

OASIS · AT A GLANCE

Transportation collapse as a hidden barrier

A missed ride never shows up as its own line item anywhere. It shows up as a missed medical appointment, a lost shift, a canceled outing, each one filed under a different cause. Follow enough of them back and they all lead to the same unglamorous root: transportation nobody planned redundancy into.

BY JIM PALASTY · 13 MIN READ · THE BARRIER HIDING BEHIND THREE OTHERS

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DOMAINS IT UNRAVELS

Medical care. Employment. Community life. One missed-ride pattern quietly erodes all three, filed under three different names.

How it works

THREE STEPS

STEP 1

Trace the pattern

List the last ten missed or disrupted commitments and check how many trace back to a ride problem.



STEP 2

Build redundancy

One transportation plan is a single point of failure. Two or three backup options is a plan that survives a bad Tuesday.



STEP 3

Name it as its own barrier

Stop filing missed rides under "medical noncompliance" or "attendance issues." Name transportation as the actual cause.

Redundancy planning checklist

Primary ride	Medicaid NEMT, family, or scheduled paratransit.
Backup ride	A second option confirmed and ready, not improvised same-day.
Flexible option	A rideshare account set up and funded in advance for emergencies.
Confirmation habit	Confirm every scheduled ride the evening before, not the morning of.
Missed-ride log	Date, cause, and downstream effect of every disruption.

A STORY WE KNOW

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Marcus's non-emergency medical transport canceled or arrived late often enough that his mother stopped scheduling follow-up appointments she assumed would just fall through anyway. A social worker finally asked her to track it for a month. Seven of nine scheduled trips were disrupted. Two specialist appointments had been effectively abandoned, not by choice but by pattern. She built a three-option redundancy plan, NEMT, a backup paratransit account, and a funded rideshare card for emergencies. The next quarter, all nine scheduled appointments happened. Nothing about Marcus's medical needs had changed. The rides finally showed up.

NOBODY DIAGNOSED A TRANSPORTATION PROBLEM AS MEDICAL NONCOMPLIANCE. BUT THAT'S EXACTLY HOW IT HAD BEEN FILED.

What matters, at a glance

Medical care unravels

Missed rides mean missed appointments, which mean lapsed prescriptions and delayed diagnoses, quietly, appointment by appointment.

Employment unravels

Unreliable transportation reads to an employer as an unreliable employee, even when the person has never missed a shift by choice.

Community life unravels quietest

Nobody files a report when someone stops going to a social group after three missed rides. It just stops. No paperwork records the loss.

Redundancy planning

A primary ride, a backup ride, and a documented fallback plan for when both fail. Single points of failure are where the collapse starts.

The minimum redundancy

NEMT, a paratransit service, and one flexible option like a rideshare account, kept ready before the first ride ever falls through.

Name the real cause

A file that says "transportation barrier" instead of "noncompliance" changes how every downstream system responds to the pattern.

BRING THESE · CHECK AS YOU GO

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| ☐ A one-month log of every scheduled trip and its outcome | ☐ A confirmed backup transportation option |
| ☐ A funded rideshare account for emergencies | ☐ A written request to correct any "noncompliance" language in records |
| ☐ Your state Medicaid NEMT contact information | |

YOUR MOVE

When appointments and outings keep quietly falling through, here is how you find and fix the actual cause

- 1 List the last ten missed or late commitments and their stated cause.
- 2 Mark which ones actually trace back to transportation.
- 3 Set up a backup ride option beyond your primary NEMT or ride.
- 4 Fund a flexible rideshare account for last-minute emergencies.
- 5 Confirm every scheduled ride the evening before, not the morning of.
- 6 Correct any file that lists "noncompliance" instead of the real cause.

A ride that never comes doesn't announce itself as the cause. It hides behind whatever it made you miss.

RESOURCES NAMED IN THIS POST

nadtc.org · <https://www.nadtc.org/>

projection.org · <https://projection.org/>

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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