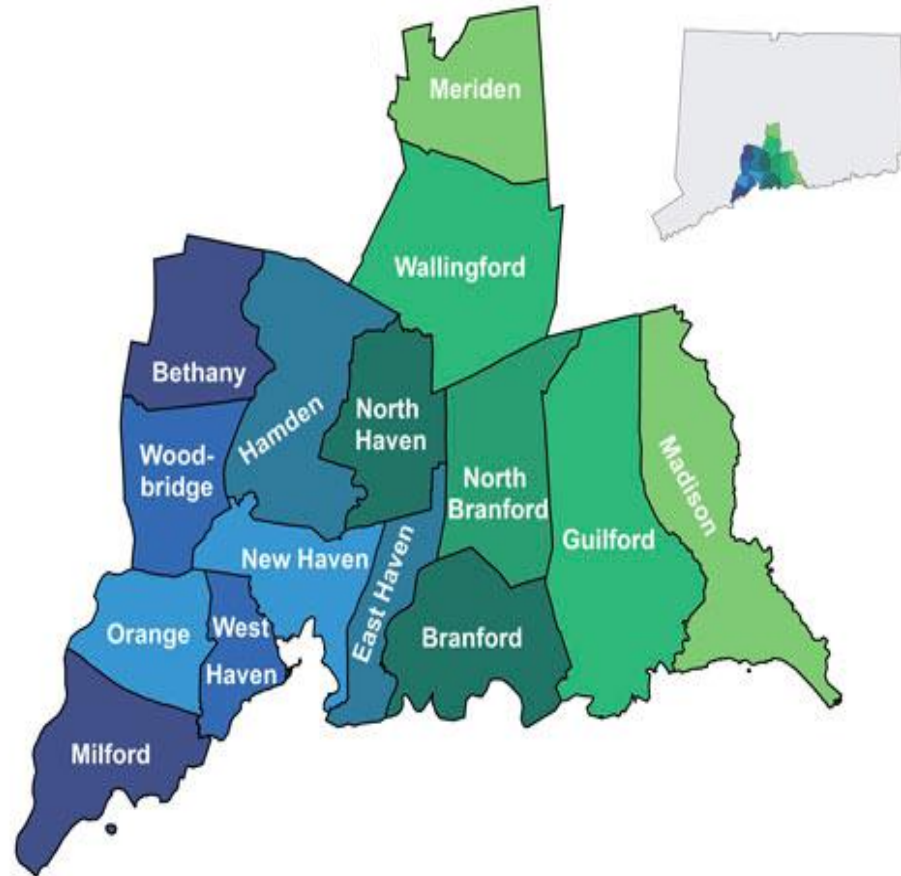
Improve social connections for clients

3



Reduce burden for families caring for older adults and people with disabilities who have trouble traveling alone to appointments

Areas Served



Map of South Central Connecticut

224 one-way medical chaperoned rides were provided throughout the greater New Haven area. 57% of clients lived in our targeted high-need, inner-city communities.

Focused recruitment of clients and volunteers occurred within pre-identified zip codes.

- 06519 (New Haven)
- 06513 (Fair Haven)
- 06516 (West Haven)
- 06401 (Ansonia)
- 06540 (Meriden)

The pairing of clients with chaperones was based on geographical proximity and shared schedule availability.

- Recruited and Trained Volunteers: 17
- Average time volunteer chaperone spends traveling with each client: 2.3 hours

Transportation Services Used

Program Transportation Partners



36 total round-trip rides
52 scheduled



53 total round-trip rides
76 scheduled

Other Transportation Providers



10 total round-trip rides
10 scheduled



11 total round-trip rides
12 scheduled



2 total round-trip rides
3 scheduled

8.6: Average miles traveled from volunteer home to/from client home

12.3: Average miles traveled from client home to/from appointment site

Medical Chaperone Program Results

- 112 round-trips rides fulfilled between December 2022-June 2023
 - 92% of rides given to older adults (> 59 years old)
 - 97% of rides provided to people with disabilities (mobility and cognitive impairments, vision difficulties, anxiety were most common disabilities statuses amongst clients)
 - 87% of rides provided to low-income individuals
 - 42% of round-trip rides given to African American and Hispanic clients
- 17 volunteer chaperones recruited and trained
 - Racial Composition of volunteers: 2 Hispanic/Latino, 3 White, 12 African American/Black
 - Age of volunteers: <51 years =4, 51-60 years =2, 61-70 years= 6, >70 years =5
 - Gender of volunteers: 100% female

Program Outcomes



No Appointments
Cancelled Due to
Transportation Issues



No reported Client or
Volunteer
Dissatisfaction

Program Impact Through Testimonials

Providing Assistance Through Medical Facilities

Mary Wade User, Male, Uses Wheelchair

“I do not know what obstacles I’m going to encounter [when I go to the doctor]. For example, last time, I had to go into an elevator to get to the appointment, and I struggled to figure out where to go. This time, the chaperone was able to help me check in to my appointment on the iPad. I would have never done that by myself because the check-in was up high, making it impossible to reach.”



Driver assists client in wheelchair as she boards a wheelchair-accessible bus. Chaperone stands to the client’s right, holding her wheelchair to secure it in place.

Program Impact Through Testimonials

Providing Social-Emotional Support

IVCG User, Female, Uses Cane (and Occasionally a Wheelchair)

“... The transportation provider had an unexpected situation arise with another traveler. I waited a couple of hours for [the driver’s] return. Had I been alone in the waiting room, not knowing when or if the driver would return, I would have been in tears. The chaperone called the driver and kept in contact with him until he returned. She provided me with updates about [the driver’s] position. **We talked about so many things. I was calm and actually enjoyed the company [of my chaperone].**”



Chaperone in foreground converses with client facing away from the camera. These social interactions are common throughout all steps of service delivery from introduction through departure.

Program Impact Through Testimonials

Providing Relief for Older Adult Caregivers

IVCG User, Female, Uses Cane and Experiences Social Anxiety

“Thank God for this Agency. My daughter normally makes and accompanies me to my medical appointments but she was unable to do so this time around because of a personal conflict. I definitely needed a chaperone. It’s hard to do things on my own. The chaperone was focused on me and lent an arm or hand if needed.”



Chaperone stands on the left of a client with a cane as she descends stairs. All chaperones are trained to provide physical assistance commensurate with clients' needs.

Program Limitations and Challenges

1



Recruitment of volunteers.
Scale of program limited by # of volunteers who can be deployed.

2



Schedule changes due to client illness and/or health providers cancelling or changing appointment times with limited notice.

3



Securing affordable and reliable transportation for younger (< 60) adults and people with disabilities.

Program Lessons

- 1** Older adults would like to attend their medical appointments but they want medical providers, transportation professionals and family members to respect their independence and sense of agency. Chaperones satisfy this need because they are viewed as peers which makes it possible for them to ultimately become true confidantes/friends.
- 2** Programs like the Medical Chaperone Program need to build in volunteer stipends/travel reimbursement resources as part of their model. This allows greater inclusion of community volunteers who want to help their neighbors but need their costs (travel, time) to be covered.

Sustainability & Future Program Directions

Funding

- Chaperone program funding is secured through July 2024
- CCC grant application pending
- Ultimate sustainability: insurance reimbursement through medicare/medicaid

Refine and expand Medical Chaperone program operations in year 2 by:

- Establish intergenerational volunteer pipeline through creation of university partnerships.
- Utilize existing volunteer cohort to help train incoming chaperones and provide in-person orientations at major medical facilities where clients are likely to go.
- Expand utilization of service by caregivers by providing information to local companies as part of their work/life balance initiatives.