

Resolution 2019-4

OPPOSING CHANGES TO THE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 mandates that in any area where fixed-bus route service is offered, door-to-door service to the elderly, the disabled and other people who cannot use or access the regular bus service must also be offered; and

WHEREAS, most counties in Pennsylvania are responsible for the coordination of these paratransit services, which they either provide directly, as the Area Transportation Authority does, or through a subcontractor; and

WHEREAS, MATP provides needed transportation to the most vulnerable members of our community which includes free trips to non-emergency medical appointments for individuals who qualify for Medical Transportation Assistance, seniors and persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Area Transportation Authority conducts over 5203 MATP related transports a year and MATP funding represents a large percentage of the overall funding for the transit authority; and

WHEREAS, on June 22, 2018, the State Legislature, in the final hours of the passage of the state budget, adopted language into the Human Services Fiscal Code (HB 1677) directing the Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide the Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP) through a statewide or regional full-risk brokerage system and the measure was approved by the Governor the same day; and

WHEREAS, the original incentive for implementing a full-risk brokerage was the promise of additional federal funding for DHS of \$15 million statewide, however, additional analysis now shows the estimated cost to the Commonwealth will be significantly higher, resulting in zero savings realized, and significant additional financial burden placed on PA taxpayers through other funding mechanisms that are already oversubscribed, and adding additional layers to the delivery of MATP services; and

WHEREAS, across the state, MATP funding exceeds 30% of the shared ride/paratransit programs.; and

WHEREAS, currently, Pennsylvania functions under a “coordinated system” which is a national model of efficiency and is illustrated in a recent Transportation Research Board report which shows our state’s shared ride model is the third-lowest MATP cost nationally; and

WHEREAS, brokering MATP service will result in many MATP trips being removed from that coordinated system which will increase costs overall, reduce coordination which will result in a significant loss in service productivity and reduce the geographic service area and hours of service, meaning seniors and persons with disabilities will see a reduction in available service; and

WHEREAS, in Pennsylvania, DHS primarily contracts with counties who are responsible for managing MATP and delivering service to eligible persons either directly or through subcontractors; and most Counties use Pennsylvania’s public shared-ride transportation systems to manage and deliver this service.; and

WHEREAS, the move to a brokered MATP service would take away local management over MATP and transfer jobs and funding to agencies outside of the Counties where the services are being provided thereby potentially turning the funding over to large statewide or even international corporations which have little interest in local concerns: and

WHEREAS, the Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority which provides MATP service through its “Lift Program” is projecting an estimated loss of revenue of \$2.1 million annually which will eventually lead to rate increases not only for all Lift riders but also those who use EMTA’s fixed-route bus service, as well as it also could lead to layoffs of drivers, mechanics and other EMTA employees; and

WHEREAS, the Area Transportation Authority is anticipating a loss of local management over MATP services, constituents will experience a loss of continuity in who they work with to arrange for these critical and often life sustaining transportation services, a loss of efficiency as agencies outside the region will be managing customer calls, and overall cuts to funding and services (including local jobs) as the result of a move to a statewide or regional full-risk brokerage system,

WHEREAS, independent research indicates that removing MATP from the coordinated model will very likely result in the need to increase revenue from the remaining funding sources, including the MATP program, by increasing the Cost to The Commonwealth by an estimated 23% or \$31.5 Million, and under the worst-case scenario where local transit providers would lose all MATP trips, the Commonwealth would experience a \$63.8 million increase in costs; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Cameron County Board of Commissioners do hereby oppose the changes being made to the Medical Assistance Transportation Program involving a transition to a statewide or regional full-risk brokerage system by the State Legislature and the Department of Human Services;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Cameron County Board of Commissioners will submit this resolution and accompanying letter of disapproval to the regional legislative Representatives and State Senators, and provide copies to the state Department of Humans Services and the Governor office as well as regional Commissioners in an effort to respectfully request the Administration and General Assembly take steps to suspend the award of the RFA and consider taking action to study this issue further before initiating any changes

ADOPTED this 21st day of March 2019.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Lori J Reed, Chair

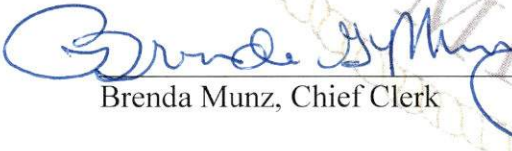


Phillip P. Jones



H. James Thomas

Attest:



Brenda Munz, Chief Clerk