



2016 Board Annual Retreat
County Commissioner's Topic of Interest
Submitted by: Commissioner Leake

Topic of Interest: Prescription Drugs and Transportation for Seniors

Please provide the funding amount allocated for transportation and prescription drugs for seniors. In addition, scenarios are requested of various funding increases for transportation and prescription drugs for seniors that summarizes the financial impact. For example, an additional \$1 million will provide transportation services for (X) seniors and cover (\$X) in prescription cost.

Response – Prescription Drugs:

Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services (DSS) has budgeted funding of \$7,000 available to assist eligible individuals with medical supplies and medication needs. Customers in need of this assistance must have previously applied for Medicaid and have been denied or eligibility is pending. Requests for individuals who have active Medicaid cases (authorized or certified status) will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for assistance in emergency or crisis situations. Funds are distributed based upon resident need; no funding is set aside solely for seniors.

In many instances, MedAssist referrals are completed after determining whether or not the needed prescription is available through MedAssist. DSS staff will provide the MedAssist application to the customer and advise what information they need to take with them. If MedAssist does not carry the medication, the customer is not able to purchase the medication and the medication is for a life-threatening condition (high blood pressure, antibiotics, diabetes, etc.), DSS staff will work with local pharmacies to secure the best pricing for the medication. The pharmacist/vendor will verify the expense of a maximum 30-day supply of medication for the customer.

Q: How many persons could we assist with additional funding?

A: This is difficult to project for three reasons. First, the type of medicine needed per client varies. Second, the per client medicine cost varies. Third, reimbursement provided by DSS to MedAssist is at cost (which is drastically cheaper) for purchasing the medication, versus if we use another pharmacist/vendor where the County would be required to pay the full retail value. Below, is an estimate based on total FY2015 spend, divided by the number of customer served, based on incremental funding increase:

FY2015			Additional Customers Served via Additional Funds			
Number of Customers	Funds Spent	Per Client Average		\$10,000	\$20,000	\$30,000
311	\$ 5,329	\$17.14	# of clients served	584	1,167	1,751

Response – Transportation:

While transportation services for seniors is currently provided through Medicaid or North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) grant funding, such services are coincidental to the seniors' qualifications for eligibility, and trip purposes are limited to those allowed by the funding source (almost exclusively to medical providers). The only funding dedicated solely to seniors in Mecklenburg County for the purposes of medical, pharmacy, grocery shopping, senior centers, paid employment, and community recreation facilities is Elderly General Purpose (EGP) transportation, funded through local ½ cent sales tax. The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) allocates approximately \$112,000 to DSS annually for the EGP program. This program has served 85 customers FY16 to date but has been closed to new customers for several years. Increased funding would provide additional transportation for seniors as follows:

Transportation--based on a year-to-date average (vendor) one-way trip cost of \$18.50 (including ambulatory and wheelchair), on an average miles/trip of 7.6:

Additional Funding	Number of new customers @ 1 round trip/week for six months	Number of new customers @ 1 round trip/week for 1 year
\$50,000	56	28
\$100,000	112	56
\$500,000	563	281
\$1,000,000	1,126	563
\$2,000,000	2,252	1,126