

Medicaid LogistiCare Transportation Feedback Survey

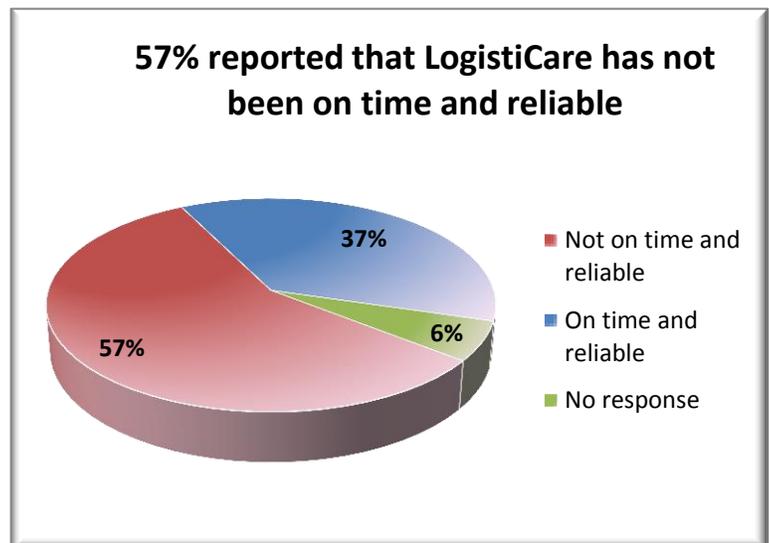
Executive Summary

The Mental Health Association in New Jersey (MHANJ) is a statewide, private non-profit advocacy organization that strives for mental health for children and adults through advocacy, education, training and services. MHANJ works to promote policies that protect rights and fight the stigma that surrounds mental illness. In existence for over 65 years, the MHANJ continues to fulfill this mission by responding to issues and concerns raised by consumers of mental health services.

The purpose of the MHANJ conducting the Medicaid LogistiCare Transportation Feedback Survey was to better understand the quality of LogistiCare services from the **point of view of those living with mental illness**. LogistiCare is New Jersey's Medicaid funded transportation service, providing transportation for Medicaid recipients to non-emergent doctor appointments. The survey was based on information obtained during meetings the MHANJ held at Wellness Centers throughout New Jersey with persons who had experience in using LogistiCare. During these meetings, four key areas of concern were identified: lack of punctuality and reliability; issues with the safety of vehicles and/or driver practices; driver interaction with passengers; and unresponsive handling of complaints.

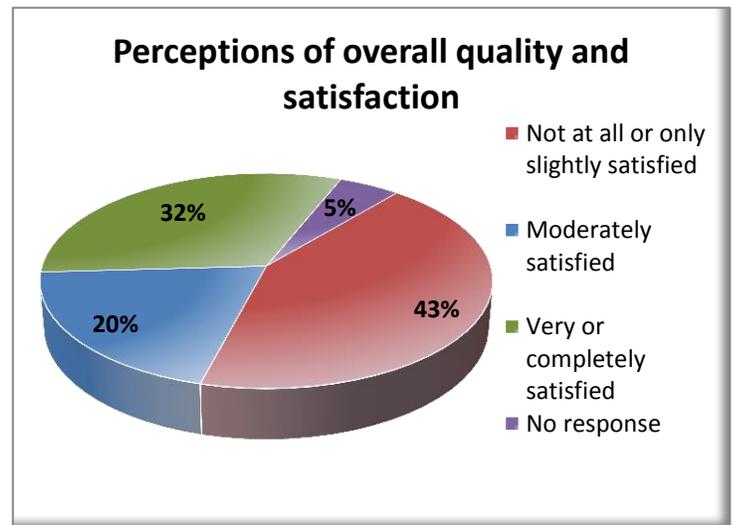
The survey was completed by 311 individuals living with mental health conditions who have Medicaid and currently utilize, or have utilized, LogistiCare transportation services in the last 6 months. The following is a summary of the study's findings. Detailed information can be obtained by referencing the entire report.

- Transportation is often late or unreliable:
 - More than half of participants reported that LogistiCare was not timely or reliable during the last 6 months and 53% of them have missed important medical or mental health appointments due to transportation being late or not picking them up at all
- Issues with the safety of vehicles and/or driver practices:
 - Nearly a third felt that safety was not a priority; reporting that drivers talk on their cell phones and text while driving, vehicle seatbelts are missing or broken, drivers speed/drive aggressively, etc.



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- Poor disposition of staff:
 - A third of respondents reported that the drivers and staff did not treat them in an appropriate and respectful manner; some were sexually harassed, cursed at, disrespected, or drivers refused to meet their physical needs
- Unresponsive handling of complaints:
 - More than a third had filed, or tried to file, a complaint, and 52% of them received no response or saw no change at all
- Nearly half of those surveyed were not at all or only slightly satisfied with LogistiCare services overall
- A quarter of participants indicated that they have stopped using LogistiCare because services are unreliable



Based on these findings, the MHANJ recommends that the Division of Medical and Health Services (DMAHS) implement a process of oversight, monitoring and reporting that is consistent in assuring compliance and transparency in the following areas:

- Ensure that transportation pick-up and return trips are timely and reliable
- Ensure that all drivers receive requisite training, such as defensive driving, wheelchair securing and lift operation, cultural and disability sensitivity, passenger assistance, first aid, child safety, handling disruptive behavior and general customer service. Training must be completed before a driver can begin and regular refresher courses must be completed in order to maintain employment.
- Implement measures to ensure safety of passengers, drivers and vehicles such as ensuring that vehicles are properly maintained, have working safety belts, and have passed inspection
- Ensure quality accountability measures are taken, such as monitoring vendor to assure services contracted are being provided and following requisite procedures for taking and handling complaints

These recommendations should be overseen and monitored by the contracted broker of services, compiled into a report and then submitted to DMAHS monthly to ensure that RFP specifications are being followed. This report should be available on the Division's web-site to ensure transparency. Additionally, this report should be presented to the Legislature yearly. Sanctions for non-compliance would be defined, would be monetary and would require correction.