

**CASCADES EAST RIDE CENTER**  
**Advisory Committee Meeting**

Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council  
Headquarters Building, 334 NE Hawthorne Avenue, Bend, Oregon

**Minutes**

January 28, 2015

Members Present

1. Bend Cab Company: Ben Nichols
2. Central Oregon MediTran: Chuck Daugherty
3. Consumer: Tashina Jordan
4. Crook County: Kris Williams
5. DHS-CAF (Central Oregon): Therese Helton
6. Pacific Source Health Plans: Molly Mardesich, **Vice-Chair**

Members Excused

Oregon Health Authority: Sarah Wetherson  
St. Charles Health System: McKenzie Decker, **Chair**

Members Absent

Bridges Health/Mosaic Medical: Amy Michel  
DHS-APD (Bend): Karren Ruesing  
Full Access (Bend): Sarah Moore  
Loving Lift Transport: Harry Hall

Guests Present

Jay Stubbs, Modus Transportation  
Jill Sipes, Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) –Aging & People with Disabilities (APD)

Staff Present

Melanie Ybarra, CERC (Cascades East Ride Center)/COIC (Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council)  
Cameron Prow, TYPE-*White* II

**A. Welcome and Introductions**

Vice-Chair Mardesich called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. Ms. Sipes joined the meeting via phone. Ms. Helton arrived at 1:09 p.m.

Ms. Ybarra reported that Crook County will now be represented by Muriel DeLaVergne-Brown, director of Crook County Public Health. Kris Williams is here today representing Crook County Health Dept. as Ms. DeLaVergne-Brown is out of the area.

**B. Adoption of Minutes**

**Motion 1 (6/0/0):** Mr. Daugherty moved to accept the November 19, 2014, minutes. Ms. Jordan seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**C. Brokerage Reports**

Ms. Ybarra reviewed selected ride statistics for September, October, November, and December of 2014 and for the same four-month period a year ago in Deschutes, Crook, and Jefferson Counties.

Total Calls Received in November (10,902) and December 2014 (11,521) were higher than October 2014 (10,757) and much higher than a year ago. She stated Pacific Source believed the higher call volume may be due to doctors trying to take care of people before service coverage changed on January 1, 2015.

Total Medicaid Rides Provided: The Ride Center provided 6,268 rides in October 2014 and 6,229 rides in December 2014, much higher than normal and higher serving only three counties than a year ago serving nine counties. She attributed the higher number of rides

provided to the new people who became eligible for Oregon Health Plan (OHP) benefits. November ride numbers were lower than these two months at 5,121.

Capacity Denials went from 23 in October 2014, a normal number, to 78 in November 2014 and 131 in December 2014. In November, 40 were the heavy snow days and in December 60 were 2 of the bad weather conditions' days. Based on her research, the higher number of capacity denials in November and on December 4 were directly related to snow days and poor road conditions. Also, in December volunteers providing fewer rides contributed to the increase in capacity denials. The transition of DHS Volunteer drivers to CERC Volunteer drivers occurred in November and December, and five drivers anticipated to transfer chose to remain with DHS. CERC's Volunteer Coordinator has recruited five new volunteers, and is working to recruit more.

Ride Policy Denial Totals were higher than normal in November 2014 with 83 denials, in part due to 2 people requesting numerous rides they became ineligible for. A similar situation occurred in December 2014 with 54 denials.

Ms. Ybarra explained the State rules about clients being required to reapply annually for their OHP benefits. Many of those who became eligible in 2014 did not have to file an initial application but were grandfathered in from other programs. Due to confusion about the need to file a reapplication to remain eligible, many clients have lost eligibility. CERC cannot provide rides unless clients' eligibility is reinstated.

Ms. Mardesich reported that termination dates have caused a lot of problems for Pacific Source clients. People send in their paperwork but it is taking time for it to be processed because of the large numbers being submitted. She predicted that this situation is likely to continue for a while.

% of Rides Provided by Volunteers: Ms. Ybarra said this figure dropped to 19.84% in December 2014 as the total number of rides increased, but rides provided by volunteers did not. In comparison, October 2014 ride numbers increased, but the number of rides provided by volunteers increased also.

Shared Rides increased to 800 in October 2014 but returned to the normal 600 range for November and December 2014. Sharing more of the rides helps CERC accommodate a higher number of ride requests.

Eligible Clients has almost doubled in comparison to the same period last year from around 31,000 in late 2013 to 60,129 people eligible in October 2014. That number dropped to 57,098 in November 2014 then went back up to 58,156 in December 2014. These numbers are slowly going back up as applications are processed.

% Eligibles Using CERC remained steady for September through December 2014. CERC serves only those people who have no other way to get to medical appointments, which averages 2-2.5%.

Unduplicated Clients Served – TR Req't: Clients have 45 days to submit verification for their rides. Due to this delayed processing of TR requests, the numbers for September (171) and

October 2014 (175) are higher in this report than numbers available for the November 2014 meeting. She will adjust the November (138) and December 2014 (116) numbers to reflect the actual number of unduplicated clients after the 45-day submittal period for these months.

Travel Reimbursements by County: TR reimbursements numbers are remaining surprisingly consistent at around 1,400 per month.

Fixed Route Bus Trips for Deschutes County were 65 in November and 43 in December 2014.

Number of Volunteer Drivers: Ms. Ybarra proposed adding this statistic to the monthly reports and members agreed that would be helpful.

#### **D. Follow-Up from Prior Meeting**

##### 1. After-Hours Service Update

Ms. Ybarra said the CERC website now has a link to a list of the after-hours' providers, the services they provide, and their phone numbers. Stretcher providers are trading weekends and the website shows which ones are working which weekends. Two providers have informed her they want to stop providing rides after hours. A new provider has indicated interest in after-hours' service and same-day ride requests. Now that CERC is serving only three counties, the after-hours' message has been updated to specify the type of service needed: Press "1" for ambulatory transport, "2" for wheelchair transport, "3" for stretcher transport, and "4" for secure transport.

##### 2. Stretcher Services

Ms. Ybarra reported she is working with Redmond Fire on a new contract. Redmond Fire previously stated it would not contract with CERC again but has now agreed to do so. Since Redmond Fire is a 9-1-1 emergency service provider, it should only be used as a last resort when no one else is available.

##### 3. New Committee Members

Ms. Ybarra said Angie Gilley, who represented veterans and Crook County in the past, has resigned due to a busy schedule. Crook County will now be represented by Muriel DeLaVergne-Brown, director of the Crook County Health Department. Melanie will check with the Deschutes Veterans Officer regarding suggestions for a replacement to represent veterans.

Chair Decker reported Pilot Butte Rehabilitation Center has expressed interest in joining CERC, which would serve as a representative for the care facilities.

The person Karren Ruesing was trying to contact regarding COCOA (Central Oregon Council On Aging) membership is no longer with them. Ms. Sipes volunteered to talk with COCOA about CERC membership when she meets with that agency on January 30, 2015.

##### 4. Bylaws

Ms. Ybarra presented the draft Bylaws as revised following the November 19, 2014, meeting and requested member feedback.

Vice-Chair Mardesich asked if the Bylaws should be posted on CERC's website. Ms. Ybarra responded that bylaws aren't usually posted. However, meeting dates and agendas are posted as well as the minutes after they've been approved.

## **E. Brokerage Update**

### **1. OBSS Update**

Ms. Ybarra said CERC uses OBSS (Oregon Brokerage Scheduling System) to set up rides, assign them to providers, bill for rides, and manage data. The state originally contracted with Tri-Met to build and maintain this system for all Oregon Medicaid brokerages. Effective January 1, 2015, another company took over Medicaid brokerage services in the Portland area. The state has temporarily extended the OBSS portion of its contract with Tri-Met through March 31, 2015, to continue OBSS support and allow time to address who will update and maintain OBSS in the future. CERC's new IT (information technology) specialist has been learning OBSS. He is able to generate reports and make minor program changes, but is holding off on major revisions until he completes training with the Tri-Met programmer next week.

Ms. Ybarra reported that CERC is testing a new automated client eligibility verification system that is HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act)-compliant. The daily download from the state works well and provides easy, quick access to needed information, but is not HIPAA-compliant. A major disadvantage to the new system is that CERC will no longer be able to track the number of Central Oregon clients who are OHP-eligible. She will research how this information can be accessed since this statistic is needed for CERC's service management and monthly reports. Under the 270-271 system, entering a new client or updating existing client data in CERC's system will automatically query the state database regarding that client's OHP eligibility. Brokerages using this system report it is working well so far. If everything checks out, CERC will move to the 270-271 system by the end of January 2015. CERC will still be able to check manually if the automatic verification doesn't work, but the manual process is labor-intensive.

### **2. Volunteer Driver Program Update**

Ms. Ybarra said the DHS volunteers who chose to transfer to COIC drivers have completed that process. Five more than anticipated chose to stay with DHS. The Ride Center will continue to use DHS volunteer drivers to transport children aged 11 years and younger as only DHS Volunteers are authorized to act as attendants for children.

### **3. Capacity Challenges**

**New Provider:** Ms. Ybarra reported CERC has added a new provider called Secure Transport. This company has provided transports in the Willamette Valley for some time. The owner recently moved to Central Oregon and wants to provide secure transport services out of Bend. The Ride Center currently has two secure transport providers. The one covering Hood River and Pendleton rarely provides CERC rides anymore. Oregon Coast Transporters, a mainstay for many years, dispatches their drivers from the valley. Secure Transport will offer a more timely pickup option for rides originating in Central Oregon. She explained CERC schedules 2-8 secure transports a month as the medical need for this type of ride service is minimal.

**Provider Expansions:** Ms. Ybarra announced that Wapato added a second vehicle that can transport two wheelchairs at the same time. Loving Lift is looking at adding a second wheelchair-capable vehicle and focusing its services in Jefferson County.

Mr. Daugherty reported that his company will soon add another ambulatory vehicle to serve the south Deschutes County area.

Ms. Helton announced that Madras is opening a dialysis center.

**New Ride Procedure for Children:** Ms. Ybarra reported a challenge with transporting children to/from the KIDS Center due to differing procedures for drivers and cab companies, causing confusion for the children. After discussion, both Bend City Cab and Checker Cab agreed to change procedures for children's rides; sending a driver at their scheduled pickup time for children. Usually cab companies wait for a phone call. The KIDS Center reported that this new procedure is working well.

**Ride Assistance Option:** Ms. Ybarra presented a flyer about a new program to provide rides to eligible individuals in Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties who have no other means of going to/from approved services. Qualifying rides will include DHS and Social Security Administration meetings, education classes, and grocery shopping. Since the ODOT (Oregon Department of Transportation) grant that funds this program will reimburse only CERC volunteer drivers, the program will be available only to clients who are ambulatory or can wheelchair-transfer and will be based on availability of volunteer drivers. Drivers' priority will be Medicaid rides to doctor appointments.

Ms. Sipes asked about the impact of this program on capacity denials and how CERC will educate providers and clients about this new service. APD has hired new staff to work with presumptive (pre-SSI) clients so they can attend evaluation appointments and other meetings.

Ms. Ybarra expressed concern about marketing this new program too much before additional volunteer capacity is available as the demand could overwhelm the Ride Center's ability to provide these rides. Getting more Medicaid transportation providers on board will free up volunteers. She is working with CERC's Volunteer Driver Coordinator (Erik Maiorano) to recruit new volunteers, and requested member assistance in contacting potentially interested groups or individuals. Anyone interested can phone Mr. Maiorano or check the CERC website for more program information.

The Ride Center is required to provide written notices when Medicaid transports are denied. The person who authorizes denials has been given Ride Match information, so she can offer this additional resource if appropriate. Ms. Ybarra is developing a brochure to use in outreach to DHS workers, St. Charles, Pacific Source, and health departments. She requested member assistance in finding a name for this program.

Member concerns included the application process, what clients who are denied transportation for noncovered services will be told so they won't cancel an appointment before other options can be considered, and volunteer recruiting ideas. An ad in

The Bulletin under "Volunteer Opportunities," Jake's Diner in Bend the first Tuesday of every month, Dad's Restaurant in Prineville, and Central Oregon Veterans Outreach were mentioned as potential opportunities.

**Veteran Transports:** Ms. Ybarra reported the ODOT grant funding this program will expire on June 30, 2015. She is hoping the grant will be renewed.

Mr. Nichols asked if transporting veterans to and from the location where they can catch the van to the Portland Veterans Administration Center was considered a medical ride. Ms. Ybarra explained it is if the veteran is going to Portland for a Medicaid-covered medical appointment and if the veteran is on OHP. There is a \$5-per-day fee for veterans to access this service. If covering this fee would be a financial hardship, the veteran can contact his county Veterans officer who can issue a voucher to cover the \$5 fee. The cost of getting to the shuttle is covered by Medicaid if the veteran is on OHP. Veterans can request mileage reimbursement if they are Medicaid-eligible and drive their own vehicle to/from the V.A. shuttle.

## **F. Service and Policy Challenges**

### **1. No-Show Card**

Ms. Ybarra said Pacific Source and Central Oregon Health Council want to reduce no-shows, which are expensive for transport providers since they cannot bill for these trips, and hard on medical providers as they are staffed to provide the service even though the client no-shows. She presented a draft handout suggested by a volunteer driver. The forms will be printed on cardstock, be a door hanger or hole-punched with a rubber band so they can be hung on a door handle.

Ms. Williams suggested printing the minimum half-page-sized form in a bright color. Members agreed by consensus that this form was a good idea, and needed to be bright.

### **2. Travel Reimbursement Forms**

In response to requests from several CERC members, Ms. Ybarra presented the revised OHP Medical Travel SINGLE VISIT Verification Form and the OHP Medical Travel MULTIPLE VISIT Verification Form. She emphasized that the multiple-visit form is to be used only for one person with multiple visits to the same medical provider. Both of the revised forms are available on the CERC website.

Ms. Jordan said the revised forms were much easier to use.

### **3. Postage-Paid Envelopes**

Ms. Ybarra reported CERC is working to provide postage-paid envelopes for clients to use in returning TR verification reports. CERC has set up an account with the U.S. Postal Service and the envelopes have been ordered and will be available soon.

## **G. Other Business**

### **1. Attendants for Medicaid Rides**

Ms. Sipes requested clarification of the policy about when attendants for children must cover the cost of their own ride. Not all 12-year-old clients have the aptitude to travel alone on the bus, and some parents are uncomfortable with their 12-year-olds doing so.

Ms. Ybarra explained CERC does not normally provide bus tickets to young children attending Medicaid-eligible appointments. Children 18 years and younger may be accompanied by a parent at no extra cost, and this includes if they're riding on the CET bus. If a mother with a baby schedules an appointment through the Ride Center for her 12-year-old, the CSR (Customer Service Representative) will usually schedule the ride with a volunteer driver or a cab company. There is no charge for the parent or adult attendant of a Medicaid client. Babies travel free. For parents wanting to bring along other children, if 5 or under they ride the bus for free; if 6 or older, the parent must pay for extra children brought along.

2. CERC Transition to Pacific Source Coordinated Care Organization

Ms. Sipes asked when CERC will be put under PSCCO as the transition date keeps getting postponed. Ms. Mardesich said PSCCO and CERC have been working together but kinks still exist which must be resolved.

Ms. Ybarra said CERC has implemented HIPAA procedures, designated a HIPAA Privacy Officer (herself) and a HIPAA Security Officer (Dustin, new IT specialist), provided the necessary documents, and is making the physical restructuring changes required. The concern about whether CERC has the means to support OBSS has been addressed. There are still many procedural details to be worked out. She is meeting with DHS in Salem on January 30, 2015, and may find out the new transition date.

Vice-Chair Mardesich invited members to share any other concerns they might have.

- \* Bend Cab Company: Mr. Nichols reported nothing new.
- \* Bridges Health/Mosaic Medical: No report.
- \* Central Oregon MediTran: Mr. Daugherty reported nothing new.
- \* Consumer: Ms. Jordan reported nothing new.
- \* Crook County: Ms. Williams reported nothing new.
- \* DHS-CAF: Ms. Helton reported nothing new.
- \* Loving Lift: No report.
- \* Pacific Source Health Plans: Ms. Mardesich reported nothing new.
- \* St. Charles Medical Center: No report.

**H. Adjournment**

The next meeting is scheduled for 1 p.m., Wednesday, March 25, 2015.

With no further business, Vice-Chair Mardesich adjourned the meeting at 2:38 p.m.