



County of Orange
California

James D. Ruth
County Executive Officer

August 9, 2004

Tom Staple, Foreman
FY 03/04 Grand Jury
Superior Court of California
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92702

Subject: Response to Orange County Grand Jury Report, "Senior
Transportation in Orange County"

Dear Mr. Staple:

Per your request, and in accordance with Penal Code 993, enclosed please find the County of Orange response to the subject report as approved by the Board of Supervisors. If you have any questions, please contact Brian Wayt at the County Executive Office who will either assist you or direct you to the appropriate individual.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James D. Ruth".

James D. Ruth
County Executive Officer

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**2003-2004 Grand Jury Report
“Senior Transportation in Orange County”
Response to Findings and Recommendations**

Response to Findings 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-9, 11 &12:

1. Transportation available to the senior citizens of Orange County has improved over the last three years in both the public and private sectors

Response: Agrees with Finding

2. Predicted increases in the senior population will need to be accommodated with expanded transportation services and additional funding.

Response: Agrees with Finding

4. The County has awarded six contracts for Senior Non-Emergency Medical Transportation service. These contracts are funded by Tobacco Settlement Revenue. Two more of these pilot programs are in development.

Response: Agrees with Finding

5. The Senior Mobility Program has been implemented by 16 member cities and two non-profit agencies

Response: Agrees with Finding

7. Tobacco Settlement Revenue-funded programs reduce the demand placed on ACCESS and Senior Mobility Program providers and allow them to make more services available within existing resources.

Response: Disagrees partially with the Finding

Due to the strict eligibility criteria associated with the Tobacco Settlement Revenue (TSR) funded programs, ACCESS eligible riders are not permitted to participate in the Senior Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Program (SNEMT).

Additionally, the Office on Aging collaborates with Senior Mobility Program providers to ensure that rides are provided to older adults who have no other means of medical transportation.

8. The Office on Aging provides a central senior-transportation clearinghouse through the use of the 800-510-2020 telephone number and has reached 500,000 households out of 938,000 households in the County. Information is provided in English, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese and Chinese. The Office on Aging is making a strong

effort to publicize this number to all senior citizens, their families and the general public.

Response: Agrees with Finding

9. Medical transportation programs do not fulfill the social needs of senior citizens for shopping, visiting, and entertainment

Response: Agrees with Finding

11. As the senior population grows and additional transportation services become available, increased staffing at the Office on Aging will be a critical necessity.

Response: Disagrees partially with the Finding

While we agree that the critical needs for senior transportation dictate the necessity of adequate staffing levels, it has not been determined if the Office on Aging should be the agency responsible for administering or implementing additional transportation services.

12. The Office on Aging, Orange County Transportation Authority, County agencies and other entities involved with senior transportation need to collaborate to create a network of information.

Response: Agrees with Finding

Response to Recommendations 1-3, 5, 6, 8 & 9:

1. The Orange County Transportation Authority and the Office on Aging continue to improve transportation options and their availability to the senior citizens of Orange County.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented

Office on Aging, in collaboration with OCTA, has implemented Senior Mobility Programs, Senior Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Pilot Programs, provided low-income older adults with bus passes and ACCESS coupons, has provided community-based organizations and volunteer programs that provide senior transportation with gas cards, and continues to brainstorm ways to enrich transportation options for older adults of Orange County.

Office on Aging recognizes that SNEMT pilots currently in place were designed to be test models towards developing a “best practices” model that will prove to be cost effective and provide the greatest number of trips possible. A Phase II Plan is under development for future implementation. Approval of the Phase II Plan is

pending board action on July 27, 2004. If approved, the plan is scheduled for implementation in April 2005.

2. The Orange County Transportation Authority and the Office on Aging identify funding sources, such as Measure M, to support future expansion of senior transportation services

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

Currently the funding source of Tobacco Settlement Revenue, which supports SNEMT programs and acts as “seed money” for the implementation plan, dictates the need to leverage funding from alternative resources. As indicated in the proposed Phase II plan, the Office on Aging and OCTA, in coordination with multiple community resources, will be drafting a funding development plan to address the resource options to continue to expand existing senior transportation services. Regularly scheduled collaborative meetings with the Health Care Agency, OCTA, Cal Optima, and the Office on Aging are taking place to address the issues of funding and collaboration for senior transportation.

3. The Orange County Transportation Authority and the Office on Aging compare subscriber lists for ACCESS and non-emergency transportation services to stop dual-service usage by subscribers who do not qualify for an exemption

Response: The recommendation has been implemented

Client databases from the SNEMT pilot programs are currently shared with OCTA to prevent any duplication of services and to verify client eligibility. Office on Aging Information and Assistance also provides pre-screening of seniors who call for transportation prior to referring them to SNEMT services. Office on Aging will continue to monitor client enrollment to avoid duplication of services.

5. The Orange County Transportation Authority and the Office on Aging continue to distribute information about senior transportation services in multiple languages.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented

Office on Aging currently provides senior transportation information that includes but is not limited to flyers, brochures, and website links in five languages including: Vietnamese, Spanish, Korean, English and Chinese. Office on Aging Information and Assistance also has bilingual staff that speaks Vietnamese and Spanish and uses the language line for other translation services as needed.

6. The Orange County Transportation Authority and the Office on Aging publicizes the availability of programs that fulfill the social transportation needs of senior citizens.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented

Office on Aging supports the Senior Mobility Programs through funds received from the California Department of Aging. The Senior Mobility Programs are operated by various cities in the county, which provide social transportation to older adults. Office on Aging also distributes information related to these and other programs that offer social transportation. Additionally, Office on Aging staff provide community presentations, conduct Info-Van outreach efforts, participate in a wide variety of community events and engagements, and disseminate all transportation options that are available to older adults throughout the county. Periodically, Office on Aging makes available an updated “alternative transportation” guide of all transportation services operating in the county.

8. The Office on Aging plan for future staffing to accommodate a growing senior population.

Response: The recommendation requires further analysis

Office on Aging will continue to assess and evaluate current senior trends and needs in transportation and other senior programs and make the necessary recommendations to funding sources and the Board of Supervisors to implement staffing patterns that address the optimum support necessary to meet the service needs of older adults. Increasing staff is subject to limitations on net county costs as well as local, state, and federal funding sources.

9. The Orange County Transportation Authority and the Office on Aging periodically schedule conferences with all senior transportation providers to discuss their programs and to exchange ideas for providing and improving senior transportation.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented

Office on Aging, in collaboration with OCTA, currently provides quarterly forums with Senior Mobility Program providers and TSR transportation providers as well as many other community transportation stakeholders. Also, the Office on Aging attends monthly advisory meetings with OCTA’s Special Needs in Transit Committee, monthly meetings with the Senior Citizens Advisory Council Transportation Committee, monthly meetings with providers of Senior Non-Emergency Medical Transportation, and periodic meetings with Cal-Optima, and numerous other senior transportation providers.