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Behind the Scenes

Executive Director's Report

The Access Services Board of Directors met on January 15, 2019.

The Board approved the Consent Calendar, which included items extending contracts for Oracle support services, third party administration services, drug and alcohol consultant services, data services, and information technology services. Also approved was the reappointment of Community Advisory Committee members along with the award of five appeal provider contracts.

The Board also took action and extended the terms for both the Southern and Eastern region contracts for one year.

Finally the Board heard a presentation related to the potential use of a transportation services brokerage and approved the extension of the eligibility transportation services portion of the Eastern region for an additional year.

Andre Colaiace
Executive Director

Access looks to enhance North County transfer trips

With the encouragement of Access' Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and other advocates, staff is working on a recommendation that could go to the Board this spring that would expand and enhance opportunities for Access riders to travel between Antelope Valley, Santa Clarita and the rest of Los Angeles County.



For years, Access has offered limited opportunities to travel between these areas, with the Olive View Medical Center in Sylmar acting as a transfer hub. Access currently provides three connections a day between Antelope Valley and the rest of Los Angeles, and four connections a day between Santa Clarita and the rest of Los Angeles. Access transports an average of 25 people a day on weekdays.

Under consideration is the addition of more weekday transfer times, new weekend transfer times, and consideration of other suggestions stemming from a round of public outreach. Feedback has already been sought from Access' CAC and Santa Clarita's Accessibility Advisory Committee. A meeting was also held in Lancaster on Friday, January 18th with disabled riders and community advocates at the Independent Living Center who provided additional opinions. Staff's goal is to present an improvement plan to the CAC and Transportation Professionals Advisory Committee and ask for Board approval prior to a July 2019 implementation.

Mike Greenwood
Chief Operations Officer

My Access Services extern experience

Prior to my sophomore year of college, I never really took the time to think about fields outside of medicine that offer services to those in need. My interest in how different agencies come together to enhance the lives of those in need began when my mother underwent retinal detachment surgery to save her vision, and relied on various sources to help her throughout her recovery journey. Coincidentally, during Fall Term of my junior year, the Career Center at Carleton College in Northfield, MN released a list of externships offered during our winter break and one, in particular, piqued my curiosity: ADA Complementary Paratransit Services Student Extern with Access Services. I deemed this the perfect opportunity to gain a better understanding of the intersection between healthcare and transportation.

Access Services went above and beyond to give me the opportunity to gain an understanding of the Agency and the role it plays in both health care and transportation. I was fortunate to meet with various people from different departments to further understand how each department plays a role in helping the company meet its mission of providing accessible transportation for people with disabilities. For example, during my site visit of San Gabriel Transit in El Monte, I learned that one of the main duties of the Operations Department is to conduct oversight on Access' contractors to make sure they are providing good service to Access customers. Business analytics, to give another example, assists the Agency by analyzing all the data collected from the contractors to ensure they are meeting the 15 key performance indicators.

After being educated about Access, I wanted to know more about what health insurance companies were doing to help their customers overall. Access arranged for me to meet with LA Care who, through the federal Medi-Cal program, insures two-thirds of Los Angeles County's population. During the meeting, they informed me about Medi-Cal's benefits and a few projects they are implementing. One of the benefits is free transportation for non-emergency medical travel, which their customers have to call two days in advance to reserve. Furthermore, LA Care is investing \$30 million to attract more providers to LA County through full scholarship awards for medical school and student loan forgiveness programs. It was a very interesting conversation that helped me gain a broader understanding of how transportation and medical care intersect.

Shelsea St. Hillien
Carleton College '20
Access Services Extern



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Rider Commendations

"I would like to file a commendation for my driver Jose. I made it to my destination on time and in a professional and caring manner. I would also like to file a commendation for my return trip with driver Mohammed. He was also very kind to me. I appreciate the level of service I'm receiving from your drivers."

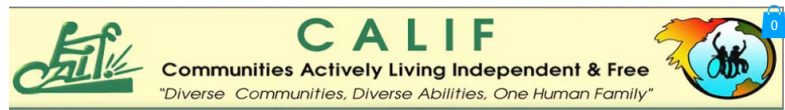
Beatrice Young
Rider since March 2004

"I would like to file a commendation for my driver Maria Isabeles. Maria arrived early, worked fast and centered my daughter's wheelchair perfectly! She was professional and cordial. Greeted all of us and was very friendly. I just wanted to recognize Maria for all her hard work."

Jasmine Burciaga -Terry
Rider since May 2009

CALIF Meeting

Last month, Executive Director Andre Colaiace and I met with Lillibeth Navarro, Founder and Executive Director of Communities Actively Living Independent & Free (CALIF). Lillibeth invited Andre and me to discuss a variety of topics concerning Access' policies and if there are ways to make the service more responsive to the day-to-day challenges an Access customer may encounter. One of the challenges she brought up was the overall flexibility of the paratransit system to meet a customer's needs.



For instance, there may be occasions where a customer's medical appointment has ended early and a customer may need to book an earlier pick-up time. In this instance, if a customer calls the contractor to request an earlier pick-up time, her request may be accommodated if there is availability in the reservations system but there is no guarantee. Lillibeth noted that in many cases, Access' contractors have been accommodating whenever this situation arises but Access should consider extending this flexibility for other scenarios. We thanked her for the input and also briefed her on the customer initiatives that we have implemented, such as the Where's My Ride application.

Communities Actively Living Independent & Free (CALIF) is an independent living center, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that provides advocacy programs and services for people with disabilities primarily residing within the 50 zip codes of Los Angeles County covering south and central Los Angeles and neighboring communities.

CALIF also provide various education and training and volunteer opportunities to the young and older population, especially of the disability community through the various collaborating agencies like Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), National Asian Center for Aging (NAPCA) and Volunteer Center of Los Angeles, among others. Having over 15 years of existence as an independent living center since its foundation in 2001, CALIF continues to proactively explore the various opportunities to grow and expand its programs and services through aggressive grant writing and effective programs and services implementation and purposeful advocacy work.

Matthew Avancena
Director, Planning and Coordination