39 Percent of Substance Abuse Treatment Facilities Offer Transportation Assistance to Treatment

People who need substance abuse treatment may not get the help they need because they cannot get to the treatment facility. About 10 percent of adults who needed and tried unsuccessfully to get treatment reported transportation as a reason for not getting treatment. To address this problem, some treatment facilities offer transportation assistance. This help might include vans or public transportation tokens or passes.

The National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services (N-SSATS) is a survey of all known substance abuse treatment facilities. In 2011, 13,720 facilities responded to the survey. Of these, 39 percent offered transportation assistance to treatment. Nearly two thirds (62 percent) of the facilities that provided residential (non-hospital) treatment offered transportation assistance. Smaller percentages of the facilities that provided hospital inpatient treatment and the facilities that provided outpatient treatment offered transportation assistance (46 and 35 percent, respectively).

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is expected to increase the number of people with health insurance coverage. Because of this, more people might seek substance abuse treatment. However, health insurance coverage does not solve the transportation problems of people who need treatment. To meet the transportation needs of the growing number of people likely to seek treatment, providers should consider maintaining existing transportation services or adding such services.

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