

Introduction

- Aging often means loss of independence and ability to drive.¹
- Driving cessation can lead to depression and lack of mobility.²
- An estimated 25% of Vermonters will be 65 years or older by 2030.³
- We surveyed senior citizens in Chittenden County, VT to determine access to transportation and its effect on their lives.
- We focused on seniors without personal vehicles and assessed their transportation challenges.

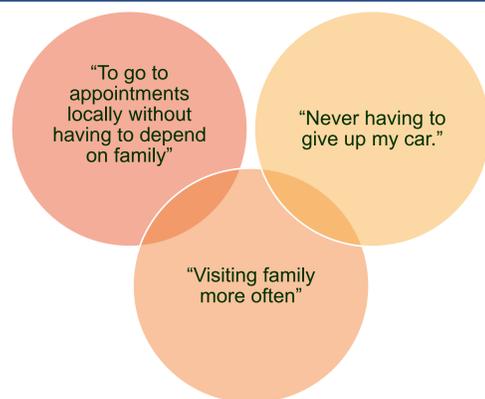
Important Daily Activities Surveyed



Methods

- 1,221 surveys were distributed to senior congregate meal sites, senior housing, and other senior community partners in Chittenden County.
- 252 completed surveys were analyzed.
- Surveys consisted of 37 questions assessing transportation access and the perceived importance of various activities.
- Surveys were in English, and required the participant to be literate.
- Individuals were considered to not have a personal vehicle if they reported it being "rarely available" or "not available." (n = 82)
- Activities were considered difficult to get to if individuals reported that it was "never" or "sometimes" easy to get there.
- SPSS was used for statistical analysis.

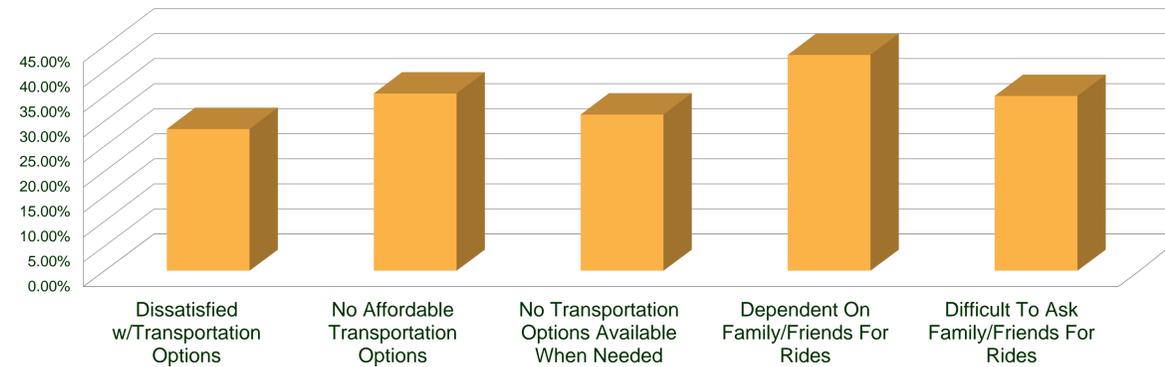
If you could change anything about your access to transportation, what would it be?



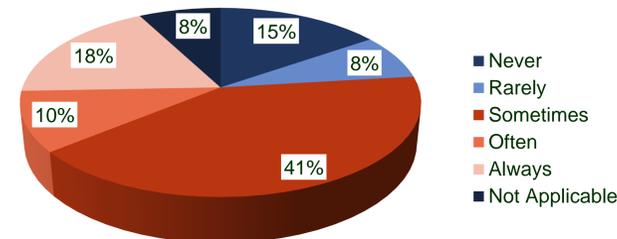
Findings

Types of Transportation Challenges

Many seniors face a multitude of transportation challenges.

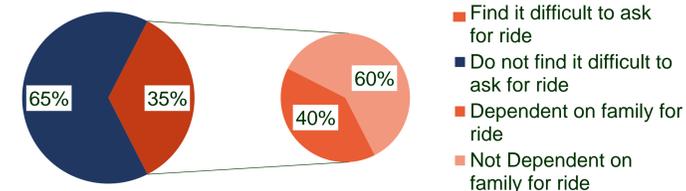


Seniors Who Delay Medical Appointments Due to Lack of Transportation



Of those who consider medical appointments to be very important, 69% of individuals always, often or sometimes delay medical appointments due to lack of ride

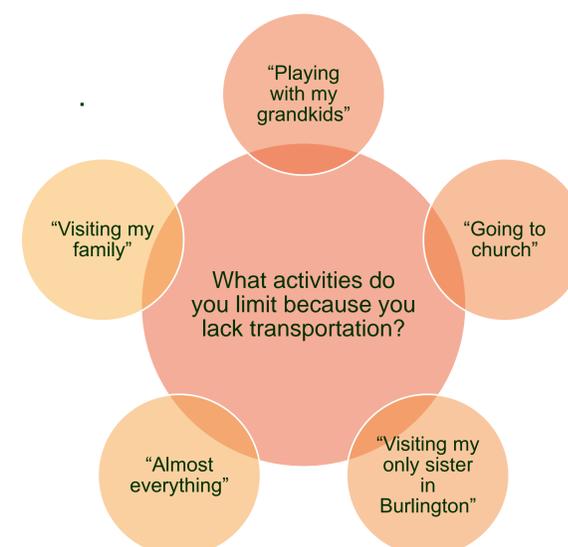
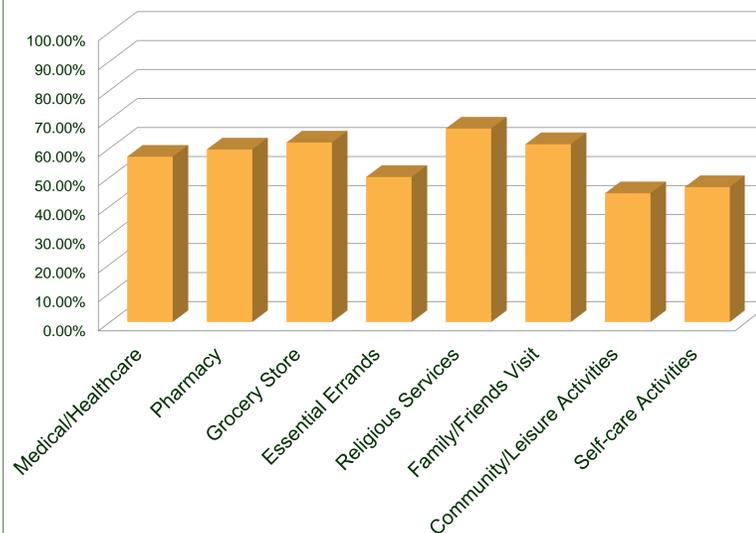
Seniors Who Find it Difficult to Ask Family and Friends for Rides and Are Dependent on them for Transportation



Of the 35% who indicated difficulty asking family or friends for rides, 40% were often or always dependent on family or friends as their primary mode of transportation.

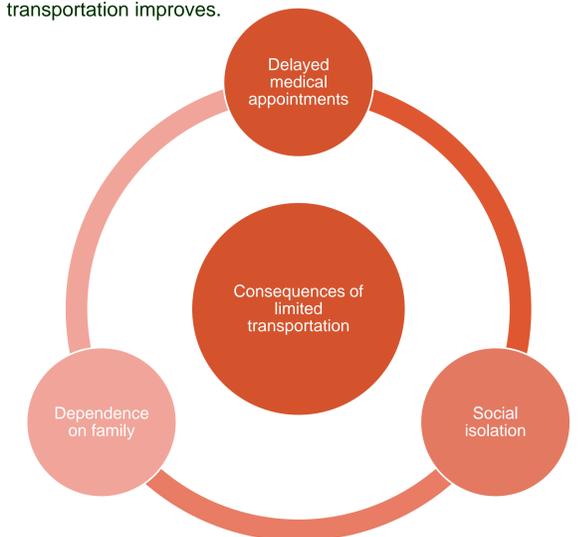
Percentage of people reporting difficulty getting to important activities

Regardless of activity, >40% of individuals reported having difficulty getting to activities they considered very important.



Conclusion

- The inability to drive combined with the lack of accessible and affordable transportation options leads to missed healthcare appointments, decreased community involvement, and social isolation, which may have detrimental effects on the health and well-being of seniors.
- Seniors commonly report difficulties asking family and friends for rides, yet this is the primary mode of transportation for almost half of them.
- Our data show that there are many seniors who are still facing transportation challenges; it is critical that their access to transportation improves.



Future Directions

- One limitation to this study is that the surveys mainly reached English speaking elders who live in senior residences or attend meal sites, excluding those that remain in their own homes.
- To have the greatest impact on maintaining health and well-being, emphasis must be placed on increasing seniors' access to transportation for medical appointments and life-enriching activities.
- Policy and funding initiatives need to recognize the burden on elders in relying on family and friends to provide transportation.
- Innovative transportation programs need to continue to grow and expand services. One such program is Neighbor Rides, a collaborative volunteer driver initiative led by United Way of Chittenden County.



Sources

- 1) Satariano, W.A. Driving and the promotion of safe mobility in older populations. *Journal of Gerontology: Medical Sciences*. 2007; 62A: 1111-1112.
- 2) Fonda SJ, Wallace RB, Herzog AR. 2001. Changes in driving patterns and worsening depressive symptoms among older adults. *J Gerontol B Psychol*, 56B:S343-51.
- 3) US Census 2010; <http://www.census.gov/2010census/>. Web. 25 Nov 2013.