

Report Highlights

Feasibility of Requiring Shared-ride Services During Evenings and Weekends and for Intercounty Travel

House Resolution 631 directed the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to study the feasibility of requiring counties to offer shared-ride services to persons with disabilities during evenings and weekends and for intercounty travel.

We concluded:

- **Shared-ride services would need to be provided to all eligible shared-ride participants, not just for persons with disabilities.** HR 631 only refers to the Rural Transportation Program for Persons with Disabilities (PwD) shared-ride program. Virtually all the transit agencies reported that, if extended hours are provided, they should be provided to everyone eligible for the shared-ride program (such as elderly, Medical Assistance, and MH/MR clients). Moreover, PennDOT’s shared-ride policy directs that service must be uniformly provided to all user groups, otherwise it is considered exclusive ridership and not eligible for reimbursement.
- **Shared-ride providers voiced several concerns regarding evening and weekend service.** Concerns cited by county shared-ride providers included *lack of demand* (most medical facilities, senior centers, and sheltered workshops are not open evenings and weekends), *recruiting drivers and dispatchers* (most do not want to work evenings and weekends), and *passenger safety* (passengers having to wait for vans and walk home after dark).
- **Many shared-ride providers already offer intercounty service, but it is often quite limited.** Of the 26 providers who responded to our questionnaire, 20 indicated they currently provide at least some intercounty service, although oftentimes the service is very limited. If counties were required to provide intercounty service, they would either have to be required to enter into reciprocal agreements to coordinate schedules and drop off points, or providers would have to be allowed to place some limit on how far into a neighboring county they would need to travel.
- **It would cost an additional \$27.1 million to provide shared-ride services during evenings and weekends.** Of this \$27.1 million, approximately \$23 million (85 percent) would be Commonwealth—primarily Lottery—funds. The table below shows our estimate of the cost to provide evening and weekend service in those counties that do not already provide this service. (If the service is already being provided, we assumed no additional costs would be incurred.)

Additional Estimated Cost to Provide Shared-ride Services During Evenings and Weekends*	
(\$Millions)	
Extend weekday service to 6 p.m. for an additional 28 agencies.....	\$ 4.9
Weekday evening service from 6–9 p.m. for an additional 43 agencies	13.4
Saturday service for an additional 32 agencies	4.0
Sunday service for an additional 41 agencies	<u>4.8</u>
Total additional estimated cost to provide evening and weekend service for all shared-ride providers	\$27.1
<small>*Does not include Allegheny or Philadelphia Counties, which are not authorized to participate in the PwD program.</small>	