

Human Services Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5356 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING NONEMERGENCY MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION
Title: FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS.

Vote Date: 3/19/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/3/2026

File No.: 414

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Human Services Committee

CO-SPONSORS OF BILL:

Sen. Saud Anwar, 3rd Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

Medicaid recipients are unable to find adequate transportation for non-emergency appointments, an issue that is especially acute in underserved areas of the state. The bill makes certain drivers eligible to provide nonemergency medical transportation (NEMT) through a contract or subcontract with the Department of Social Services (DSS) without the full endorsement process, or the amount of training that is currently required of drivers with the contracted service. Adequate reimbursement, as contemplated in the bill, is believed to be essential for an adequate supply of qualified drivers.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS), Andrea Barton Reeves, Commissioner: opposes the current language, although expresses shared concerns regarding the availability and safety of NEMT. The current contracted MTM drivers must undergo criminal history records checks, motor vehicle driving record reviews, and a review of the sexual abuse registry, as well as being required to participate in various training programs including defensive driving, CPR, first aid, and HIPAA. Contracting with independent drivers without this training is inviting risk, as these rides are for a vulnerable population.

Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS), Mairead Painter, Commissioner: supports provisions requiring regular review of reimbursement rates to ensure they are sufficient to maintain an adequate pool of drivers and transportation on providers across the state. When rates are adequate, providers are more likely to remain in the network, improving access, continuity of care, and health outcomes for individuals who rely on these services.

Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), Garrett T. Eucalitto, Commissioner: expresses concern regarding the current draft of this legislation would allow drivers hired through companies to drive as if they had an 'f-endorsement' prior to completion of all background checks. This would exempt the NEMT provider from the liability, currently in place, during the 90-day process of approval. However, current regulations prevent the use of poorly maintained vehicles, assure drivers have a valid driver's license, proper insurance, have met basic background checks, are financially suitable, and can respond to and resolve complaints as indicated.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

CT Ambulance Association, Gregory Allard, President: supports the legislation and recommends inclusion of emergency medical services providers within the scope of the bill. Reliable transportation is often the deciding factor in whether a patient receives dialysis, cancer treatment, behavioral health services, or follow-up care after a hospital stay. When transportation fails, patients miss appointments, conditions worsen, and costs rise elsewhere in the system. A predictable, annual rate review process for both emergency and non-emergency ambulance services would provide stability and ensure that providers can continue to recruit and retain trained personnel, invest in safe equipment, and meet response time expectations.

Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA): supports the bill. In parts of the state where provider networks are geographically dispersed, and public transit options are limited transportation systems face unique pressures. When the transportation system is strained, patients experience delays, missed appointments, and avoidable escalations in care that can lead to emergency department visits or hospitalizations. Regular review of reimbursement rates at least annually would help to stabilize the emergency and NEMT systems.

Ambassador Wheelchair Services, Inc., Salvatore Marotta: supports regular review of reimbursement rates sufficient to maintaining an adequate driver pool. Expressed appreciation for the efforts toward improving access to NEMT for Medicaid recipients, in the face of a shrinking industry and an unreasonably lengthy review process.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Non expressed.

Reported by: Rebecca McClanahan

Date: May 4, 2026