



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Transportation Funding Secured by Senator Young for Chautauqua County

CATHARINE YOUNG November 23, 2014

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### *Supplemental Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation Payment of \$79,377 for Chautauqua County*

ALBANY - Elderly, disabled, and other local residents who rely on efficient public transportation options can cheer the news announced by Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I-Olean) that much needed relief for non-emergency Medicaid transportation systems is coming to Chautauqua County.

"This is great news for those residents who face significant transportation challenges and depend on public options to make it to important medical appointments. These small local buses are vital for many elderly citizens, veterans, and disabled residents who do not have other options," said Senator Young.

Changes were made in the 2010-11 state budget gave the Commissioner of the New York State Department of Health (DOH) the authority to assume management of non-emergency Medicaid transportation across the state. The law's intent was to streamline local transportation systems, reduce the local burden of administration, save Medicaid dollars, and improve the quality of services. DOH awarded Medical Answering Services (MAS) a contract to manage Western New York's non-emergency Medicaid transportation system.

However, implementation has caused several counties to suffer financial hardship, including Chautauqua County. For this reason, in this year's state budget Senator Young fought for a hold harmless provision that would provide a supplemental Medicaid payment to county's whose non-emergency Medicaid transportation services have been adversely affected.

Chautauqua County's Chautauqua Area Rural Transportation System (CARTS) is among those who have faced hardship as a result of the changes. With a reimbursement of \$79,377 for Chautauqua County, losses will now be covered and they will finally receive the assistance they deserve to resolve this issue.

"This is very welcomed news and I applaud Senator Young once again for her continued help and support. Although well intentioned, the recent changes in Medicaid dispatch services have adversely impacted our local budget for this important rural transportation service. This supplemental funding will help get us back on track," said Chautauqua County Executive Vince Horrigan.

"How the changes to non-emergency Medicaid transportation were being implemented, and how rural Upstate localities and their residents were being affected, was a major concern. CARTS has long been a reliable and efficient model that has served residents well. The burdens that have been laid upon the county by DOH needed to be corrected immediately, which is why I was glad to be able to secure a resolution in the state budget," said Senator Young.

"I will be sure to continue working to ensure that the originally stated intent of the changes are followed - to improve quality while achieving savings and efficiencies. Routes relied upon by residents must be protected and those most familiar with local systems need to be able to continue doing the job they do so well," said Senator Young.

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