Using the Internet for Medicaid Transportation Brokering

Paratransit Services is using new telecommunications technology to make life easier for our Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) ride providers and clients, and to increase the overall efficiency of this service. Two examples of this are Integrated Voice Response and our Ride Check Website.

Integrated Voice Response

The Integrated Voice Response (IVR) system works in conjunction with ProviderNet and Trapeze™. After a ride provider enters the pick-up time in ProviderNet, the IVR program automatically dials the client's telephone number between 11:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. on the day before the scheduled ride. A recorded voice then informs the client of the time and date of the trip, and identifies the ride provider.

This system is currently being tested in Snohomish County, Washington, and a preliminary survey has indicated that IVR is being well received by our clients. When fully operational, IVR will provide an important savings in staff time.

Ride Check Website

The newest technical development being tested by our Technical Services team is "Ride Check," a web portal, accessible either through our Paratransit Services website (www.paratransit.net) or through a separate Paratransit Services subdomain, that enables our NEMT clients to retrieve travel information for next-day and same-day rides brokered through our Washington State NEMT brokerage center. To access ride information, the client or the head of household of the client (e.g., if the client is a child), need only to enter the last name and the DSHS ID number. The information provided includes the name of the client, pick-up time, and the transportation provider who is providing the transportation.

This service has passed all preliminary tests and has recently been approved by the State of Washington for use in the NEMT program. Once fully implemented, this service will provide a new convenience for our clients and lower the volume of trip-verification calls coming into our brokerage center, allowing our customer service representatives to more quickly respond to new trip requests.

For more information call Paratransit Services: 1-800-933-3468
website: www.paratransit.net
**Government to Stop Collecting Long-Distance Telephone Tax**

IRS News Release regarding excise tax on long-distance telephone service. Forward to your finance department—this could save you some MONEY!

WASHINGTON - The Internal Revenue Service today announced that it will stop collecting the federal excise tax on long-distance telephone service.

The tax on telephone services was first imposed in 1898. The current rate is 3% of the charges billed for these services. The IRS announcemenent follows decisions in five federal appeals courts holding that the tax does not apply to long-distance service as it is billed today.

Taxpayers will be eligible to file for refunds of all excise tax they have paid on long-distance service billed to them after Feb. 28, 2003. Interest will be paid on these refunds.

Taxpayers will claim this refund on their 2006 tax returns. In order to minimize burden, the IRS expects to announce soon a simplified method that individuals may use.

"So taxpayers won't have to spend time digging through old telephone bills, we're designing a straightforward process that taxpayers may use when they file their tax returns next year," said IRS Commissioner Mark W. Everson. "Claiming a refund will be simple and fair."

The IRS announcement does not affect the federal excise tax on local telephone service, which remains in effect. Likewise, various state and local taxes and fees paid by telephone customers are also unaffected.

More information can be found in IRS Notice 2006-50, posted on IRS.gov. It will also be published in Internal Revenue Bulletin 2006-25, dated June, 19, 2006.

IR-2006-82, May 25, 2006
See also: www.IRS.gov/newsroom

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**Meet Our Technical Services Manager!**

Wayne Evans and his team keep our technical systems running at peak performance.

Paratransit Services is fortunate in our ability to attract and retain talented professionals to our staff. A prime example of this is our Technical Services Manager, Wayne Evans.

A software developer with 25 years experience in information systems, Mr. Evans is skilled in a variety of programming languages (including C, C Sharp, Visual Basic, Visual Basic Script, and Java) and has developed applications through their entire life cycle for the U.S. Navy, British Telecom, Concurrent Technologies Corporations, XO Communications, Datalink Inc., Red Bull, and Slipka-Deakman Associates on a variety of platforms including Pocket PC and Windows CE Hand Held devices.

Wayne and his team of information technology professionals provide 24/7 support to all of Paratransit Services' transit and call center operations. They provide hardware, software, and network maintenance as well as the development of enterprise level applications for our operations. They are also responsible for our recent advancements in utilizing the Internet to broker Medicaid trips in Washington State (see story inside).

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Networking and Telecommunications Technology Newsletter