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Access To Transportation For Chittenden County Senior Citizens

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Introduction

- Aging often means loss of independence and ability to drive.1
- Driving cessation can lead to depression and lack of mobility.2
- An estimated 25% of Vermonters will be 65 years or older by 2030.3
- We surveyed senior citizens in Chittenden County, VT to determine access to transportation and its effect on their lives.
- We focused on seniors without personal vehicles and assessed their transportation challenges.

Important Daily Activities Surveyed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical/Healthcare Appointments</th>
<th>Pharmacy</th>
<th>Grocery Store</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essential Errands, Bank, Post Office, etc.</td>
<td>Religious Services</td>
<td>Visit Family/Friends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self-care activities, (e.g. hair appointments, fitness classes, etc.)

Community and Leisure Activities, (i.e. events at senior centers, meals, bingo, etc.)

Methods

- 1,221 surveys were distributed to senior congregate meal sites, senior housing, and other senior community providers in Chittenden County.
- 252 completed surveys were analyzed.
- Surveys consisted of 37 questions assessing transportation access and the perceived importance of various activities.
- Surveys were in English, and required the participant to be literate.
- Surveys were considered difficult to get to if individuals reported that it was "never" or "sometimes" easy to get there.
- SPSS was used for statistical analysis.

Findings

Types of Transportation Challenges

Many seniors face a multitude of transportation challenges.

Seniors Who Delay Medical Appointments Due to Lack of Transportation

Of those who consider medical appointments to be very important, 69% of individuals always, often or sometimes delay medical appointments due to lack of rides.

Seniors Who Find it Difficult to Ask Family and Friends for Rides and Are Dependent on them for Transportation

Of the 35% who indicated difficulty asking family or friends for rides, 40% were often or always dependent on family or friends as their primary mode of transportation.

Percentage of people reporting difficulty getting to important activities

Regardless of activity, >40% of individuals reported having difficulty getting to activities they considered very important.

Consequences of lack of transportation

- Transportation is a critical aspect of maintaining community integration, family relationships, and personal well-being.

Future Directions

- Policy and funding initiatives need to recognize the burden on elders in relying on family and friends to provide transportation.
- Innovative transportation programs need to continue to grow and expand services.

Sources