

**Access to Health and Wellbeing Workgroup Meeting**

**Wednesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025 9:30am-11:30am on Zoom**

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**Facilitator: Lyn McCarthy, Program Supervisor, King County Mobility Coalition**

[emccarthy@hopelink.org](mailto:emccarthy@hopelink.org)

**Presenters:**

**James Walters**, NEMT Program Manager, Health Care Authority

**Darryl Sierra**, Director, NEMT, Hopelink

**Nadine Zygaj**, Community Engagement Specialist, Carina

**Attendees:** Alex O'Reilly (Seattle Aging and Disability Network), Staci Sahoo (Hopelink) Erin Funk (Hopelink), Philip Bradford, Angie Kitheka (Volunteer Services CCS), Belen Herrera (SDOT), Holden Ringer (TCC), James Walters (NEMT/HCA), Nadine Zygaj (Carina), Rochelle, Vy Mai (Project Access Northwest), Judy Brown, Angie Kitheka (CCS), Phirun Lach (Sound Generations) Ysabel Yu (NKCMC/Hopelink), Roz Novikova (TRL/Hopelink), Chelsea Nelson (Find a Ride/Hopelink), Laura Loe (Find a Ride/Hopelink)

Staff Support: Lyn McCarthy (KCMC Program Supervisor), Heather Clark (Manager of Coalitions)

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**Healthcare Authority – James Walters**

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- Washington State NEMT program
- Hopelink acts as the broker for NEMT in Snohomish and King Counties
- Brokers do not provide the transportation themselves, but arrange trips with providers
- Brokers act as gatekeepers and coordinators
- Have to follow Washington Administrative Code (WAC)
- One of the most audited services (approximately every 3 years)
- Brokers are required to have a consistent cadence of data review and audits
- Questions? Email <mailto:hcanemttrans@hca.wa.gov>

**Question** – are all rides fulfilled?

**James** – we prefer 2 business days before appointment date. If less than that is provided, brokers do their best.

**Question** – can rides be booked in advance?

**James** – yes, for appointments such as dialysis, but there is a limit for the number of appointments that can be made in advance

**Question** – can rides be provided to caregivers to get to work?

**James** – no

**Question** – Can a caregiver book on behalf of a client?

**James** – yes.

**Question** – How difficult is the process to modify processes? How often is the process updated?

**James** – on an as-needed basis and largely focuses on maintaining alignment with WAC.

**Question** – who makes the ultimate change? Legislators?

**James** – we have the ability to make changes and it has to be approved. Overall, the process runs smoothly.

## **NEMT – Darryl Sierra**

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(Broker perspective)

- **Lower mode**, gas cards and public transit (check below information for accuracy)
  - Gas – reimbursement method will be used starting January 1, 2026 (policy change) no advances are allowed.
  - Public transit - ORCA cards, e-purse, etc
- **Higher mode**, (e.g., cabulance) door-to-door service
  - Hopelink transportation's door-to-door service is a shared ride service
  - Requires eligibility (provider needs to approve and usually lasts one year)
  - Once received, 3-5 business days for Hopelink to process
- **Requirements for scheduling**
  - Provider one card, DOB, current address, client's phone number, dr. appointment information (phone, dates, times)
  - Try to be respectful of pronouns and name changes
  - Contracted with 24 providers
  - Service partners are not Hopelink employees
- **Communicating with Hopelink**
  - Customer service call center
  - No more than 4 weeks in advance
  - Same day transportation is for urgent care only
  - Web chat (have information readily available)

- Medicaid transportation document submission is available (secure website)
- MyRide Online – best used for trips booked 48 hours in advance – can submit feedback. MyRide Online does not update in real time (ends 4pm)

**Question** – what can be used as a current address for those who are unhoused?

**Darryl** – shelter address can be used, or a pickup address, we do our best to accommodate

**Question** – when people ask if they can be a driver/partner, what should I tell them?

**Darryl** – we have information on our webpage – “Become a Driver” at the bottom of our website. Screening and Eligibility restrictions are stringent for becoming a driver/partner

**Question** – if someone is discharged from an ER, they can get a ride home, but if they have received sedation, drivers cannot assist, correct?

**Darryl** – correct, drivers have not been medically trained. They will need an attendant to help support them

**Comment** – as a nurse, we are not allowed to discharge a patient if they have had anesthesia unless they have an attendant

**Question** – what are the statistics? How many trips?

**Darryl** – 2,400 trips/day

### **Carina – Nadine Zygaj**

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- Website where people seeking in-home care can find quality care providers at no cost and care providers can find good care jobs
- Job matching program
  - All users are verified
  - No search fees or ads
  - Encourage clients and caregivers to message to establish a good fit prior to agreement
- Medicaid, MAC, TSOA, or WA Cares Fund (starting in 2026)
- Private insurance is also accepted
  - Enter a zip code and all available agencies with available caregivers will show up
- Services provided
  - Meals
  - Personal care
  - Laundry
  - Shopping
  - Transfers
  - In some cases, transportation

- cleaning
- Becoming an IP
  - Starting wage \$22.52
  - Paid training
  - PTO, flexible schedule options
  - Healthcare benefits
  - SEIU 775 representation and benefits
- Different types of IP's
  - HCA certified IP
  - Family IP
  - Respite IP

**Question** - Can these IP's provide transportation post-sedation

**Comment** – liability is high in these situations and they need to be evaluated carefully. We cannot safely discharge someone post anesthesia unless they have a responsible party available to care for them in their homes

**Contact information:**

Help with Registration: [www.caring.org/contactus](http://www.caring.org/contactus)

Community Outreach: Nadine Zygaj [Nadine.zygaj@carina.org](mailto:Nadine.zygaj@carina.org) or 206-319-6259

For those without internet access: call 1-888-796-0605

**Comment** - in NYC, there was a buddy system where people could connect and have someone available to assist with public transit trips, etc.

**Nadine** – great system but this is beyond the scope of Carina (we work with Medicaid approved clients).

**Question** – are there IP's who are non-drivers and could use a system like that?

**Nadine** – January 15<sup>th</sup> – Hopelink Mobility will be doing a presentation about transportation options for our caregivers. Details to follow.

- **KCMC Quarterly Meeting**
  - Feb 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026 9:30-11:30am on [zoom](#)
- **Access to Health and Well Being Workgroup**
  - Feb 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026 9:30-11:00am on [zoom](#)