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**CONTACT**

David Scholnick  
856-365-9510, ext. 2013  
dscholnick@camdenhealth.org

**CAMDEN COALITION TESTIFIES AT NON-EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION HEARING**

*Camden Coalition cites persistent problems, urges state to improve NEMT*

Today in Trenton, the Camden Coalition testified at the Assembly Human Services Committee hearing on the status of, and issues affecting, the state-contracted non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) system. New Jersey recently signed a new contract with LogistiCare, the state's sole provider of NEMT under Medicaid for the past nine years, but serious problems persist.

"The new contract with LogistiCare has the potential to generate improvements to the non-emergency medical transportation system," said Jon Tew, senior program manager at the Camden Coalition. "Despite some modest improvements, our patients unfortunately are not seeing any real change. Late arrivals and no-shows have reduced Medicaid recipients' access to healthcare, and impacted their health and wellbeing."

The Camden Coalition has advocated to improve NEMT since 2013. In partnership with [Faith in New Jersey](#) and the [Good Care Collaborative](#), a statewide coalition of consumer advocates, providers, and policymakers helping to transform New Jersey's Medicaid system, the Coalition has worked to identify issues with NEMT and advocate change. While some of the recommendations were included in the current LogistiCare contract, patient and provider experiences from around the state continue to call into question the effectiveness of the program.

In his testimony, Tew described the experience of one Camden patient, who after waiting for hours in his doctor's office for LogistiCare to arrive, decided to walk home on an 88-degree day. Halfway through his walk he had an asthma attack and had to call an ambulance to take him to the hospital.

"We cannot underestimate both the human and financial costs of a failed NEMT system," said Tew. "At the Camden Coalition we budget over \$10,000 a year in taxi rides for stranded Medicaid patients because we continue to expect unreliable service from LogistiCare. Attending



regularly scheduled doctors' appointments improves health outcomes and reduces unnecessary and avoidable emergency department costs. LogistiCare's failure to provide good service is costing the state millions of dollars."

When LogistiCare drivers fail to arrive on time or abruptly cancel rides, the Camden Coalition care team often calls on local cab drivers like [Freddy Rodriguez](#). Rodriguez is a cab driver who, for the last five years, has filled the transportation gap that patients experience when the NEMT system breaks down. The nurses, social workers, and community health workers of the Camden Coalition's care team all know him and admire his professionalism, diligence, and the caring, respectful way he interacts with patients.

"Freddy's attentiveness and kindness, responsiveness, and prompt service is a shining example of what LogistiCare's service could and should be," Tew continued. "The duplication of service that Freddy provides demonstrates LogistiCare's failure to patients, providers, and taxpayers alike."

The Camden Coalition is part of a nationwide coalition of NEMT advocates working on Medicaid NEMT service and provider performance around the country, many of which are serviced by LogistiCare.

"While most of the service issues mentioned today are not unique to New Jersey," said Tew, "The Camden Coalition appreciates New Jersey's commitment to working with advocates to improve service for the most vulnerable in our state."

#### **About the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers**

*The Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers is a citywide coalition of over 25 hospitals, primary care providers, and community organizations working together to deliver better health care to vulnerable citizens in Camden, NJ. Founded by Dr. Jeffrey Brenner in 2002, the Coalition knits together a fragmented health care system for patients with complex needs and repeated, ineffective and expensive hospitalizations, using smart data and holistic, multi-disciplinary team care. We believe if we can deliver better care at lower cost here in Camden, it can be done for everyone, everywhere in America.*

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