



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Transit Administration



## Rides to Wellness Demonstration Grants Program Evaluation

### Background

To address transportation barriers to healthcare access, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funded eight Rides to Wellness demonstration projects valued at \$2,865,233 to identify and test promising, replicable public transportation healthcare access solutions that support the “triple aim” of increased access to healthcare, improved health outcomes, and reduced healthcare costs. Federal transportation law requires an independent evaluation of these demonstration projects.

### Objectives

Goals of the evaluations were to assess the actual vs. expected outcomes of the eight individual projects against the overall goals of the Rides to Wellness initiative of increased access to healthcare, improved health outcomes, and reduced healthcare costs.

### Findings and Conclusions

*The demonstration projects funded under the Rides to Wellness Initiative were successful in improving healthcare access and health outcomes and reducing healthcare costs.*

As a whole, the 2016 Rides to Wellness demonstration projects produced several positive results. Though some projects encountered challenges when attempting to quantify outcomes, particularly individual and societal cost outcomes, they clearly made a meaningful, and sometimes invaluable, difference for the people they served. For those with no other transportation options, these services provided lifeline access to healthcare. Most projects also helped clients to support their and their family's health through other activities such as grocery shopping, accessing employment, and taking their children to school.

Overall, program participants credited the projects with significant improvements to their health. Some reported that because of the program they were more active and independent, had more control over their lives, experienced less emotional hardship, and were better able to reach their goals. In addition, the program raised awareness about the connection between transportation and healthcare and opened the door for partnerships to build upon the ideas and experiences of the projects.

## Benefits

The 2016 Rides to Wellness demonstration grants provided funding to help finance innovative pilot projects that improved access to healthcare by fostering partnerships between healthcare and transportation providers. Although these projects varied in terms of their impacts, they succeeded in identifying several promising approaches that are worthy of consideration for further investment or investment on a broader scale.

## Project Information

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