

TO: Appropriations Committee Members

DATE: February 7, 2009

RE: CT Elderly and Disabled Demand Responsive Municipal Grant Program

FROM: Sally B. Ritchie
Director of Waterford Senior Services

Cathy Wilson
East Lyme Senior Center Director

Please accept this written testimony in support of continued funding for the Municipal Transportation Grant program, which has provided **six-thousand three hundred and eighty-two (6382)** rides to the residents of East Lyme, Groton, New London, and Waterford since the program began three years ago. The need for dependable transportation services for elderly and disabled individuals, who are not Medicaid eligible, continues to be at the top of the list of services required in order for individuals to remain independent in the community. Essentially, funding this service contributes to keeping people out of nursing homes, off of Title 19, and maintaining their autonomy.

The towns of Waterford, East Lyme, and Groton first applied for this funding in 2006. We pooled the funds allocated to each town and have brokered rides from the Eastern CT Transportation Consortium to transport older and disabled adults to medical appointments. This program has expanded our town-funded transportation operations thereby providing an additional supportive service to assist older adults in remaining independent and living in the community. Since the initial application, the city of New London was added in 2007 and the Town of Stonington was recently added as well.

The need for reliable and safe transportation is growing. Family members are not always available to provide rides to their loved ones and the increasingly diverse and scattered nature of our families today means that many elderly and persons with disabilities are alone and stranded. For individuals fortunate enough to have family and friends living nearby, the grant has a caregiver mileage reimbursement component that is extremely cost effective.

The Municipal Grant Transportation service is often the only means of transportation available to assist individuals who require long-term physical therapy appointments, life supporting dialysis treatments, as well as chemotherapy. Initially, with our collaborative grant there were no restrictions on the number of rides allowed per person under our program, however, by 2008, with grant funds rapidly dwindling early on in the fiscal year, a review of our records indicated that (14) fourteen individuals were using 55% of the total funds allocated to the four towns. The majority of the fourteen individuals were Dialysis patients, who require (312) rides per year in order to continue with their life supporting treatment. Without the grant transportation program, patients will be forced to hire costly wheelchair accessible vans or livery

services. Even with the Municipal Grant, we must limit the number of rides per person in order to keep the program available to all registered users.

The transportation grant allows the surrounding towns to assist individuals in obtaining rides for medical appointments outside of our normal time of operation as well as rides beyond our immediate surrounding towns. This service encourages individuals to take advantage of appointments for vital diagnostic tests that are available in the early morning as well as evenings at local healthcare facilities, allows individuals to visit specialists outside of the normal transportation area, and lightens the burden for caregivers as well.

Please continue to fund this vitally important program.

{Enclosure: 1}

**Municipal Grant Program
Trips provided by taxi or van**

Count of Transported					
Years	Towncode	Transported	Wheelchair/Ambulatory	Total	
2006	EAST LYME	Transported	Amb	114	
			Wheelchair	4	
		Transported Total		118	
	EAST LYME Total				118
	GROTON	Transported	Amb	152	
			Wheelchair	102	
		Transported Total		254	
	GROTON Total				254
	WATERFORD	Transported	Amb	71	
			Wheelchair	10	
		Transported Total		81	
	WATERFORD Total				81
2007	EAST LYME	Transported	Amb	379	
			Wheelchair	99	
		Transported Total		478	
	EAST LYME Total				478
	GROTON	Transported	Amb	1147	
			Wheelchair	247	
		Transported Total		1394	
	GROTON Total				1394
	NEW LONDON	Transported	Amb	146	
			Wheelchair	84	
		Transported Total		230	
	NEW LONDON Total				230
WATERFORD	Transported	Amb	344		
		Wheelchair	79		
	Transported Total		423		
WATERFORD Total				423	
2008	EAST LYME	Transported	Amb	605	
			Wheelchair	206	
		Transported Total		811	
	EAST LYME Total				811
	GROTON	Transported	Amb	1113	
			Wheelchair	233	
		Transported Total		1346	
	GROTON Total				1346
	NEW LONDON	Transported	Amb	524	
			Wheelchair	235	
		Transported Total		759	
	NEW LONDON Total				759
WATERFORD	Transported	Amb	231		
		Wheelchair	102		
	Transported Total		333		
WATERFORD Total				333	
2009	EAST LYME	Transported	Amb	31	
			Wheelchair	2	
		Transported Total		33	

2009	EAST LYME Total		33	
	GROTON	Transported	Amb	33
			Wheelchair	7
		Transported Total		40
	GROTON Total		40	
	NEW LONDON	Transported	Amb	24
			Wheelchair	8
		Transported Total		32
	NEW LONDON Total		32	
	WATERFORD	Transported	Amb	48
			Wheelchair	2
		Transported Total		50
WATERFORD Total		50		
Grand Total			6382	