



Keeping Older Adults in Your Community - the Importance of Rural Handi-vans

Presenters:

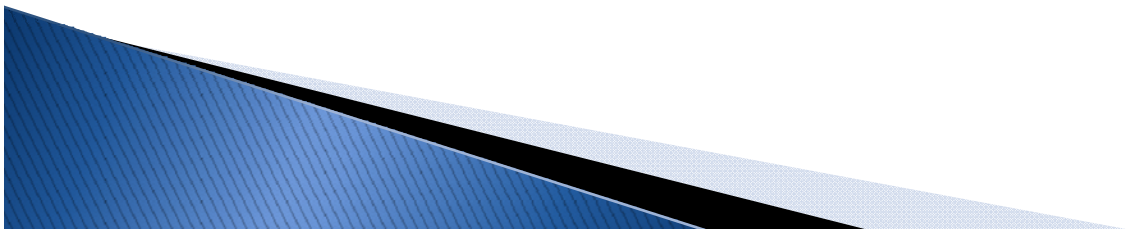
Pam McConnell, TONS Coordinator ; Doug Newberry TONS Rural Committee Chair;
Gina Sylvestre, University of Winnipeg Geography Department.



Handi-van Service and Keeping Older Citizens in Rural Communities

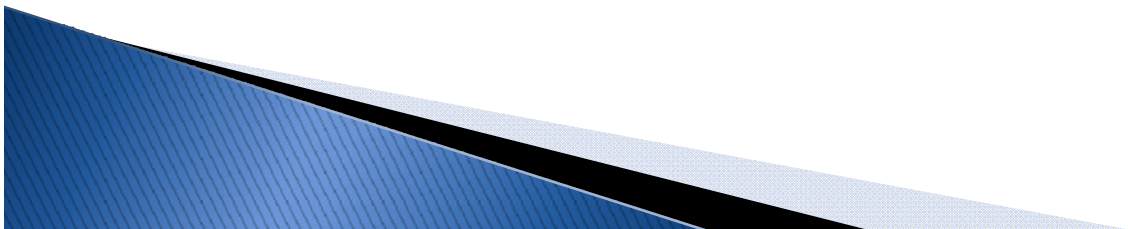
▶ Overview

- Who is TONS?
- Aging and rural Manitoba
- Concerns and Solutions for Handi-Vans.
- Next Steps?



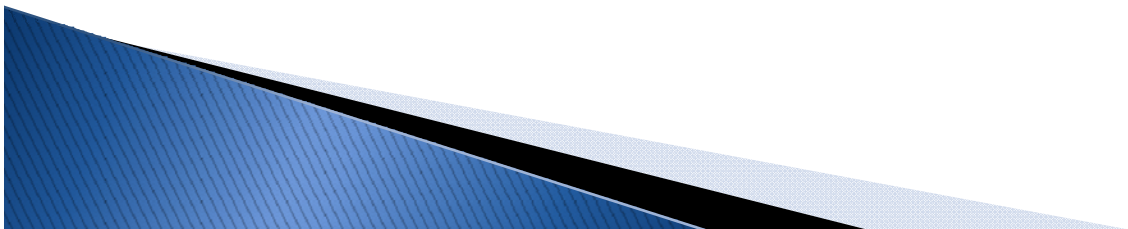
▶ **Who is TONS?**

- ▶ In 1999, a wide-range of community stakeholders concerned about the inadequacies of transportation options for older adults came together to form the Transportation Options Network for Seniors (TONS).



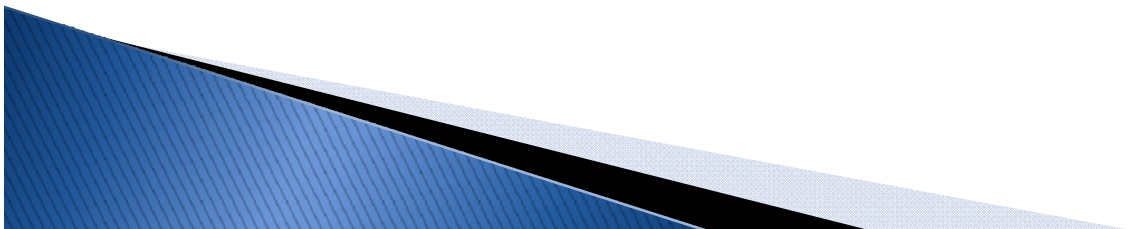
TONS MISSION:

- ▶ is to inform and educate Manitobans on the transportation options available to seniors and to promote Age-Friendly communities



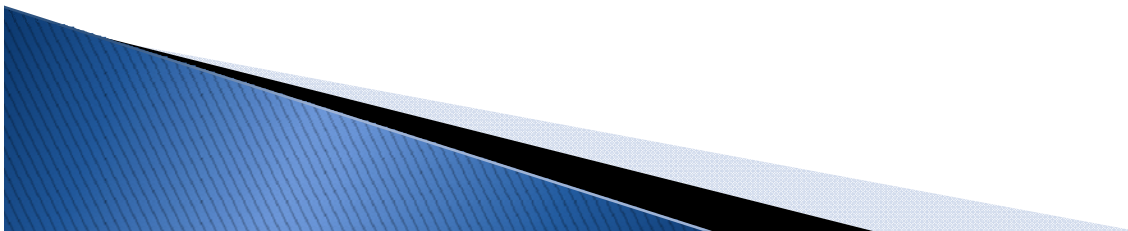
TONS STRUCTURE:

- ▶ **Board** – meets every two months
- ▶ **Three sub-committees**
 - ▶ Committee Connections
 - ▶ Rural
- ▶ **Coordinator**



TONS wants to ensure that seniors in Manitoba can get appropriate, affordable and accessible transportation when they need it.

Appropriate, Affordable & Accessible!



FUNDERS

- ▶ Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat (SHAS) –
Core funding



- ▶ Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation (MPIC) –
Changing Seats



- ▶ Winnipeg Foundation – **Senior Taxi usage**

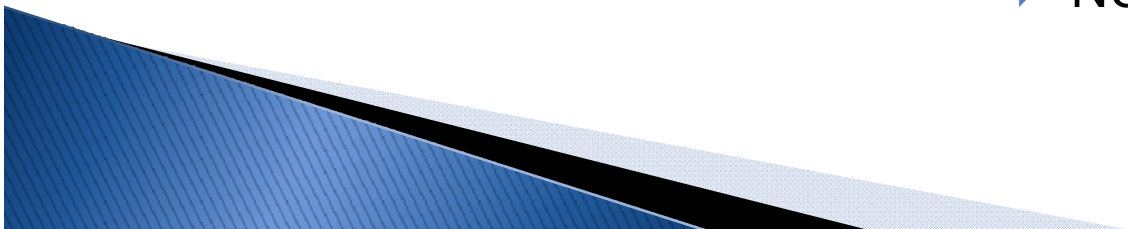


- ▶ New Horizons – **Changing Seats expansion**



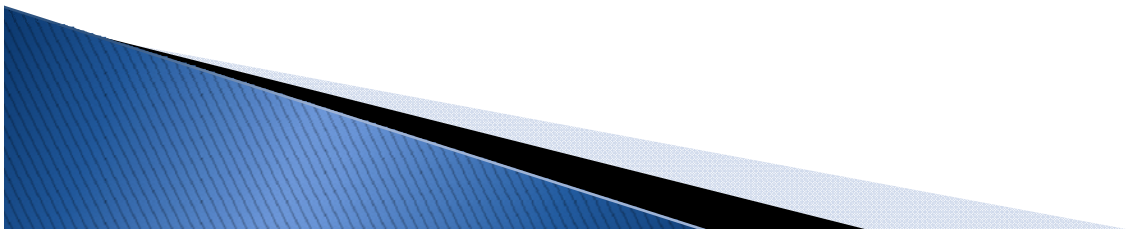
KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- ▶ Manitoba Association of Seniors Centres
- ▶ Good Neighbours Active Living Centres
- ▶ Age & Opportunity
- ▶ Regional Health Authorities
- ▶ Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM)
- ▶ Canadian Automobile Association (CAA)
- ▶ Winnipeg Foundation
- ▶ Winnipeg Transit
- ▶ Manitoba Taxi Board
- ▶ Société Franco-Manitobaine (SFM)
- ▶ University of Manitoba – Centre on Aging
- ▶ University of Winnipeg – Dept. of Geography
- ▶ Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat (SHAS)
- ▶ Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation (MPIC)
- ▶ New Horizons



Why is TONS Involved with Handi-Vans?

- Providing adequate transportation in rural areas of Manitoba recognized as a priority issue to ensure a sustained quality of life for rural seniors.
- In communities with few transportation resources, Handi-van programs lend support to families and care givers that currently help meet the essential needs of Manitoba's aging populations.

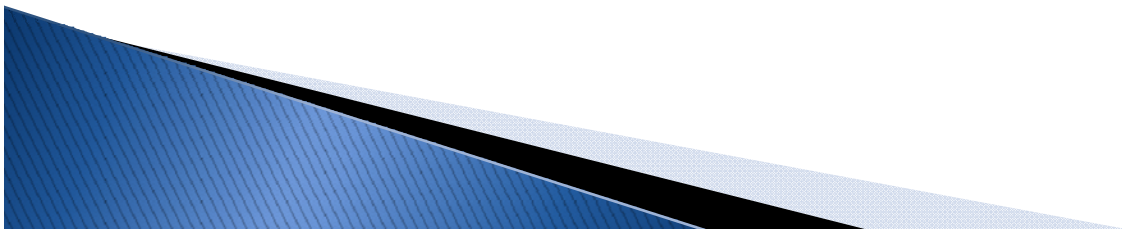


Handi-van Service and
Keeping Older Citizens in Rural Communities

Aging and Rural Manitoba

“Integral to rural vibrancy in the Prairie context is the social and economic engagement of older members, yet the lack of mobility options is a significant barrier to the continued community contributions of many seniors. In southern Manitoba, the aging population is faced with severe winters and long distances, combined with the excessive costs of accessing activities, care and goods.” (1)

(1) Gina Sylvestre , Department of Geography, University of Winnipeg

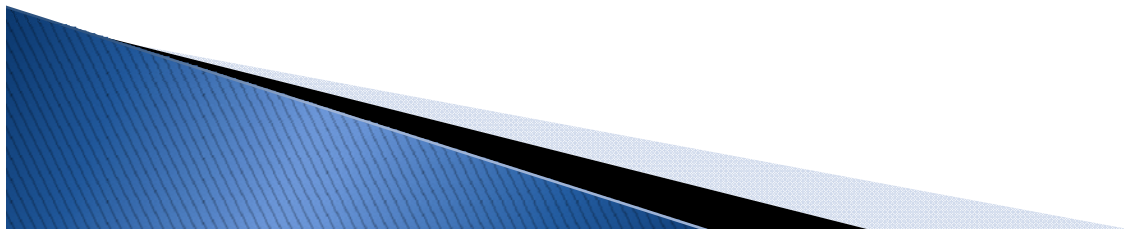


Aging and Rural Manitoba

Summary of Provincial Population by Regional Health Authority

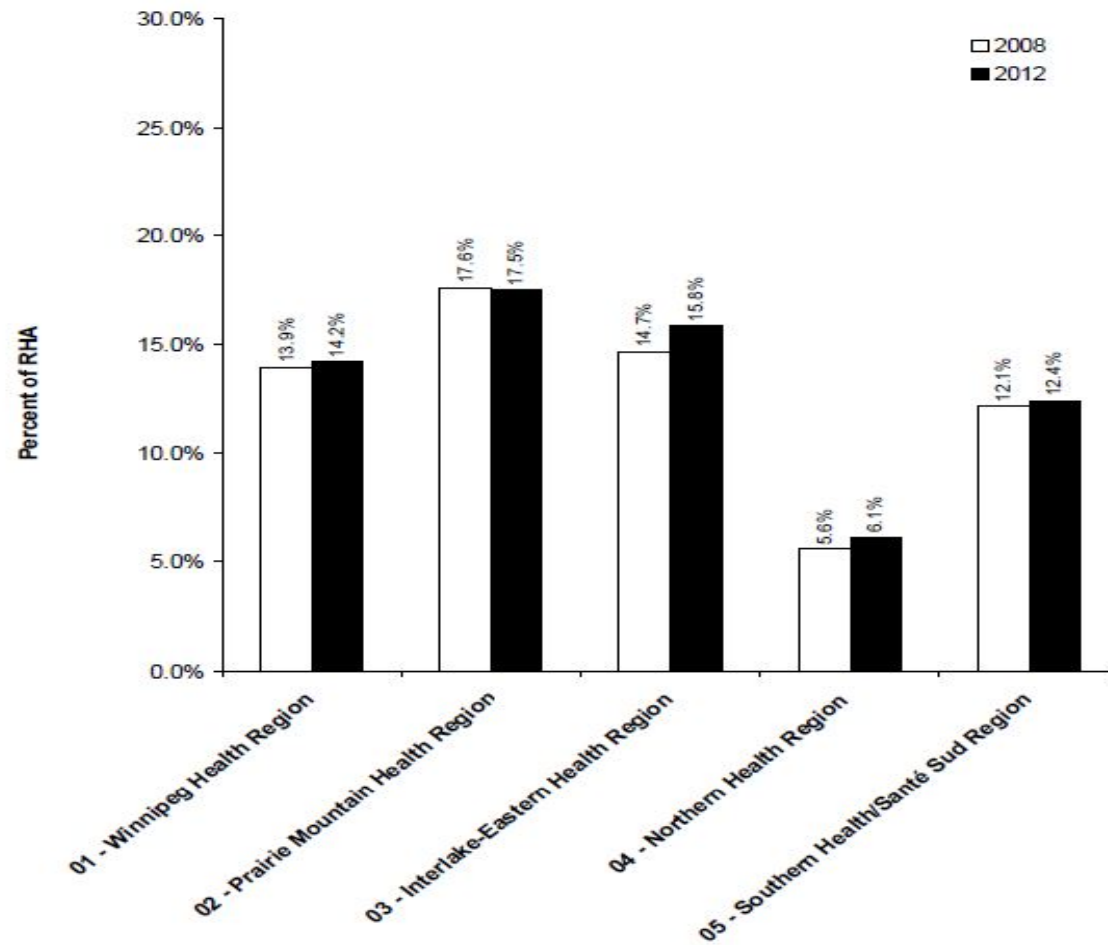
Age Group 65+

Regional Health Authority	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Winnipeg Health Region	94,750	96,414	97,811	99,736	102,883
Prairie Mountain Health Region	28,172	28,357	28,431	28,608	29,070
Interlake-Eastern Health Region	17,395	17,813	18,272	18,869	19,760
Northern Health Region	3,943	4,062	4,218	4,337	4,522
Southern Health/Santé Sud Region	20,622	21,066	21,503	21,998	22,723
Provincial Total	164,882	167,712	170,235	173,548	178,958



Aging and Rural Manitoba


Percent of Population for Age Group 65+ by
Regional Health Authority
June 1, 2008 and 2012



Aging and Rural Manitoba

- ▶ Aging: physical and social decline
- ▶ Aging as an asset to rural Manitoba
- ▶ Significance of transportation for the active participation of older adults in their communities.

“ So it’s that transportation for personal independence and my own shopping and being able to go to the library on the main street. I love libraries and I’ve hardly been in there this—well I haven’t been in there this winter because it’s, again, very far from where I am, because our main street is and anything of importance is on that street... .. I could be far more active if I could get to places.”



**Handi-van Service and
Keeping Older Citizens in Rural Communities**

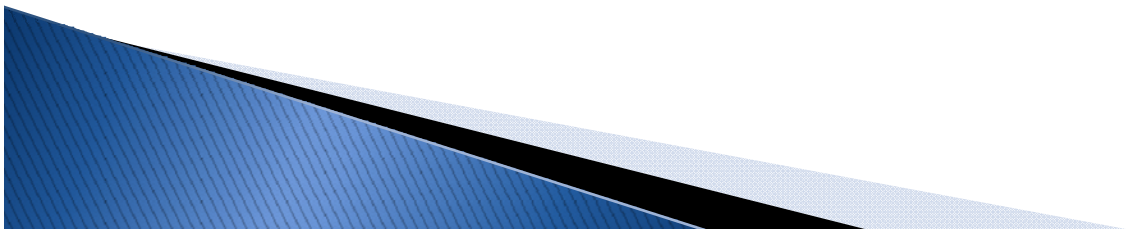
Barriers of Rurality

- Geographic distance and isolation
- Increasing costs of insurance and fuel
- Centralization of services has increased need for long-distance travel
- Municipalities across the province are very diverse in terms of situational factors:
 - Population and tax base
 - Proximity to major centres and amenities
 - Distance to neighbouring communities
- Limited mobility options in rural Manitoba



What are some of the challenges
facing Handi- Vans?

What are some solutions that will
help keep our older adults in our
communities?



Challenges Facing Handi-Vans

Policy concerns

1. Government Funding

- Start-up grant * for new Handi-van service \$6,000. (\$6.0)
- Annual grant * 37.5% of operating costs(up to a maximum of \$20.0 for service with one vehicle or \$30.0 for more than one vehicle)
- Regional Incentive grant (Start FY2012/13) is based on volumes and distances travelled (\$15.0 max)
 - Requires Municipal government funding (or in kind services) Municipality must contribute a min. of 20% of total Handi-van service revenues, which include contributions to offset year end deficit (Sponsoring municipality must be receiving the max., or receive within \$5.0 of the maximum annual MDTP operating grant to qualify to apply)

NOTE: * Funding level has not increased since inception

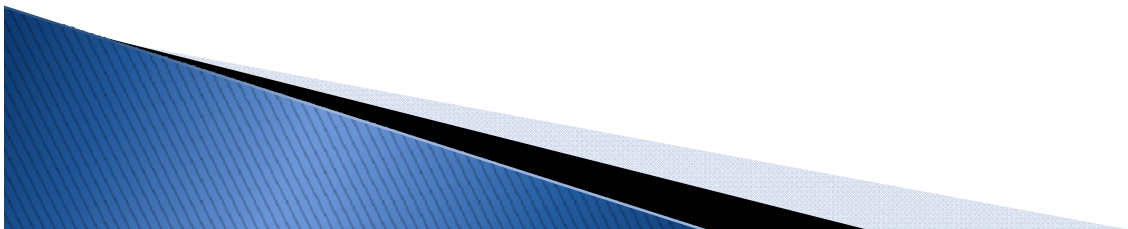


Challenges Facing Handi-Vans

Policy concerns

2. Services are NOT available throughout all of rural Manitoba

3. Medical transportation
 - Prioritization – medical has priority
 - Using Handi-van in place of an ambulance
 - Allowing Handi-vans to be used for community transportation



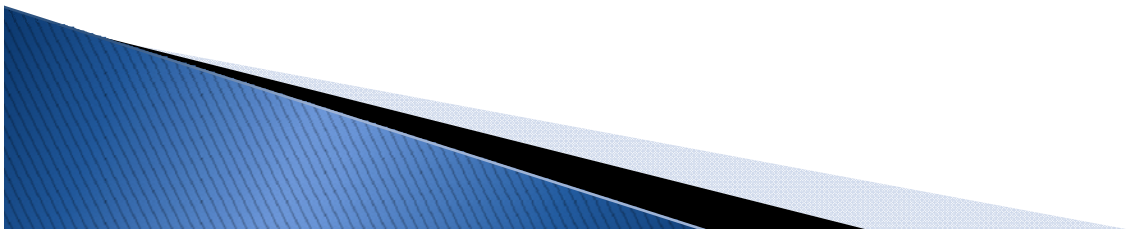
Solutions

Funding:

- ▶ Permit vans to be used in off hours as community vans.
- ▶ Ensure that Handi-van users can afford rate increases.
- ▶ Handi-Vans need to embrace fund raising opportunities.

As Municipal Officials how can you help?

- ▶ Continue to lobby through the AMM and other means at our disposal to encourage the Provincial government to increase funding for Handi-van services.
- ▶ Ensure that municipal funding and support for Handi-van services is at a level that ensures sustainability.



Solutions

Improved Service:

- ▶ Encourage Handi-van operators to reach out to other district services and collaborate to develop a coordinated district model of Handi-van operations.

As Municipal Officials how can you help?

- ▶ Lobby through the AMM to encourage the government to recognize the significance of Handi- vans to rural communities' vibrancy.



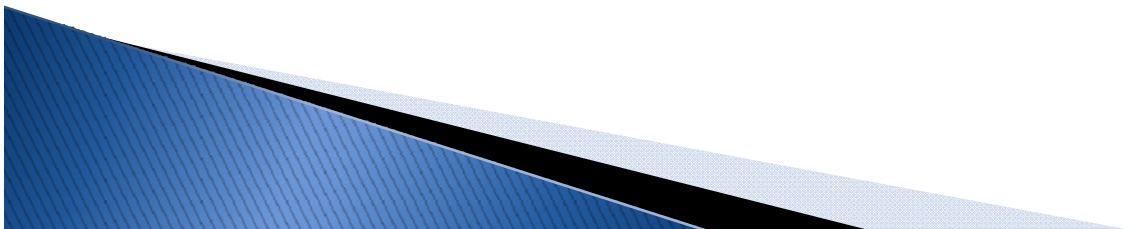
Solutions

Medical Transportation:

- ▶ Through the AMM lobby the government to examine the guidelines of the Mobility Disadvantaged Transportation Program (MDTP) and the transportation priorities.

Any additional ideas?

Questions?

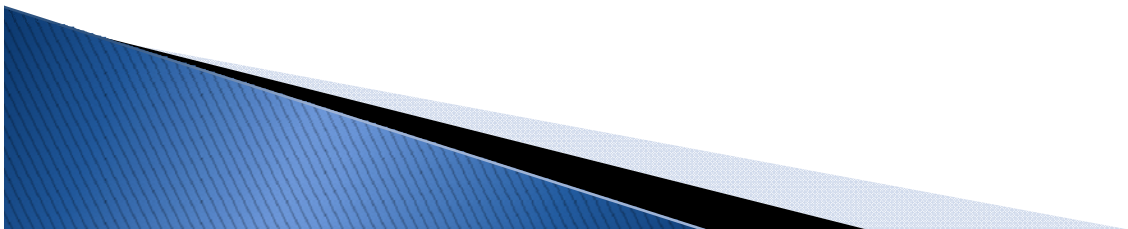


Challenges Facing Handi-Vans

Operational Concerns

1. Operational costs

- Buying the right vehicle(s)
- Escalating costs : paid driver rates, driver training, bookkeeping, vehicle maintenance, gas, vehicle insurance, HV Board insurance, etc.
- MDTP guidelines restrict vehicle usage
- At the May 2013 meeting there were representatives from 35 of the 69 Handi-Van operators. Very few had an understanding of the actual costs of their service.
- Affordability / SUSTAINABILITY

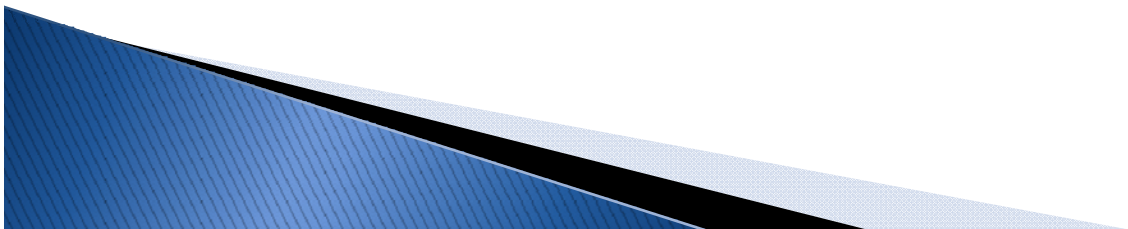


Challenges Facing Handi-Vans

Operational Concerns

2. Isolation of Handi-van services

- Limited community participation on many HV Boards
- Municipal engagement may be limited
- Little coordination of operations
- Little sharing of services
- Finding qualified drivers is becoming increasingly difficult

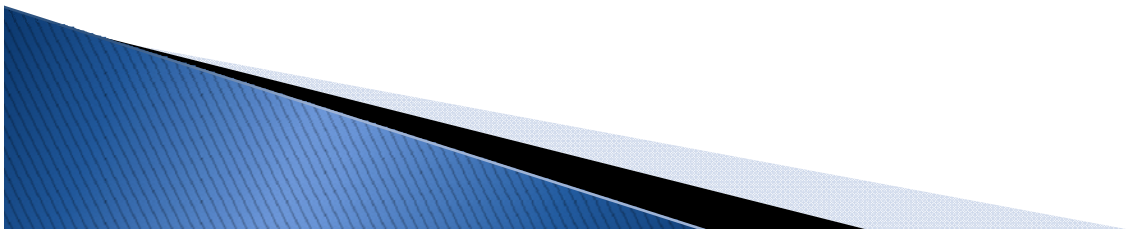


Challenges Facing Handi-Vans

Operational Concerns

3. Need for greater efficiencies and collaboration

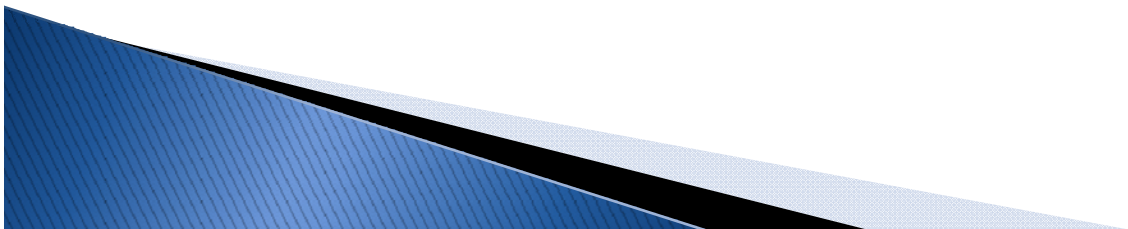
- Lack of coordination of operations
- Little evaluation of services
- No sharing of best practices
- Affordability / SUSTAINABILITY



SOLUTIONS

1. Responding to Rising Operational Costs to Be Sustainable

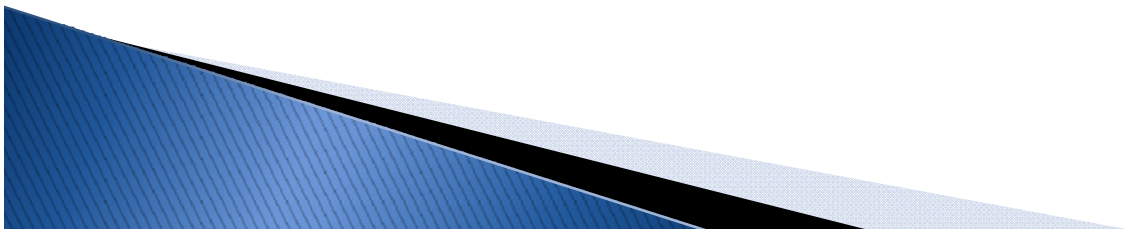
- Increased government funding
- Purchases through municipality
- Bulk purchasing for more than one Handi-van service
- Affordable, accessible educational opportunities
- Annual calculation of the actual costs of the service
- Calculation of what riders can afford to pay
- Learn best practices i.e. buy the right vehicle the first time; Paid drivers = more and younger drivers to choose from



SOLUTIONS

2. Reducing Handi-van Services' Isolation

- Regular communication with the sponsoring municipality
- Greater coordination of operations within districts
- Community promotion of the Handi-van – reduce “stigma”
- Establish system or way to communicate, share information with other Handi-van operators
- Increased sharing of services, best practices and challenges

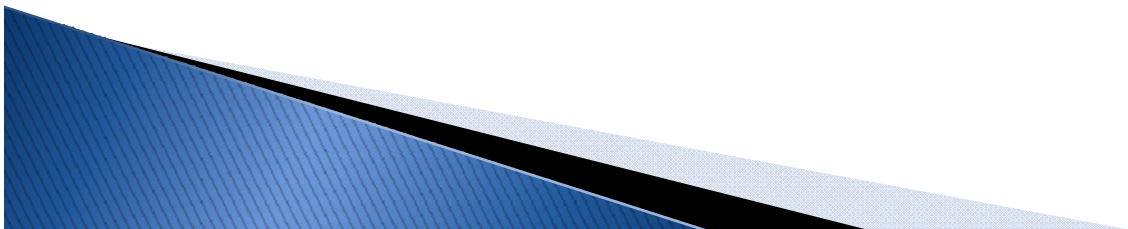


SOLUTIONS

3. Collaboration can Improve Handi-van Programs

- Coordination of operations aligned with districts
- Evaluation of services with goal of increasing riders – survey riders, senior services for overall satisfaction, unmet needs, community perceptions
- Share best practices
- Gain an understanding of what good Handi-van services look like

Any additional ideas?
Questions?



Challenges Facing Handi-Vans

User Concerns

1. Cost of using service

“I know it’s ten dollars when you call them for within town, for just around town. And of course we’re so far from Winnipeg, far enough that I think it is I think seventy-five or eighty dollars to go to Winnipeg”

1. Lack of knowledge about service or stigma about using the service.
2. Priority rides (often seniors cannot use service because of prioritization for contracted services and medical appointments)



Solutions

Cost of Using Services

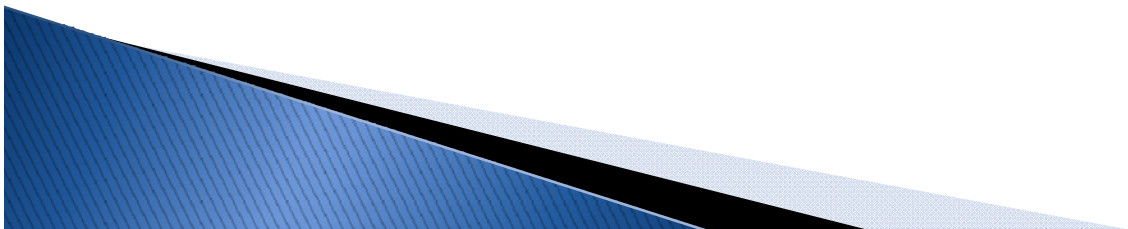
- ▶ Increasing costs recovery can not be borne by service users alone
- ▶ Determine what users can afford to pay
- ▶ Handi-Van operators understand their costs
- ▶ Ensure government and Dept. of Health awareness
- ▶ Increased Government funding levels (MDTP) and other funding

Lack of Knowledge/Stigma

- ▶ Create perception of a community van
- ▶ Include recreation and FUN!

Priorities

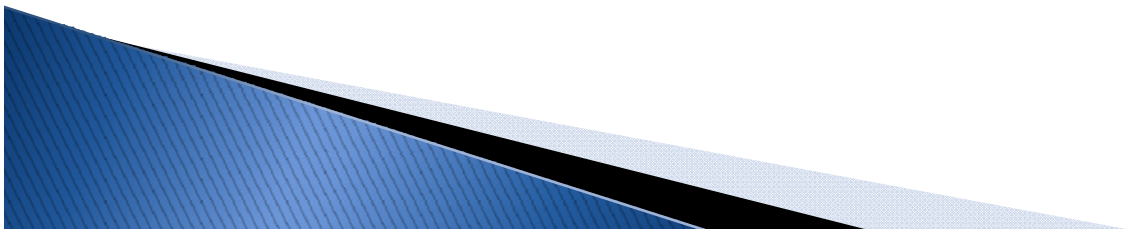
- ▶ Establish priority ride protocols
- ▶ Determine if other transportation alternatives are required and how they will be met



Next Steps

- ▶ In the near future TONS will be rolling out a web based system to facilitate the sharing of best practices, ideas and more coordination of the operations between Handi-van services.

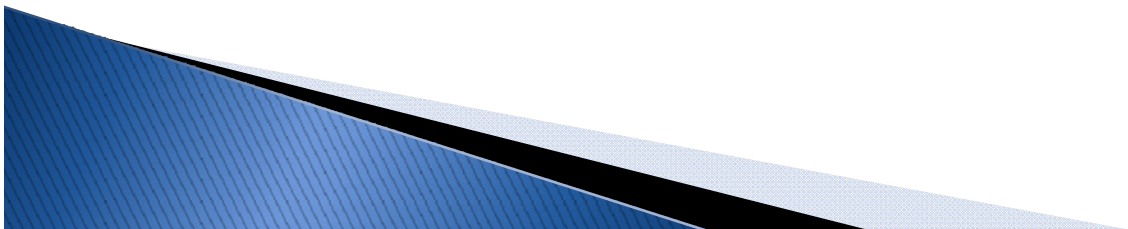
- ▶ Initiate meetings with two districts
 - to explore the new tool and
 - learn how to use the tool to communicate with others.



▶ Next Steps

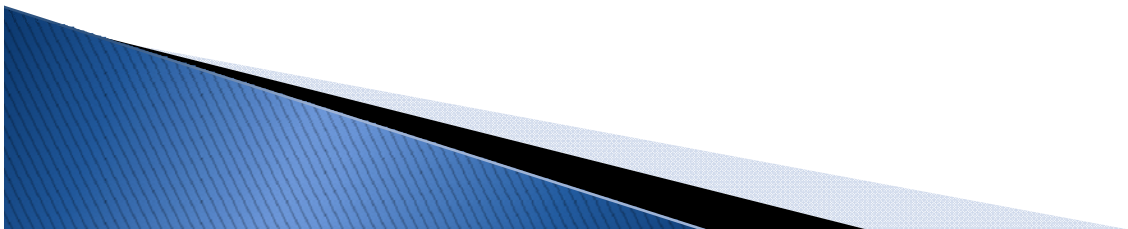
- ▶ Active lobbying by the AMM and its members to persuade government of the importance of the need for increased funding, more flexibility in the MDTP guidelines and encourage the government to realize the overall benefit of a more coordinated transportation system for Handi-Vans and medical transportation.
- ▶ Active participation by municipal governments with the Handi-Van systems.

What can you do?

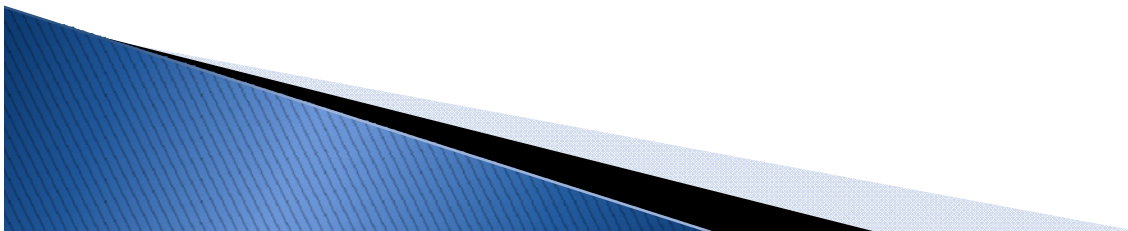




Only by being part of the solution, can we ensure our older citizens can age in place and remain vibrant members of our communities.



Questions?



CONTACT INFORMATION

- ▶ **Phone**
 - 204-799-1788

- ▶ **Email**
 - info@tonsmb.org

- ▶ **Website**
 - www.tonsmb.org

