

Free Transportation for Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Burn Patients: A Quality Improvement Project

utmb Health

Laura L. Perez, LMSW; Rebecca L. Castro, LCSW; Steven E. Wolf, MD; Jong O. Lee, MD

Problem

The Blocker Burn Center at UTMB Health provides care to persons living in Southeast Texas. The percent of patients living in poverty in this area is near or greater than the overall poverty rate for the State.

Lack of resources often translates to an inability to return to burn clinic for continued care. There is ample research to suggest that transportation plays an important part in a patient's adherence to follow-up care.

[J Community Health. 2013 Oct; 38\(5\): 976–993](#)

Solution

- Survey of East Texas residents conducted to determine need. Ninety percent of respondents surveyed “would find free transportation beneficial”.
- Contracted with an existing vendor
- Scheduled pick-ups at a UTMB-Regional Maternal and Child Health Program clinic in Beaumont, TX. Facility provided supervised parking for riders at no cost.
- Grant funds from the John P. McGovern Academy of Oslerian Medicine provides financial resources for monthly transport services.

Survey Responses: “This program has made it easier for us to get to our appointments. Thank you!”

Data

Percent Persons Living in Poverty

Texas 14.9%

Newton County	22.3%
Jasper County	19.2%
Jefferson County	18.7%
Orange County	13.4%
Hardin County	12.4%

Source: 2018 US Census Bureau data;
<https://www.indexmundi.com/facts/united-states/quick-facts/texas/percent-of-people-of-all-ages-in-poverty#table>

Implementation

- Began with one trip/month
- Limited to burn patients initially
- Increased to two trips/month after four months
- Opened to patients from Transplant and Oncology clinics
- Plan to continue studying the impact on adherence at multiple specialty sites

