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Potential solutions for reducing transportation barriers to child healthcare access

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Adequate transportation of children for health care is essential to both short-run and long-run economic vitality. In the short-run, child health outcomes are highly correlated with parental work absentee rates. In the long-run, children's health is critical to school attendance and associated academic successes. Perhaps more importantly, adequate health care access for children is critical to the quality of overall family life. While child health care access is challenging in any setting, it is particularly vexing in rural areas where low population densities and longer transit distances increase transport costs. Accordingly, the current research is aimed at identifying and describing methods of improving health care-related transportation for children in rural communities.

Absent a dramatic and unlikely increase in financial resources, mitigating transportation barriers to health care access for children in rural regions must rely on inventive measures that increase system utilization through improved coordination between transportation providers, medical facilities, and responsible government entities. Potential strategies include blending the vehicle fleets of, otherwise, separate organizations, developing hybrid programs that mix fixed route and demand-response services, and providing supervised travel for children without an accompanying adult.

In many settings, these strategies are constrained by institutional relationships that limit the sharing of resources based on often spurious concerns regarding costs. Scheduling and advance-notice requirements also often hamper efforts to improve transportation access, particularly in the case of acute care. Nonetheless, as the current work will document, institutional barriers can be overcome with the result of measurably improved health care outcomes for children.

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this session, participants will

- better understand alternatives for reducing transportation barriers to child healthcare access and
- better understand institutional obstacles to coordinating existing transportation resources.

[Transportation Barriers to Child Health Access](#)

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