



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Senator Young Announces Study to Address Public Transportation Shortages for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

CATHARINE YOUNG April 29, 2015

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ALBANY – Much-needed public transportation is scarce in rural areas, but Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I-Olean), Chair of the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources, is taking action to address this shortage in New York State.

“Due to the lack of comprehensive public transportation systems in Upstate New York, many service providers have established their own transportation systems to meet the needs of the individuals they serve. However, there is tremendous opportunity to improve the efficiency, reach, and cost effectiveness of these systems by coordinating with other organizations that have their own transportation needs,” said Senator Young.

Integrated transportation systems are especially important in rural areas where geographic barriers, difficult weather conditions, and longer distances between communities serve as additional obstacles.

“This study is an important step in the process of creating efficient transportation systems to address the needs of people with developmental disabilities and other individuals with specific transportation needs. The results of an in-depth assessment of existing local

transportation services, along with recommendations for improvement, will be invaluable. The study will provide the data necessary to develop a pilot program to demonstrate the effectiveness of an integrated transportation system,” said Senator Young.

Language in the budget directs an assessment of the transportation needs of individuals with developmental disabilities, along with other special needs populations, such as those receiving behavioral health services.

To accomplish this task, the study will involve a wide range of stakeholders including transportation service providers, transportation operators, and consumer groups. Additionally, input will be sought from New York State agencies such as the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities, Department of Health, Department of Transportation, Office for the Aging, Office of Mental Health, and Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services.

There are many factors that will be examined during the study. Some of these include an assessment of local transportation providers and systems that could participate in a future demonstration program, along with an understanding of the current availability of public transportation. The study will take into account the specialized transportation requirements that are necessary to meet the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. These can include wheelchair-accessible vehicles, or the availability of trained personnel to assist individuals being transported. The study will also examine opportunities for route consolidation, software needed to manage routes and share services, and barriers to implementation of an integrated transportation system.

The results of the assessment are expected to include recommendations addressing sources of funding and the establishment of a pilot demonstration program. The results are due to the Governor and the Legislature by December 31, 2016.

“I look forward to seeing the results of the assessment, and I am eager to use that information to develop efficient integrated transportation systems that will provide individuals with developmental disabilities and many others with the best possible access to the care and services they need,” said Senator Young.