

## **Ft. McDermitt Wellness Center Transportation Policies and Procedures**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Fort McDermitt Wellness Center provides transportation services to patients of the center as a courtesy. Our transportation services are limited to eligible patients who seek medical, dental, optometry, or referral care--other types of treatment services for an opportunity to access health care.

### **POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

At any time while transporting patients, drivers may receive personal and medical information relating to a patient receiving NEMT services. Nearly all information received about patients may be considered Protected Health Information (PHI). This includes patient's name and contact information, pick-up/drop-off location, Medicaid numbers, and information about a patient's health care provider(s). As soon as a driver receives or has access to PHI, it may become subject to regulations set forth in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) to protect the confidentiality, integrity and availability of this information. Drivers must safeguard the use and disclosure of patient PHI in accordance with HIPAA and any other applicable federal, state, or tribal statutes and regulations. PHI can only be shared with a limited set of individuals, including the patient, therefore the use of such information is restricted to **only** those uses directly connected with the services provided in transporting patients.

#### **1. Eligibility Criteria:**

To be eligible for Fort McDermitt Wellness Center **Non-Emergency Medical Transportation** (NEMT) services, a patient:

- a. Must be a registered patient (Active User) of the Fort McDermitt Wellness Center.
- b. Must provide proof of tribal membership—AIAN (American Indian/Alaska Native) proof of Eligibility, such as a tribal membership card, or other type of membership document provided by a federally recognized Tribe or from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
- c. Must reside within the Fort McDermitt Wellness Center Contract Health Service/Purchased Referred Care Delivery Area (CHSDA). The delivery care area for Fort McDermitt is within a 100-mile radius from the Wellness Center.
- d. Must have a current referral issued by a provider of the Fort McDermitt Wellness Center.

The NEMT services program must be the last resort for patients defined as eligible. All other alternate resources must be considered before transportation services can be utilized.

#### **2. Limitation of Services**

- a. The Indian Health Services Program that funds this service has restrictions that the Fort McDermitt Wellness Center must abide by. Under the IHS Indian Health Manual, Chapter 16, Transportation Policy, we are prohibited from transporting to outside agencies other than an IHS Facility or IHS referral sites.

#### **3. Priorities for Scheduling Transportation:**

- a. Tribal Elders
- b. All patients suffering from chronic medical conditions/illnesses
- c. All services are provided on a first come first served basis in accordance with eligibility criteria and priorities listed.

#### **4. Scheduling of Transports**

- a. The scheduling of transports shall be a shared responsibility between the PRC/CHS Referral Coordinator, Administrative Receptionist and/or Patient Registration.
- b. The transporters shall review the schedule and contact the patient to confirm arrangements for patient pick-up and drop-off.
- c. All transportation service requests must be received 72 hours in advance to be scheduled.
- d. Transportation accommodations will be made for the patient and may include 1 caregiver only.
- e. Patients are responsible for providing notification of cancellations directly to the PRC/CHS Referrals Coordinator, the Administrative Receptionist and/or Patient Registration.
- f. Whenever patients make their own scheduled appointments and request for NEMT services, the appointment must be made within the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

#### **5. Transportation Services:**

- a. Transportation services will be provided for individuals who have received prior approval.
- b. The transporter will wait for five minutes at each scheduled stop. If patient does not show a "No-Show" will be recorded.
- c. Drivers will not be asked to pick up patients from various locations. All patients and their parent/care giver need to at one location for pick-up.
- d. At all times while in the transportation vehicles are seat belts to be worn by the driver and passengers. It is illegal under any circumstances to operate a vehicle without wearing seat belts. Proper vehicle restraints must be used to secure children according to their size and weight. Any passenger refusing to wear seat belts will not be transported.
- e. Transportation services are strictly for assisting patients with accessing Medical, Dental and Human Services appointments at Ft. McDermitt Wellness Center and to their referring providers out of county.
- f. Children under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a legal parent or guardian. Transporters are not permitted to pick-up or drop-off children from school.
- g. For the safety of patients, no smoking, eating or consumption of alcohol is permitted during transportation. For long distant trips (Out-of-County) and when medically necessary food/drink may be permitted. Any patient presenting for pick-up under the influence of drugs or alcohol will have to reschedule and a "No-Show" will be recorded.
- h. For the safety of patients no Fort McDermitt Wellness Center vehicle may be used to transport clients with known contagious conditions. Examples include chicken pox, head lice, tuberculosis, etc.
- if. Under no circumstance are patients or their care givers to be transported who are carrying firearms or any type of self-defense device.
- j. Medication Pick-up/Drop-off: The transportation staff will assist with picking up and delivering medications for patients. Medication delivery requests are required to be made with at least 48 hours in advance. However, transport drivers will not pick-up any pain medication or narcotics under any circumstances; patients are required to pick-up their own pain medications.

- k. The transporters are not authorized to make unscheduled stops at stores, etc. for grocery/clothes shopping, gambling, etc.
- l. Patients who leave the Fort McDermitt Wellness Center premises after being seen for their appointment will forfeit their transportation service for the day.
- m. Patients found abusing transportation services can lose transportation privileges for a period of 3-12 months or may permanently lose services depending upon the severity of the situation.
- m. MTM services must be managed by the Transportation Manager for reimbursement on time.
- n. All drivers must abide by the FMWC Employee Handbook.

#### **6. Accommodations for Disabled Patients:**

- a. Accommodations will be made to the best of our ability to assist our disabled patients with accessing care.
- b. Whenever the Fort McDermitt Wellness Center is not able to transport a patient with a disability, a reasonable effort must be made to assist with finding an alternative transportation service.

#### **7. Escort Funding:**

- a. Escort funds (Lodging, Mileage, and Per Diem Vouchers) are provided to patients who require special transportation arrangements due to medical conditions or disabilities. Requests for Escort Funds is processed through the Referrals Coordinator and requires at least two weeks advanced notification.

#### **8. Broken Transportation Appointments:**

- a. Broken Transportation appointments are appointments that were canceled by patients without giving notification to the Patient Registration or Purchase Referred Care. These appointments are recorded as "No-Shows."
- b. Broken Transportation appointments will be taken into consideration before any further transports are approved.
- c. If a passenger does not show up at the specified time and place or does not call and cancel the transport by 4:00 p.m. the day prior on two (2) separate occasions in a one (1) year period, the patient will be sent a letter of warning of the possibility of losing transportation service privileges.
- d. If the behavior continues for a third time within a one (1) year period, the patient will be suspended from services for a period of three (3) months. If a patient becomes ineligible, they will be sent a letter of notification, and a log will be kept of all incidents.

#### **9. Community Resources for Public Transportation:**

- a. Whenever the Center is unable to provide a patient with transportation services, due to, severe weather, cancellation, unavailable vehicle/driver, over-booked trip, etc., an alternate resource must be shared with the patient, and the patient must be notified as soon as possible. If no alternate resource is available, the Center will reschedule the appointment.

Reviewed by Dr. Jacqueline Bae, Health Director of Ft. McDermitt Wellness Center - April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018

*Dr. Jacqueline Bae*