



February 28, 2019

Representative Cathy Abercrombie, Co-Chair
Senator, Marilyn Moore, Co-Chair
Human Services Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2000
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Co-Chairwomen Abercrombie and Moore, Ranking Members Case and Logan and members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Joshua Komenda. I am President of Veyo, the state's non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) broker. I appreciate the opportunity to testify on House bill 7166, "An Act Concerning Non-Emergency Medical Transportation for Medicaid Beneficiaries." Veyo was awarded the non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) broker contract for the State of Connecticut in 2017 for service beginning January 1, 2018.

Veyo believes the underlying motivation for this bill is to improve the quality, reliability, and transparency of the NEMT program in Connecticut, and to improve the lives and health of Husky Medicaid members. These are aims that Veyo shares passionately, has relentlessly pursued since the beginning of the contract, and will continue to vigorously fight for going forward. Over the past year, it has sought the partnership of Connecticut state agencies, legislators, healthcare providers, advocates, members, ASOs, and countless other stakeholders. Our attached document, *Connecticut One-Year Update*, summarizes the Veyo team's extraordinary efforts, commitment to the state, and dramatic improvements over the historical performance of the program under other brokers. Large scale NEMT programs are extremely complex and challenging, both in Connecticut and in every single state. Since becoming the NEMT broker for Connecticut, Veyo and our transportation partners have successfully managed over 4.3 million trips with a substantiated grievance rate of just 0.03%. This is an achievement that is remarkable, both for Connecticut and nationwide. However, we fully acknowledge and want to make clear that this is of zero consequence when the system fails an individual member. Even when a small number of trips fail, Veyo recognizes how critical it is to continue to strive to improve, and will not be satisfied until that is achieved. We invite everyone who shares that aim to partner in that effort.

One extremely noteworthy challenge that Veyo would like to draw attention to is the dramatic increase in demand over the past year, and the challenges of growing supply with existing Connecticut transportation providers to keep pace with that growth. Over the past year, Connecticut's Medicaid population has grown substantially. In addition, treatment for substance abuse has spiked sharply. Both of these trends have resulted in an overall trip count increase of close to 20% from 2017, or 2,000 to 3,000 trips per workday, an excess that Connecticut's transportation providers have not been able to seamlessly absorb. Veyo's team has worked tirelessly to onboard nearly every single qualified commercial provider in the state, increase the



capacity of existing providers, and supplement available supply with its Independent Driver-Provider (IDP) system. At the same time, Veyo has been working hard to coach, discipline and/or remove providers that continuously underperform and fail Husky members. Between one-quarter and one-third of Veyo's providers are currently under Corrective Action Plans, and improving the system requires getting these providers to an acceptable quality range or removing them from the network. In order to succeed at this process, however, new, high quality providers need to be licensed. Veyo has been working with DSS and DOT since June of 2018 to aggressively add licensed capacity to the state, but has been constrained by the administrative challenges of licensing. I would like to stress this as a critical factor of success, and to request continued partnership from state agencies and legislators to assist in this process.

During these 13+ months of operation, and as required by its contract with the Department of Social Services (DSS), Veyo has coordinated transportation "through the most cost-effective means which meet the Member's mobility status, personal capabilities and medical needs." Veyo has done so in compliance with its contractual obligations by overcoming numerous challenges, including the almost 20% increase in utilization of the NEMT benefit over the course of its first year of operation, while simultaneously saving the state millions of dollars through our innovative NEMT model.

Incorporated into the contract are numerous service quality standards and ramifications for non-compliance. Through its 3rd Party Operator Mobile Application, and its electronic integration to provider dispatch systems, Veyo currently captures the GPS and timestamps 58% of trips in Connecticut electronically and completely objectively. No other NEMT broker has the capability to achieve this level of objective performance measurement. Further, in 2019 we are striving to have 100% of providers on this technology to ensure that all parties can be held fully accountable to performance. Based on the terms of the contract and Veyo's understanding of HB 7166, Veyo believes that many of the sections of the bill are already represented in our contract with DSS. If the language in the bill represents a modification to the current contract Veyo is more than willing to engage with DSS to review relevant contract provisions and discuss revisions if necessary.

The bill proposes that the Commissioner of Social Services, or any transportation brokerage vendor contracting with the commissioner not "Fail or refuse to provide non-emergency transportation to eligible Medicaid beneficiaries."

Veyo's mission is to provide all members with the services they are entitled to under the guidelines of the contract. **While perfection of this mission is our goal, if gaps occur, Veyo is committed to process improvement in order to close any issues as quickly as possible.** Veyo's contract with DSS states the following in part:

Veyo provides Members with access to services to arrange for the provision of transportation to medical appointments. Transportation to covered non-emergency



medical services is arranged for and provided through the most cost-effective means which meet the Member's mobility status, personal capabilities and medical needs.

Veyo shall provide non-emergency transportation services to providers throughout the State of Connecticut, to border providers and to select providers in non-contiguous states, if the Department determines this is medically necessary for a Member. The Contractor shall provide transportation and related services to all eligible Members to the extent these services are necessary to support eligible Members' access to and from covered healthcare services.

The existing contract language addresses the language in the legislation and also contains remedies. With respect to the language that a broker shall not "refuse" to provide transportation, the contract spells out the specific requirements by which the NEMT program operates. Veyo has processes in place to contact the member, explain how the benefit works, and give members the information on how to dispute any such decisions.

Veyo is uncertain whether the language in section 1 subsection 2 (a) in the bill represents a suggested change to the contract language. The current agreement allows for a 30-minute window -- 15 minutes before and 15 minutes after the agreed-upon pickup time.

If the bill proposes to maintain that 30-minute window, then this point is already agreed upon in the current contract. If the bill is proposing to narrow that window to a total of 15 minutes, Veyo is happy to engage with DSS on the ramifications of such a change on the supply network and Veyo's operational model.

Veyo believe that the language in section 1 (a) subsection 2 (b) mirrors what is already in the contract between Veyo and DSS. The content of Veyo's contract with DSS states:

PICKUP WAIT TIME. The waiting time for a scheduled pickup going to an appointment (a leg) should not exceed fifteen (15) minutes before and fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled pickup time. A Member, under no circumstances, shall arrive more than thirty (30) minutes prior to an appointment, unless this is done at the Member's request. The NEMT provider shall be required to be onsite for at least five (5) minutes and cannot leave prior to the actual pickup time (e.g. For a pickup time of 8:00 a provider arriving between 7:50-8:00 would have to wait until 8:05 to declare the passenger a no-show).

RETURN TRIP WAIT TIME. The average waiting time for a scheduled return trip, after an appointment, shall not exceed thirty (30) minutes. Members being discharged from hospitals or emergency departments shall be picked up within three (3) hours of receipt of the request from the member, member's representative or hospital staff.



The language in section 1 (a) subsection 3 regarding mode of transportation is also included in the contract. The existing contract spells out Veyo's obligations with respect to the most cost-effective means which meet the Member's mobility status, personal capabilities, and medical needs. Veyo has processes and personnel in place to meet these needs and fulfill these obligations. The language in the bill is already captured in the contract.

There are numerous provisions and processes defined in the contract - and exemplified by Veyo's process documentation - that already support the requirement to maintain a sufficient transportation network. These provisions include following an agreed-upon process for denials, resolving complaints and grievances, and imposing penalties by DSS on the transportation broker for situations where the broker is not compliant with the contract. To that end, Veyo has partnered with over 80 commercial providers (managing over 1,400 commercial vehicles) and 250 independent driver-providers (IDPs).

Since beginning our work in Connecticut, Veyo has exhibited its desire to work with DSS, legislators and stakeholders to improve upon the NEMT system. We recognize that non-emergency transportation is a critical component of a Medicaid member's ability to access health care.

We have and will continue to provide regular updates to various legislative committees, alter our reporting information when requested to provide appropriate data and information about our model and systems and conduct outreach in various poorer communities across the state to develop strategies to address issues or concerns. We remain committed to being a partner with the State of Connecticut and most importantly the clients we serve to create the best NEMT program possible.

Veyo sincerely appreciates the opportunity to comment on HB 7166 and we will make ourselves available for follow up questions or discussion.

Regards,

Josh Komenda, President
Veyo