

Funded Transportation Services for Seniors

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Conflict of interest declaration: Author is a volunteer for CHATS (Community & Home Assistance to Seniors).

WHEREAS lacking access to transportation services places seniors at higher risk for social isolation and can negatively affect an older adult's physical, psychological and cognitive health (Government of Canada, 2014).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) advocate to municipal, provincial and federal governments, for more funding for transportation services for seniors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the RNAO encourage members and non-members to be volunteer drivers in their communities, by advertising on their website and in their magazine.

Background Information

When talking about seniors staying in their homes, we must think about their ability to get around the community. Current options for transportation services in the community are limited and costly for seniors, even when services are offered at a subsidized rate. This is important because many older adults are not able to drive due to mobility issues, medical conditions, surgeries, falls, medications (ie. narcotics), or their license has been taken away due to declining cognition. Not being able to get around the community, remarkably limits a person's independence, contributes to social isolation, and reduces accessibility to health-care services (Government of Canada, 2014).

At the present time, many older adults use public transportation or volunteer services, if available, to get around their communities. One example of a volunteer service in the York and South Simcoe region, is CHATS (Community & Home Assistance to Seniors), which is a not-for-profit charitable organization, that provides subsidized transportation for seniors. CHATS is a vital component to healthy aging, because CHATS volunteers assist older adults with grocery shopping if needed, not just get the person to and from the store. This level of service is imperative, because the additional support helps to enhance the quality of life for seniors.

Therefore, in order to promote independence, encourage socialization, and keep seniors in their homes, it is essential that more funding goes toward transportation services, and volunteer organizations like CHATS.

Additionally, the RNAO should encourage nurses, retired or on their days off, to become transportation volunteers.

References:

1. Government of Canada. (2014). *National Seniors Council Report on the social isolation of seniors*. Retrieved 21 July, 2016, from http://www.seniorscouncil.gc.ca/eng/research_publications/social_isolation/page05.shtml.
2. CHATS (Community & Home Assistance to Seniors). Retrieved from: <http://www.chats.on.ca>.