

SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION IS DEFINED AS DOOR-TO-DOOR OR DOOR-THRU-DOOR TRANSPORTATION VERSUS CURB-TO-CURB OR OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES.

FOR MANY REASONS, THE NEED FOR SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION HAS INCREASED AND WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE OVER THE NEXT YEARS. THE DEMOGRAPHICS ARE CHANGING.

IN THE COMING DECADES, PERSONS UNDER AGE 18 WILL GROW MODERATELY, BUT PERSONS AGE 65 AND OLDER WILL GROW RAPIDLY. BY 2035 PERSONS AGE 65 PLUS WILL ECLIPSE UNDER AGE 18 FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OUR HISTORY. THIS WILL AFFECT MORE THAN JUST THE NEED FOR MORE SENIOR RIDES.

ALONG WITH THE INCREASE IN PERSONS 65 PLUS, 93.5 PERCENT OF THOSE SENIORS DO AND WILL DWELL ALONE. THE NEED FOR SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION CAN ONLY INCREASE.

VOLUNTEERS PROVIDE A LARGE SHARE OF SENIOR RIDES FOR THOSE AGENCIES WHO SPONSOR THE RIDES. THE AGENCIES HAVE INDICATED THEY ARE HAVING DIFFICULTIES RECRUITING AND RETAINING VOLUNTEERS. THEY CLAIM THERE ARE Issues with A commercial driver insurance designation THAT RESULTS IN AN INCREASED auto insurance premium. Another RECRUITMENT DIFFICULTY is the mileage reimbursement. FOR VOLUNTEERS WHO RECEIVE REIMBURSEMENT ABOVE \$600 THERE IS THE NEED TO CLAIM THIS AS INCOME. MANY VOLUNTEERS IN GREATER MN REACH THAT \$600 LIMIT RATHER QUICKLY BECAUSE OF THE GREAT DISTANCES TO CLINICS, ETC. THEN To top OFF THE DIFFICULTIES, Seniors make up a big share of the volunteer drivers and many of them are snowbirds.

CURRENTLY THE VOLUNTEER MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT IS SET AT \$.14 MILE WITH THE BUSINESS RATE AT \$57.5 CENTS MILE. ORGANIZATIONS MAY ELECT TO PAY A HIGHER REIMBURSEMENT AMOUNT. BUT THE BUSINESS RATE IS A FEDERAL RATE.

REPRESENTATIVE Dave Iislegard AUTHORED LEGISLATION TAKING THE STATE OUT OF TAXATION WHICH AFFECTS THE TAX THAT IS LEVIED ON THE AMOUNT OVER \$600. THIS LEVY IS DETERMINED AT THE AMOUNT OVER \$600 ABOVE THE \$.14 RATE AND NEEDS FEDERAL CHANGE.

REPRESENTATIVE DAN WOLGAMOTT ADDRESSED THE INSURANCE LIABILITY CONCERN IN HF2377 IN THE 2019 LEGISLATIVE SESSION, THE SENATE COMPANSION BILL SF2324 WAS AUTHORED BY SENATOR JEFF HOWE, A REPUBLICAN. NO ACTION WAS TAKEN.

THE MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT ALSO AFFECTS CAREGIVERS WHO PROVIDE ANOTHER LARGE SHARE OF SENIOR RIDES. A SURVEY BY NADTC SHOWED THAT 40 PERCENT OF CAREGIVERS SPEND AT LEAST 5 HOURS/WEEK PROVIDING RIDES TO CLIENTS OR FAMILY MEMBERS OR FRIENDS.

BECAUSE IT IS HARD TO DO ALMOST ANYTHING IF YOU DON'T DRIVE, SENIORS DEPEND ON VOLUNTEERS AND CAREGIVERS TO GET THEM TO DOCTOR APPOINTMENTS, SHOPPING, VISITING, ATTENDING EVENTS, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY KEEPING THEM ACTIVE AND NOT ISOLATED WHICH ITSELF AFFECTS HEALTH AND WELLBEING.

BUT AS SENIORS AGE, MANY NEED ASSISTANCE WITH DAILY ACTIVITIES SUCH AS WALKING OR SEEING OR HEARING. MOST OF THE AILMENTS SENIORS HAVE PREVENT THEM FROM WALKING TO A BUS STOP OR EVEN TO THE CURB. THAT IS WHY WE NEED SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION.

AT THE 2019 SENIOR CAUCUS DAY ON THE HILL, REPRESENTATIVE WOLGAMOTT SPOKE ON HIS AUTHORED LEGISLATION. THIS WAS DEFINITELY A VERY GOOD START. HOWEVER, A LARGE NUMBER OF LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS HAVE DECIDED THIS ISSUE NEEDS ADDRESSING IN THE 2021 LEGISLATIVE SESSION. A SHORT LIST INCLUDES: MN board on Aging, area agencies on aging, mn council On transportation access, aging in place, volunteer driver coalition to name just a few of them.

With the change in the mn demographics, the need for legislation to support our seniors and their needs for services IS IMPERATIVE.

The Senior caucus plans do its part in Support OF ANY Legislation that assists THESE Agencies to PASS LEGISLATION FOR OUR SENIORS.