

# Non-Emergency Medical Transportation

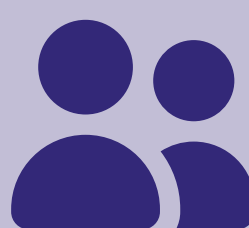
*A lifeline with broken links*

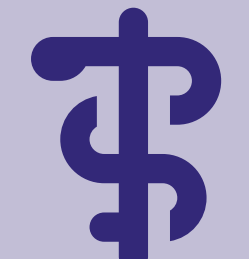
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## Why NEMT matters

**Reliable transportation to medical care is essential for health, especially in rural areas.**

 The Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) system serves millions of Americans, especially those with chronic conditions.

 NEMT provides access to essential health services like dialysis, chemotherapy, and preventative screenings.

 In rural areas, NEMT is often a lifeline – but service quality varies dramatically.

### Key Challenge:

 NEMT is a complex, fragmented industry with unclear definitions of quality and uneven oversight.

## Emerging insights

Based on early interviews and reviews of the literature, **quality** is defined differently by different groups:




- Riders: Reliability, dignity, safety
- Providers: Efficiency, cost control
- Planners: Balancing care vs. regulations

Additionally, rural challenges amplify NEMT gaps:

- Longer distances and fewer providers limit choice
- Volunteer driver shortages are especially acute here

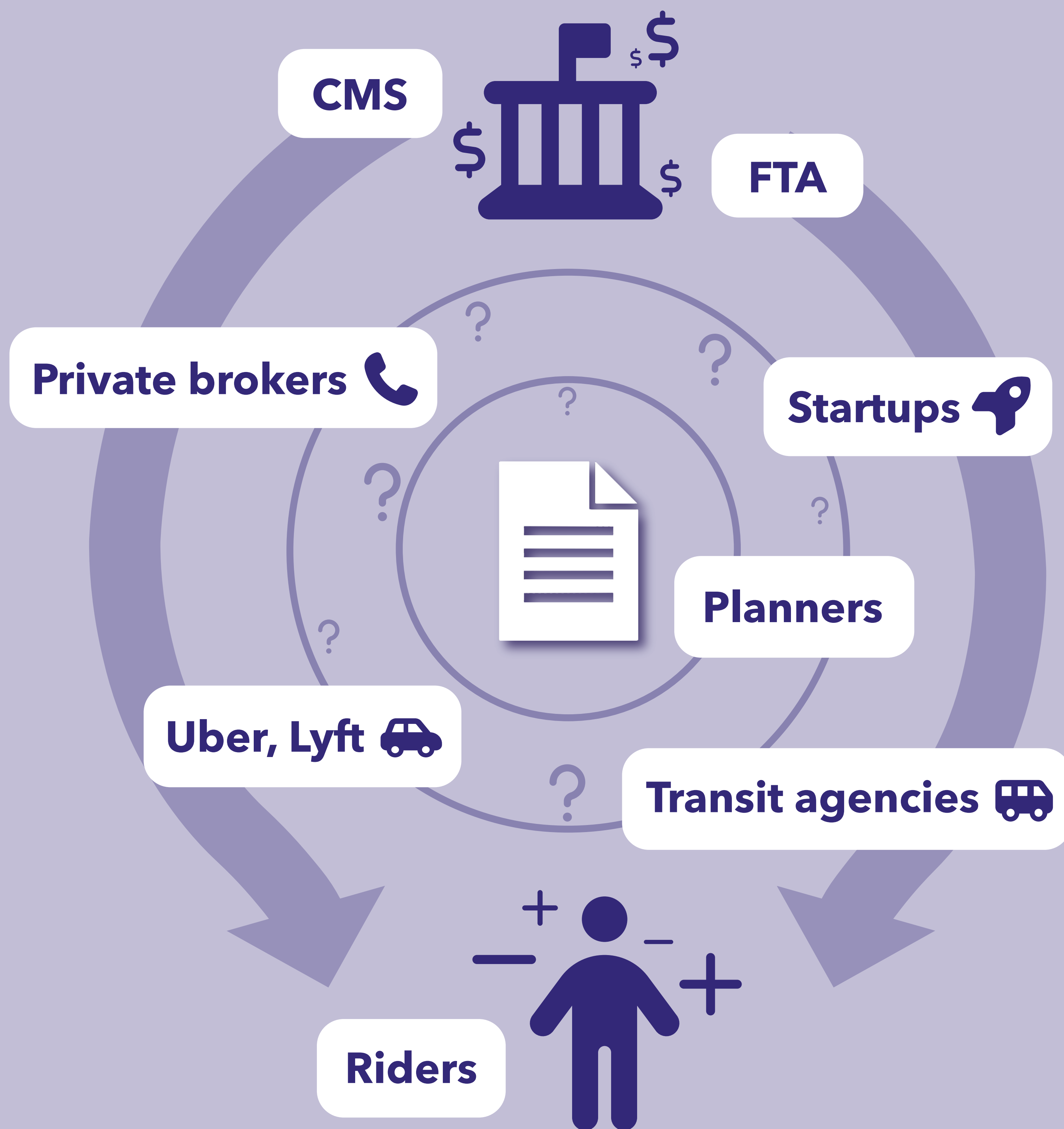
**Planners sit at the center, mediating between technocratic efficiency and human needs.**

## Research questions

-  How do stakeholders – riders, providers, planners – define NEMT quality?
-  How do these definitions conflict or align?
-  How do differences in NEMT quality contribute to health disparities, especially in rural areas?

## The NEMT ecosystem


**NEMT weaves together public programs, private companies, health systems, and riders in a web of overlapping responsibilities and incentives.**



## Methods

Phase	Focus	Data sources
1	Develop a typology of NEMT quality definitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Surveys and interviews</li><li>• With riders, brokers and providers, and planners</li></ul>
2	Link service quality to health outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Electronic health records</li><li>• NEMT trip data</li><li>• Self-rated health questionnaires</li></ul>

## Implications for providers

-  **Quality definitions shape funding:** When quality is measured only as cost or timeliness, rider-centered service gets overlooked.
-  **Show the full picture:** Track and share data on rider safety, dignity, and comfort alongside performance metrics.
-  **Leverage rural perspectives:** Local stories and data can influence policy specific to rural communities.

**Providers aren't just vendors! They are part of the healthcare safety net. Elevating rider experience alongside efficiency strengthens both contracts and care.**

## Get involved

I am actively conducting research on NEMT and health. My research includes all NEMT stakeholders, from brokers to planners to providers to riders. If you're interested in participating, contact me at [mimihutchinson@utexas.edu](mailto:mimihutchinson@utexas.edu).