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# NEMT TODAY

SPRING EDITION



**TRANSFORMING THE  
FUTURE OF THE NEMT  
INDUSTRY, TOGETHER.**

NEWS FOR THE NON-EMERGENCY MEDICAL  
TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS

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## LETTER FROM THE NEMTAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Welcome to this edition of NEMT Today. We hope you find the articles filled with information, advice, and updates important to everyone operating in the NEMT industry.

Even though it is only April, you should already have your calendars circled and be planning to attend this year's [TRANSFORM 2024](#), to be held September 8-10 in Glendale, AZ. The Conference Advisory Committee is working hard to create an incredible agenda for this year's attendees. To be a speaker at Transform, you can complete an application online. Don't delay, as applications are rapidly pouring in.

You may have noticed the reference to "Advisory Committee" instead of Advisory Board; this is merely a change in terminology to reflect that these are NEMTAC Board Committees. Other than that, these groups continue to function as they have in the past - with a few minor changes. The Certification AC, now called the Certification & Standards Advisory Committee, reflects that this committee creates standards for Certification and is responsible for processing and adjudicating the public comments portion of the Standards creation process. Additionally, the Conference & Resource AC has been split into two groups: the Conference Advisory Committee and the Editorial Advisory Committee. I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to mention that we are always looking for interested individuals with a passion for improving this industry to join one of the Advisory Committees. You can submit your interest through the NEMTAC website.

As mentioned in the last edition, NEMTAC is making significant efforts to raise our visibility this year. You can expect to see NEMTAC representatives speaking at several conferences and visiting influencers in Washington, D.C., throughout 2024. We are also actively recruiting individuals and groups to be part of our Stakeholders Advisory Committee. Our goal is to have access, through the Stakeholder Committee, to the thoughts and input from all aspects of our industry, ranging from users of NEMT services, advocacy groups for critical sectors of our industry, and equipment manufacturers. By having input from these resources, we will be able to develop better and more all-inclusive Standards.

Finally, watch for our upcoming Lunch & Learn Webinar Series. This educational series will help keep you informed about NEMTAC activities and provide valuable insights into running your operations. If you have missed any of the past webinars, you can access recordings of these presentations on our websites.

Thank you for your continued efforts to improve our industry.

Dan Reid, Board President

**“Register  
Today!  
Early  
Bird Ends  
May 1st”**



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Carmel, IN, April 09, 2024 — BraunAbility, the global leader in wheelchair accessibility vehicle solutions, today announced the launch of its latest innovation, the [BraunAbility ADA Infloor with Simple Stow™ ramp](#), the only infloor wheelchair accessible vehicle to meet [Buy America requirements](#).



Available on the Chrysler Voyager or Pacifica, the versatile and cost-efficient mobility solution for commercial transportation is engineered with safety, ease of use and accessibility top of mind to meet the diverse needs of passengers with mobility challenges.

A user-friendly manual ramp with an extended handle makes ramp deployment and stowing simple, requiring 60% less effort than previous models. The vehicle features a lowered threshold for easier entry for both wheelchair using and

non-wheelchair using passengers and an additional three inches of doorway height compared to the foldout conversion. The redesigned ramp includes a fixed two-inch edge guard to meet ADA safety standards, and a removable front passenger seat allows for seating plan flexibility.

Cycle tested and backed by a three-year limited warranty, the BraunAbility Chrysler ADA Infloor with Simple Stow™ ensures reliability and peace of mind for users and operators alike. In fact, the CARB-approved vehicle meets or exceeds all FMVSS certifications and is Altoona-tested for durability.

“The BraunAbility ADA Infloor is just the latest in a long line of best-in-class commercial mobility solutions from BraunAbility,” said Jim Probst, General Manager and Vice President of Commercial Sales at BraunAbility. “The innovation, the quality and the reliability packaged in this product highlight what it means when we say the BraunAbility brand is Built to Trust.”

# INTRODUCING!



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CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH CARE



# Why Choose the Traversa Transport Wheelchair vs. the Synthesis Positioning Wheelchair? By BRODA.



Choosing the right wheelchair is critical, whether for personal use, for a facility, or for non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT). Two standout options from Broda come to mind: the Synthesis Positioning Wheelchair and the Traversa Transport Wheelchair (patent pending). Both are designed with patient comfort and safety as priorities, but they cater to different needs and care settings.

	 <b>Synthesis</b> Positioning Wheelchair	 <b>TRAVERSA</b> Transport Wheelchair
<b>Who Is It Designed For?</b>	 One, specific user	 Many NEMT Passengers
<b>Use Setting</b>	 Personal use at home or within a medical facility	 Commercial NEMT Services
<b>Crash-Tested</b>	 Yes <small>*With optional WC19 Transport Package</small>	 Yes
<b>Infinitely Adjustable Tilt &amp; Recline</b>	 Yes	 Yes
<b>Adjustable Fit</b>	 No	 Yes
<b>Weight Capacity</b>	 350 lbs. (159 kg)	 450 lbs. (204 kg)
<b>Elevating Seat Height</b>	 No	 Yes
<b>Pivot Assist™ System for easy lateral movement</b>	 No	 Yes





## Traversa Transport Wheelchair: The NEMT Operator's Dream

### Key Features:

- Designed especially for NEMT efficiency and accommodates passengers up to 450 lbs. with ease.
- Height adjustability with an ergonomic foot pump for easy lateral transfers.
- Narrows or widens to fit most passengers with a few simple adjustments.
- Crash-tested to meet the WC19 safety regulations, reducing risk for operators.
- Equipped with the Pivot Assist™ System for easy side-to-side movement.
- Full vinyl wrapping for

enhanced appearance and easy cleaning.

- Includes a four-point chest harness for passenger safety.
- Compatible with your fleet, fitting seamlessly with standard securement systems.

Leading the future of comfort and mobility for non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT), the Traversa Transport Wheelchair is designed for NEMT operators who cater to a variety of passengers. It's praised for its durability and safety. Drivers also love the easy-to-use adjustment features and the compatibility with their fleet vehicles, making it an operator's ally in the field.

The Traversa offers convenience and safety not only to passengers but also to drivers. It's a product built to serve the NEMT industry, reducing the risk of injury and optimizing the time spent on each transport.



## Synthesis Positioning Wheelchair: Personalized Comfort for Every User



### Key Features:

- An emphasis on personal use for everyday life.
- Made-to-order sizing allows for a tailored fit.
- A weight capacity of up to 350 lbs.
- Optional WC19 Transport Package meets crash test regulations for safety and confidence.
- Features infinitely adjustable tilt and recline for optimal positioning.
- Offers personalization for individual tastes, including a wide selection of colors and accessories.

The Synthesis Positioning Wheelchair from Broda, known for its remarkable comfort and positioning features, appeals to users seeking a reliable and custom-fit wheelchair. Broda's Positioning series combines the benefits of comfort with the functionality needed for daily and occasional transport use.

In short, the Synthesis Positioning Wheelchair is an excellent choice for individuals who are dependent on a caregiver for mobility and require a comfortable and secure vehicle transport option.

For more independent users, our Encore Pedal Wheelchair and Encore Rehab Wheelchair also offer the optional WC19 transport package!

## **Side-by-Side: Personalization vs. Flexibility**

The Synthesis is your go-to for personal, custom-fit comfort, reflecting Broda's benefit of ensuring individuals with varying conditions are positioned and secured well for their daily needs. The Synthesis aims to enhance an individual's quality of life outside of their home while providing the necessary support for those occasional trips



The Synthesis Positioning Wheelchair is the perfect companion for everyday care, providing comfort, safety, and mobility, made-to-order especially for the user.

The Traversa, on the other hand, extends beyond personal use. It's a high-caliber investment that streamlines the transfer process, designed meticulously with the NEMT requirements in mind. Adjustable, flexible, and potentially increasing trip capacity, this wheelchair promises to improve operational efficiency and client satisfaction.

## What to Choose?

It boils down to the environment and purpose. If you're purchasing for individual use, emphasizing day-to-day comfort and positioning, the Synthesis Positioning Wheelchair is a matchless mobility solution. This is a wheelchair that pledges longevity and profound comfort. Start your Broda journey by perusing their catalog of positioning solutions.

For NEMT operators, the Traversa Transport Wheelchair presents unparalleled safety and efficiency. Its flexibility and driver-friendly features underline a solid, long-term investment that prioritizes safety, convenience, and passenger contentment. Removing logistic barriers and boosting operator profits, it's clear why Traversa is a preferred partner in the NEMT realm.



The Traversa transport wheelchair is compatible with most NEMT vehicle fleets.

# Making the Decision

In summary, the Synthesis offers comfort and individuality for single users, while the Traversa shines as a beacon of efficiency and versatility for commercial NEMT providers. Whichever path you choose, Broda ensures an equipment standard that reflects professionalism, expertise, and an unwavering commitment to comfort and safety.

For more inquiries, reach out to [info@brodaseating.com](mailto:info@brodaseating.com) or call [844-552-7632](tel:844-552-7632), and embark on a seamless experience from pick-up to drop-off with Broda.

## Recommended Products



Traversa Transport Wheelchair

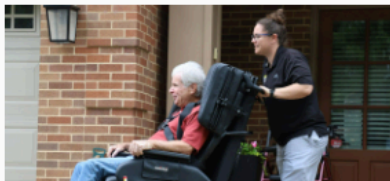


Synthesis Positioning Wheelchair



Encore Pedal Wheelchair with the WC19 Transport Package

## Related Posts



NEMT - Feb 28, 2024

**5 Reasons To Use The Traversa Instead Of A Standard Transport Wheelchair**



NEMT - Feb 28, 2024

**How To Overcome Industry Challenges & Competition In NEMT**



NEMT - Feb 29, 2024

**How NEMT Operators Can Reduce Risk & Prevent Accidents**



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# CALL FOR CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

**SUBMISSION DUE: April 25, 2024**

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*Speaker*



***Matthew W. Daus, Esq.***

***President, International Association of Transportation Regulators***

<http://iatr.global/>

***Transportation Technology Chair, City University of New York,  
Transportation Research Center at The City College of New York***

<http://www.utrc2.org/>

***Partner and Chairman, Windels Marx Transportation Practice Group***

<http://windelsmarx.com>

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# Congestion Pricing Exemption Wars: *The MTA Empire Strikes Back Against Private Buses!*



For more than a century, buses have been the beating heart of transportation in and around New York City. From the articulated New York City Transit buses to the double-deckers weaving through Manhattan streets to the intercity buses bringing travelers from across the country, these workhorses have ferried generations of New Yorkers and visitors alike.

In the early days, horse-drawn omnibuses transported New Yorkers along cobblestone streets. As the city sprawled and technology advanced, gasoline-powered buses took over, their rubber tires gliding over paved avenues. The iconic red double-deckers, introduced in 1905, quickly became a beloved



symbol of the city.<sup>1</sup> Beyond the city limits, a vast network of intercity buses connected New York to the rest of the nation, while smaller regional lines crisscrossed the surrounding states, transporting residents between rural towns and the big city.

Today, the bus industry in and around New York City is comprised of many service types and operators transporting millions of commuters, tourists, and students each day. These include school buses, publicly and privately operated commuter buses, intercity buses, tour and sightseeing buses, airport shuttles, and specialty operation buses. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) operates almost 6,000 buses,<sup>2</sup> making it the largest municipal bus fleet in the United States. As of the third quarter of 2023, MTA buses showed weekday ridership of approximately 2,150,000 passengers.<sup>3</sup> The Port Authority Bus Terminal, the largest bus terminal in the country serving commuters and intercity travelers, serves an estimated 260,000 passengers on a busy weekday.<sup>4</sup> Over 10,000 school buses operate in New York City<sup>5</sup>, serving 1.5 million students<sup>6</sup>, over 1 million of whom attend New York City's public schools.<sup>7</sup>

Buses, along with vans, have also found a place in limousine company fleets. These vehicles offer a number of advantages over traditional limousines, such as being more spacious and accommodating larger groups. They can also be equipped with amenities like Wi-Fi and entertainment systems, making them ideal for business meetings or airport transfers. Additionally, charter buses and vans can be more cost-effective than limousines, making them a more attractive option for budget-conscious clients. The shift to buses and vans is just one example of how the transportation industry is adapting to the changing needs of its customers.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.topviewnyc.com/packages/brief-history-of-new-york-city-transportation>

<sup>2</sup>

[https://data.ny.gov/Transportation/MTA-2025-2044-20-Year-Needs-Assessment-Bus-Fleet-I/pssf-s7fa/data\\_preview](https://data.ny.gov/Transportation/MTA-2025-2044-20-Year-Needs-Assessment-Bus-Fleet-I/pssf-s7fa/data_preview)

<sup>3</sup> <https://metrics.mta.info/?ridership/daybydayridershipnumbers>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.panynj.gov/bus-terminals/en/port-authority/pabt-history-.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/dcas/downloads/pdf/fleet/school-bus-sftp-final.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/reports/doe-data-at-a-glance>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.privateschoolreview.com/new-york>



*Image: Daniel Bowen*

Buses are a key piece of New York City’s transportation system. Not only do they transport people inside and outside the City, but they also mitigate congestion by taking millions of cars off the road. One bus can carry the equivalent of 40 to 60 single-occupancy vehicles but with fewer emissions and taking up less of the roadway.<sup>8</sup> The City and the surrounding region rely on buses to get people where they need to go. With the number of vehicles entering the City at an all-time high of about 335 million tolled bridge and tunnel crossings, congestion mitigation is more important than ever.<sup>9</sup> However, the MTA’s congestion pricing program – as currently proposed – may impact the costs and operations of many of those buses, whether under bus or limo operators. While private buses can and should be part of the solution, as an efficient form of shared mobility to complement public transit, the proposed congestion pricing does not include this policy acknowledgement.

### ***A Long Time Ago in a Legislature Far, Far Away...***

Congestion pricing was first seriously examined by Mayor Michael Bloomberg. Bloomberg and a specially appointed state commission pushed to

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.amli.com/blog/why-buses-are-more-sustainable-than-cars>

<sup>9</sup> <https://gothamist.com/news/carmageddon-car-traffic-into-nyc-hits-new-high-mta-says>

create an \$8 fee for inbound car trips into the Manhattan core between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. on weekdays. It was projected to produce \$491 million annually for transit improvements, cut driving time spent in standstill traffic by 30 percent, and slash emissions.

Crucially, the plan also included a transit build-out. Expanded local and express bus and subway service was called for, in order to prove transit as a viable alternative for an even greater share of commuters and show the congestion fees weren't meant to be punitive. With the MTA, the city secured \$354 million in federal funds for these improvements, contingent on the passage of the plan. The plan was blocked in the state legislature and the improvements did not come to fruition.<sup>10</sup>

Fast forward to the summer of 2017, and New York Governor Andrew Cuomo declared a state of emergency for the MTA due to ongoing reliability and crowding issues on mass transit.<sup>11</sup> The subway was particularly affected by outdated infrastructure causing overcrowding and delays. By 2017, only 65% of weekday trains performed on time – the lowest rate since the 1970's. MTA buses were affected to a lesser extent. This crisis was called “The Summer of Hell.”

The main causes that attributed to this crisis were a lack of funds, signal slowdowns, and degrading infrastructure. Politicians at the mayoral and gubernatorial level were found to have removed \$1.5 billion of MTA funding through gradual cutbacks and maintenance deferments. Historically, MTA funds were also used as a “piggy bank” for the state, with the issuance of bonds benefiting the state at the MTA's expense. By 2017, a sixth of the MTA's budget was allocated to paying off debt, a threefold proportional increase from 1997. The MTA also was prone to overspending and focusing on superficial improvements over key infrastructure issues.<sup>12</sup> Later that summer, Governor Cuomo drafted a proposal for congestion pricing in New York City to raise funds for city transit and reduce congestion.<sup>13</sup>

The Central Business District Tolling Program, also known as congestion pricing, was officially conceived in 2019, over 150 miles away from NYC in the New York State capital of Albany, through the legislature's enactment of the MTA Reform and Traffic Mobility Act. This legislation directed the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority (TBTA) to establish a tolling program to curb congestion in the Manhattan Central Business District (CBD). The CBD is defined as Manhattan south of and inclusive of 60th Street, excluding the FDR Drive, the West Side Highway, and any surface roadway portion of the Hugh L. Carey Tunnel

connecting to West Street.<sup>14</sup> By law, the Program must generate at least \$1 billion a year to finance \$15 billion for MTA transit and commuter rail capital projects.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-16/new-york-city-has-a-new-congestion-pricing-plan>

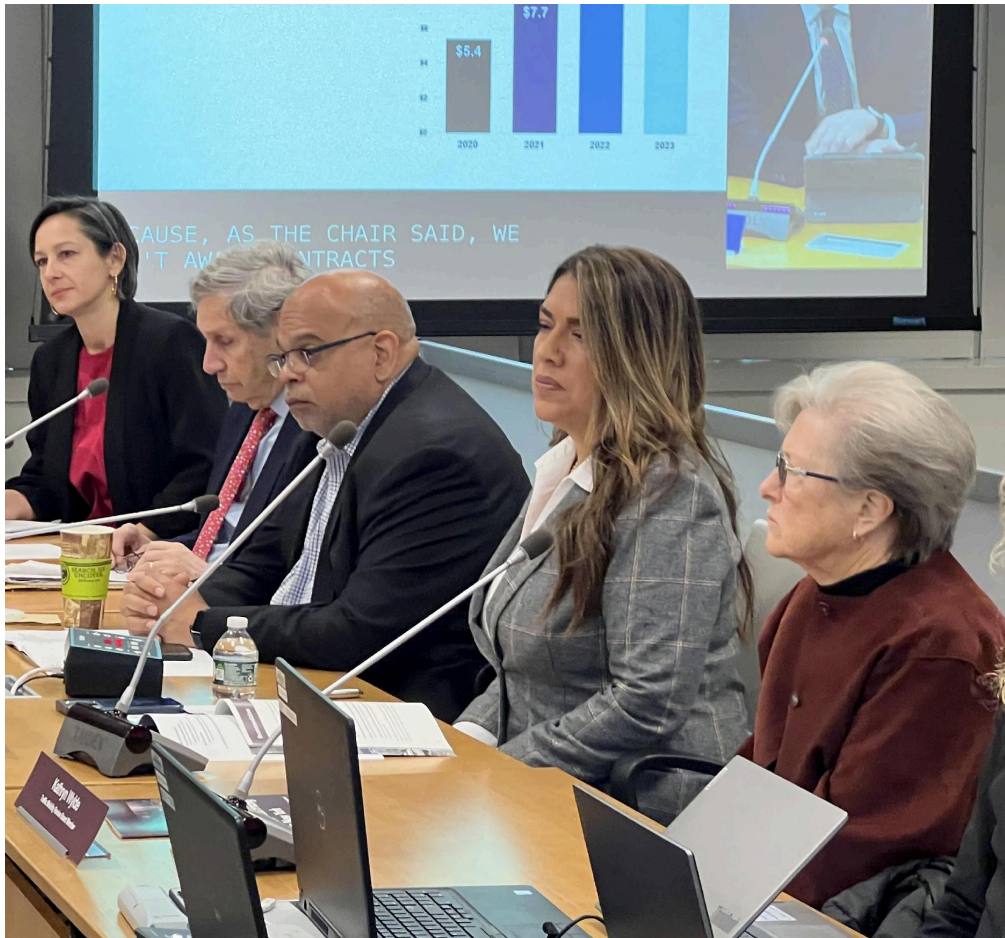
<sup>11</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/29/nyregion/cuomo-declares-a-state-of-emergency-for-the-subway.html>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/18/nyregion/new-york-subway-system-failure-delays.html>

<sup>13</sup> <https://ny.curbed.com/2017/8/14/16142868/cuomo-congestion-pricing-plan-nyc>

<sup>14</sup> <https://new.mta.info/project/CBDTP>

<sup>15</sup> <https://new.mta.info/document/127761>



**Members of the TMRB from Left: Special Advisor, Juliette Michaelson; TMRB Chair, Carl Weisbrod; John H. Banks; Elizabeth Velez; and Kathy Wylde**

The Act established the Traffic Mobility Review Board (TMRB), which was tasked with issuing a recommended tolling structure for the Program.<sup>16</sup> On November 30, 2023, the TMRB produced its report, outlining its recommended tolling structure.<sup>17</sup> The “Base Auto” rate for passenger vehicles and passenger-type vehicles with commercial license plates is \$15, capped at once per day. All other types of vehicles will pay each time they enter the CBD unless they qualify for one of the very few exemptions. The rate for buses ranges from \$0 to \$36 depending on the nature of the bus’s operations and time of day. All rates would be 75% lower during overnight hours (9 pm to 5 am on weekdays, and 9 pm to 9 am on weekends). These rates are for E-ZPass users, and will be higher for those not using E-ZPass.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://new.mta.info/project/CBDTP>

<sup>17</sup> <https://new.mta.info/document/127761>

<b>Vehicle Classification</b>	<b>Charge</b>	<b>Overnight Rate (9PM-5AM weekdays; 9PM- 9AM weekends)</b>	<b>Crossing Credit for Lincoln, Holland, Hugh L. Carey, &amp; Queens- Midtown Tunnels</b>
Passenger Vehicles (Base Auto)	\$15 (capped at once per day)	\$3.75	\$5
Small Trucks (moving vans, box trucks)	\$24	\$6	\$12
Large Trucks (articulated, pulling one or more trailers)	\$36	\$9	\$20
Transit & Commuter Bus	Exempt	n/a	n/a
Intercity & Charter Bus	\$24	\$6	\$12
Tour Buses	\$36	\$9	\$20
Commuter Vans licensed by TLC	Exempt	n/a	n/a
Yellow taxis, green cabs, & black cars licensed by TLC	\$1.25 per ride to, from, and within the CBD	\$1.25 per ride to, from, and within the CBD	None
App-based FHV's licensed by TLC	\$2.50 per ride to, from, and within the CBD	\$2.50 per ride to, from, and within the CBD	None
Motorcycles	\$7.50	\$1.88	\$2.50

On December 6, 2023, the TBTA Board, which is coterminous with the (MTA) Board, voted to proceed with the steps necessary to submit for public comment a proposed toll schedule in compliance with the State Administrative Procedure Act (SAPA). As part of SAPA, TBTA will hold a public comment period and a series of public hearings before adopting a final toll schedule. A 30-day testing phase and a 60-day public information campaign will precede the start of toll collection. By law, for the first 60 days, only the established tolls – no additional fees, charges, or fines – will be collected. When toll collection begins, vehicles that enter the Central Business District will be tolled.<sup>18</sup>

### ***The MTA Empire Strikes Back Against Private Buses***

The TMRB's recommendations group buses into three different categories. Intercity and charter buses comprise one group, which is charged a \$24 base fee. Tour buses are another group, charged a \$36 base fee. Lastly, transit and

<sup>18</sup> <https://new.mta.info/project/CBDTP>

commuter buses – whether publicly owned or privately owned and under government contract providing commuter services – would be exempt along with commuter vans licensed by the NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission. The TMRB did not recommend a general exemption for school buses because they are often deployed for purposes beyond transporting students to school. However, the TMRB urged the MTA to explore providing a specific school bus exemption when transporting students to and from school.



*Image: NBC New York*

The TMRB’s final report explains that “[c]ommuter buses merit an exemption from the CBD toll because they serve a public purpose and reduce congestion by offering affordable, predictable, and safe transit service for millions of people. They are a core component of the region’s public transportation system.”<sup>19</sup> For congestion pricing, commuter buses include private for-profit operators contracting with local, county, or state governments to provide public transit service. To qualify as a commuter bus, the operator must be under contract with a government agency to provide fixed-route bus service. Otherwise, it will be considered an intercity bus and subject to a base toll rate of \$24 for each entry to the CBD, and \$6 overnight.

Unlike commuter buses, the TMRB reasoned, intercity and charter buses deployed for private for-hire transport do not serve commuters daily, “although they do provide an efficient, quasi-transit option, especially for people of more moderate means.” As for tour and sightseeing buses, the TMRB believes they “do

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<sup>19</sup> <https://new.mta.info/document/127761>

[not] serve a quasi-public transit role and should be charged \$36 for the disproportionate congestion they cause in the CBD.”<sup>20</sup>

For limousine companies operating buses and vans, those buses will be charged the charter bus rate. While they may be transporting large numbers of people who would not find public transit suitable for their transportation needs, the TMRB viewed them as serving only a “quasi-public” transit role.

Exempting publicly owned and government-contracted buses helps maintain affordability and accessibility for millions of daily commuters, ensuring that these vital public services remain financially viable. There is a strong argument that buses serving all of the riding public – not just those who use public transit – should be exempt. The charge on private bus services could lead to an increase in operational costs and translate to higher ticket prices for passengers who rely regularly on essential intercity and charter bus services. At first glance, sightseeing buses may not appear to have a public transit role. Upon closer inspection, it is clear that some do. Thousands of tourists use “hop on, hop off” sightseeing buses every day to travel between iconic and famous sites around the City.

As of this writing, the MTA has taken the view that buses either fall into public or private functions. As noted below, this is a unique approach given the bus exemptions in place in the congestion pricing plans in London and Stockholm. Private and public busing operations serve much of the same purposes, often in different places or for different kinds of riders. It should not matter whether someone pays a private or public company for their transportation. What should matter is how effective a vehicle is at delivering large numbers of people to their destinations. Riders of private transportation companies already pay more than those riding public transit – often to or from places that public transit does not serve. The approach to buses should be neutral – and equitable – across the board.

While this issue now impacts only New York City and its metro area, other cities are considering implementing congestion pricing as well. If a precedent is set for charging commuter and other buses across the country, it would hurt an essential and affordable service for many Americans by raising operating costs and ticket prices everywhere. Buses should be exempt across the board, as they offer essential services to commuters and riders while reducing the number of private vehicles on the road, reducing congestion.

### ***Impact on the Limousine and Black Car Industry***

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<sup>20</sup> <https://new.mta.info/document/127761>



Over the past few decades, the black car and limousine industry has undergone substantial transformation, spurred by technological advancements, shifts in consumer preferences, and evolving business models. Many operators have diversified the type of services and vehicles offered to meet the demands of corporate clients, wedding parties, and others. Traditionally associated with luxurious stretch limos and luxury sedans, the limousine industry has pivoted to include a wide range of vehicles catering to various preferences and occasions, including daily employee shuttles, airport transfers, and chartered groups. In addition to executive sedans and SUVs, customers now have access to luxury vans, party buses, shuttles, and motor coaches.

The amount that these different vehicles will pay to enter the CBD will depend on whether it is a TLC-licensed for-hire vehicle (FHV), a passenger-type vehicle, or a bus. Congestion pricing will see black cars and limousines licensed by the TLC charged \$1.25 per trip to, from, and within the CBD, similar to the Congestion Surcharge. The same rate applies to yellow and green taxis, as well. High volume, or app-based, FHV's will be charged a higher per-ride charge of \$2.50. This per-trip charge was devised after the MTA's original proposal to charge taxis and FHV's only once per day was panned as logistically difficult to pass on to riders and potentially a financial burden on drivers.

Based on the information currently available, limousines, black cars, and FHV's licensed outside of New York City will be subject to the Base Auto rate, which applies to sedans, minivans, SUVs, pick-up trucks, and small vans registered as passenger vehicles or have commercial license plates. The TMRB report does not specify vehicle seating capacity, but it includes a graphic to illustrate the types of vehicles that fall into the Base Auto category.



Sedans, minivans, SUVs, pick-up trucks and small vans are classified as autos, and subject to the auto rate.



*Image: TMRB*

It is important to note that there is a 75% discount for overnight entry—9:00 pm to 5:00 am on weekdays, and 9:00 pm to 9:00 am on weekends. If an employee shuttle service uses small vans and makes its first entry before 5:00 am, then it will pay only \$3.75 for the entire day. However, larger vehicles that do not qualify as passenger-type vehicles should expect to be categorized as an intercity/charter bus and charged for each entry, \$24 during the day and \$6 overnight.

### ***The Return of the Bus Jedi!***

The bus industry is pushing back against congestion pricing and the disparity in the proposed tolling structure among the different types of operations. In an open letter to the TMRB (<http://tinyurl.com/4hm2wjmy>), **Glenn Every, President of BUS4NYC**, and **Patrick Condren, Vice President and Secretary of BUS4NYC**, advocated for an exemption for all buses from congestion pricing. **BUS4NYC** is an NYC-based advocacy group comprised of bus company owners that promotes the industry as a viable transportation solution and local economic driver in New York City. In the letter, Bus4NYC points out that many privately operated services keep people out of their private vehicles. There are also vital commuter bus services that do not have a government contract but generate millions of dollars for New York State and the MTA. Charter and tour buses arrive in New York City daily to bring crowds to Broadway and local

businesses, while airport connections provide vital transportation to the millions of travelers who come through the area's airports.



*Michael M. Santiago via Getty Images*

BUS4NYC argues that all buses – regardless of whether they are transporting people under a government contract – are essential to reducing congestion in the CBD and should be exempt from the toll. BUS4NYC correctly notes that the congestion pricing programs in other major cities, including London and Stockholm, have an exemption for buses. In London, vehicles with nine or more seats, including buses, are exempt from the city's congestion charge.<sup>21</sup> In Stockholm, buses weighing more than 14 tons are exempt from the city's congestion tax.<sup>22</sup> Unlike the MTA's proposed tolling structure, these exemptions are not limited to commuter buses providing service under a government contract. Clearly there is life in the congestion pricing universe, and the MTA as well as congestion pricing advocates often refer to how London and Stockholm's experiments have been successful and that these systems are the justification for NYC's policies – yet the MTA's failure to sensibly justify this ripple in the force by not exempting buses is troubling to many in the bus industry. As the Mandalorians say – “This is the way!” – to follow the London and Stockholm models and give buses an exemption.

Representatives from across the bus industry have spoken out about the congestion charge on buses. In addition to BUS4NYC, groups including the **United Motorcoach Association (UMA)** (<https://uma.org/>), the **American Bus Association (ABA)** (<https://www.buses.org/>), the **Greater New Jersey Motorcoach Association (GNJMA)** (<https://www.gnjma.com/>), The **Bus Association of New York (BANY)** (<https://www.banybus.org/>), and leading companies including Coach USA and Panorama Tours, have called for parity between public buses and privately run commuter and tour services.

Congestion pricing has seen the bus industry unified in an unprecedented way, calling for the MTA to consider full exemptions for all buses entering the CBD. Periodically, the industry

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<sup>21</sup> <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/congestion-charge/discounts-and-exemptions>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.roadtraffic-technology.com/projects/stockholm-congestion/>

has operated on several joint efforts, but most issues before the bus industry tend to concern specific regional or local organizations. For example, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020, which allocated funding mostly to traditional public transportation providers, did not directly allocate funding to private bus operators. Private bus operators and organizations together called for parity in fund allocation, as the bus industry serves the same riding public as public transportation systems. Later, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA), allowed private providers of public transportation to be sub-recipients of funding provided under the Acts, meaning they could receive funding through public transit agencies that received CARES Act or CRRSAA money. Additionally, the Coronavirus Economic Relief for Transportation Services (CERTS) program provided grants to eligible transportation service providers, including some private bus companies that were impacted by the pandemic.<sup>23</sup>

Congestion pricing in New York City affects not only a large geographic constituency of bus operators in the New York region but also every local bus organization across the country. Cities around the U.S. are considering steps to implement their congestion pricing programs, concerning bus operators and organizations everywhere. Congestion pricing has turned into a national issue on many fronts, namely congestion, pollution, and financing public transit, but also concerning questions about exemptions and potential tolling structures.

### *The Phantom Menace*

The TMRB said its proposed toll structure keeps congestion pricing “simple, easy to understand, and easy to administer.” The bus industry is arguing that a different price for a bus based on whether it is carrying passengers under a government contract, private ticket, or private charter is hardly simple and seems difficult to administer. For these operators, the TMRB’s reasoning for the different toll rates is hazy at best. Even though intercity and charter buses provide a “quasi-transit option, especially for people of more moderate means,” the TMRB recommends these vital services pay an uncapped \$24 toll. So what is going on?

Transport Workers Union leader John Samuelson resigned from the TMRB in protest the same day as the recommendation report was released. In his resignation letter, Samuelson charged the MTA with failing “to meet the moment” by not coupling congestion pricing with “massive increases and improvements in public transit,” including expanded express bus service.<sup>24</sup> Stockholm and London

exempted all buses from their plans *and* implemented measures to encourage drivers to switch to mass transit by increasing bus frequency and availability. New York is doing neither in the lead up to the implementation of congestion pricing. The bus industry leaders point out that traffic will not be reduced without viable alternatives to driving, and that those who already use intercity and charter buses to travel to and from NYC will now be paying the MTA to do so. These bus operators have expressed their cynicism of a plan that creates distinctions (with exemptions) without a difference. They ask: Could it be that transit funding is so bad that the

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<sup>23</sup> <https://data.bts.gov/stories/s/COVID-19-Stimulus-Funding-for-Transportation-in-th/2cyr-4k8j/>

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/24178816-november-30-2023\\_tmrbr-resignation](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/24178816-november-30-2023_tmrbr-resignation)

MTA has to minimize congestion pricing exemptions and maximize revenue sources just to keep the *status quo*?

## ***“Use the Force” – The Industry Must Be Heard***

As with any proposed toll ratemaking, this public comment period is being conducted under the State Administrative Procedure Act (SAPA), which requires the issuance of public notices and the holding of public hearings to elicit public comments on the proposed toll rates. The MTA is now accepting written and audio comments on the proposed tolling scheme and will hold four hybrid virtual/in-person public hearings in February and March to hear testimony from the public. The hearings will be held ***in person*** at 2 Broadway, New York, NY 10004 in the William J. Ronan 20th Floor Board Room, and will be live-streamed on the MTA YouTube channel ([youtube.com/@mta-live](https://www.youtube.com/@mta-live)) and on the project website ([mta.info/CBDTP](https://mta.info/CBDTP)). ***The hearings are scheduled for February 29 at 6:00 p.m., March 1 at 10:00 a.m., March 4 at 10:00 a.m., and March 4 at 6:00 p.m.***

Those who wish to comment in-person at the hearings or remotely via Zoom or telephone must register in advance online ([new.mta.info/agency/bridges-and-tunnels/cbd-tolling-hearing](https://new.mta.info/agency/bridges-and-tunnels/cbd-tolling-hearing)), by calling the Public Hearing Hotline at (646) 252-6777, or in person at the hearing. Registration will open one week before the start time of each hearing and will close 30 minutes after the hearing begins. Everyone who registers will have two minutes to speak.

***Those who wish to submit comments outside of the hearings may do so online submission, email, mail, and fax, or voicemail message through March 11, 2024.***

- **Online**: <https://contact.mta.info/s/forms/CBDTP>
- **Email**: [cbdtfeedback@mtabt.org](mailto:cbdtfeedback@mtabt.org)
- **Mail**: CBD Tolling Program, 2 Broadway, 23rd Floor, New York, NY 10004
- **Phone**: 646-252-7440
- **Fax**: Send to (212) 504-3148 with Attention to CBDTP Team.

Submit your comments or register to speak at the hearings to have your voices heard. Following the public comment period, MTA Bridges and Tunnels

will review the public comments. Then, the MTA Board will consider adopting a ratemaking regulation that includes any updates that may follow the public comment period.

## ***A New Hope – Charting a Path through Regulatory Hyperspace***

Congestion pricing is due to begin implementation this spring and is likely to stay on track. While COVID disrupted the congestion pricing timeline in the past, the TMRB’s hearings and subsequent report this past fall showed steady progress toward the program’s spring 2024 start. Now, with a public comment period and hearing dates set and tolling infrastructure already being installed, the MTA certainly plans to begin implementation on time.

During the MTA Board’s December 2023 meeting, it was made clear that additional exemptions would be difficult to implement. Another exemption or increase in credit would mean tolls increase for other drivers. In addition to increasing charges, changes to the existing

tolling structure may also necessitate additional study, and delay implementation overall. While additional exemptions are unlikely in this case, the bus industry is expected to continue to make its voice heard – not just regarding NYC’s congestion pricing program, but for other potential programs in the U.S. Bus operators across the country are concerned about what this precedent will mean for their operations. Increasing operating and ticket costs across the U.S. could severely impact what has become an affordable and accessible mode of transportation for so many Americans.

While the TMRB’s rationale for excluding commuter buses acknowledges their public service role, the broader implications for the bus industry nationwide remain a point of contention. Bus operators must actively engage in shaping the discourse around congestion pricing as a national issue. The industry’s collective voice is crucial to navigating these complex changes, ensuring that the bus’s affordability and accessibility is not unduly compromised.

Despite the challenges, the impending launch of congestion pricing presents an opportunity to reshape the landscape of urban transportation for the better. With careful planning and collaboration, we can craft a system that not only reduces traffic and pollution but also strengthens public transit, making it a more attractive and viable option for everyone. **We need a New Transportation Republic, which considers equity and fairness for the people who use the entire multi-modal mobility ecosystem - including private bus businesses and workers.**

## **Epilogue: A New Bus Industry Republic**

### ***The Motor Coach Industry’s Leadership Stands Together - United for an MTA Congestion Pricing Exemption!***



**Glenn Every, President of BUS4NYC**, said, “Buses, whether public or private, are an essential component of our regional transportation system. They get people out of their cars and into the most environmentally clean and efficient mode of surface transportation available. Riders should not have to pay more just because they are riding on a privately owned bus. We applaud the efforts of the MTA in recognizing the vital role that buses play and urge that for the good of the traveling public, for the inhabitants of the CBD, and for the environment, all public and private buses be exempted from tolling under the CBDTP.”



**Patrick Condren, Vice President and Secretary of BUS4NYC**, said, "As the CBDTP will soon hold a 60-day public hearing phase, BUS4NYC looks forward to MTA review of the proposed tolls to exempt all buses, for the

benefit of the riding public. Private commuter buses with and without government contracts do provide efficient mass transportation services and are clearly meaningful for exemption." Mr. Condren is also excited to hear at the press conference, Chair Lieber announced more developments in bus lanes and utilization which supports the transport of the riding public on both public and private buses.

In a [recent op-ed for AM New York Metro](#) advocating for exemptions for all buses, Mr. Condren wrote, "Buses are the solution, not the problem, whether public or privately owned."



**Scott Michael, CEO of the United Motorcoach Association,** said, "Motorcoach companies offering non-taxpayer subsidized commuter and charter services play an important role in mitigating congestion and reducing emissions in New York. This is in addition to the vital role the industry plays in New York's important tourism economy. UMA is actively advocating for a full exemption from the congestion toll for bus and motorcoach carriers."



**Peter Pantuso, President and CEO of the American Bus Association,** said "New York City and New York State have long appreciated the value that buses (motorcoaches) bring to the city, not only taking 50 people out of cars, but the economic impact buses have when they bring visitors to work, eat, dine, see shows and experience all the City has to offer. It is unconscionable that motorcoaches are not receiving the same treatment as transit buses and government-funded commuter buses when they provide the same role of reducing congestion. Even the MTA Chair and CEO Janno Lieber noted that 'One bus can take 50 cars off the road.' In his statement, he did not distinguish between differing types of buses, because there is no distinction. All buses, public, private, commuter, charter, transit, all do the same job: take cars off the road and mitigate congestion, and should be exempt from the tolling plan, regardless of who funds them. The federal government has long recognized toll parity between privately

operated buses and public transit for the important role we play in local, intercity, and national transportation. It is baffling how the MTA Board is unable to see the same thing."



**Patricia Cowley, Executive Director of the Greater New Jersey Motorcoach Association,** said, "The Greater New Jersey Motorcoach Association is a non-profit organization with the mission of advocating for the private contractors in and around New Jersey. Our association works in cooperation with national and other state industry associations, local, state, and federal agencies, legislators, suppliers of products and services to the operators, attractions, destinations, and other entities to promote the betterment and welfare of our industry, members, and association objectives. We are governed by a Board of

Directors, who are primarily owners of motorcoach companies, and a few non-voting directors from our supplier and destination members. We have been beating a consistent drum going back a few years on congestion tolling. Our stance has been and continues to be EXEMPTION for all buses. All private charter buses, school buses, motorcoaches, commuters and alike. We are the solution to reducing congestion; we are not the problem. Motorcoaches provide the greenest and most economical mode of mass transportation. We lower carbon emissions and rid city streets of cars. We also provide enormous economic value to NYC in tourism."



**Michelle Petelicki, President and CEO of Panorama Tours**, said, "The TMRB stated in Key Priority #5 of their report, 'Keep it simple.' However, when dealing with buses, their recommendations are inherently complex. Motorcoaches are categorized as commuter buses, charter buses, or tour buses depending on who they are transporting at that time. Each bracket has a different pricing schedule. Determining the fare is contingent on identifying the type of ridership. How will that be enforced? Globally, every other congestion program

recognizes that all buses alleviate congestion. Why complicate it? It is crucial for the MTA to recognize this oversight and address it."



**Robert Brisman, President of the Bus Association of New York State**, said "The Bus Association of New York State (BANY) membership strongly urges that all public and private bus operators be exempt from congestion pricing tolls. Buses are a critical component in lowering carbon emissions and reducing congestion throughout the region, especially in the Central Business District. That is why were shocked to see for the first time, under the TMRB's recommendation, private buses entering

Manhattan would be tolled at the same rate as tractor-trailers. Currently, all 13 bridges and tunnels controlled by the MTA and PANYNJ provide significant discounts for private buses entering the City. Until now, the MTA and PANYNJ have provided discounts on their tolling facilities because every bus mitigates congestion. All public and private bus operators should be treated the same under the congestion pricing program."

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DriveSafe Online® - 309

Occuscreen, LLC - 312

The Wright Risk Consultants - 317

Alivi - TBA

## ***NEMT Today – Thought Leader Interview: Mark Porterfield***

*Mark Porterfield is the CEO of Care♥avan which has the distinction of being the first NEMT provider to be accredited by NEMTAC. Care♥avan began nine years ago after Mark spent seven years transporting a disabled in-law. That experience made Mark aware of the need for NEMT and the shortage of high-quality providers. Care♥avan began in Montgomery, Alabama, and has since expanded into Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, Selma, and much of the rest of the state. The majority of Caravan’s transports are directly contracted with healthcare facilities, particularly dialysis providers. Care♥avan provides social engagement trips as well as trips to medical appointments. Mark notes that if “someone needs a trip to the doctor they probably need help with other trips.”*

*NEMT Today interviewed Mark Porterfield about NEMTAC accreditation, its impact on his company, and why he thinks accreditation is so important to the future of NEMT:*

*What made you interested in providing NEMT and how did you learn of NEMTAC?*

Before becoming a NEMT provider, Mark was in the grocery business. After caring for a disabled in-law, Mark considered moving into NEMT a “natural step.” In order to do so, he needed to acquire commercial insurance, create and register his new company, secure county licenses, and receive authority from Alabama’s public service commission. The state authority took 2 ½ years to secure.

Mark was referred to NEMTAC by a colleague in the industry and began serving on NEMTAC’s Compliance and Regulatory Advisory Board. He had just gone through a state compliance and regulatory process and had fresh experience. Then, in October of 2019, he signed on to bring Care♥avan through the accreditation process.

*How did the accreditation process influence the way your company does business?*

Mark noted that the accreditation process “really improved our operations.” He particularly noted that the accreditation process resulted in “improved training materials, procedures and policies” at Care♥avan. He noted that while going through accreditation he had ask himself, “Do they (particular materials and policies) make sense?” Mark examined materials from a legal and compliance perspective, but also from a practicality perspective. He concluded:

“The process works. Our training processes and related materials are much better. We dug down and detailed every step. Everyone now has it down on paper to promote consistency and understanding.”

Mark further stated that because of the accreditation process, Care♥avan now accomplishes its tasks more consistently. New staff now have the details they need to work like experienced staff, and they understand the “why” behind required rules and steps.

*Were there any surprises on the path to accreditation?*

Mark suggested there were no “no big surprises, but many a-ha moments” during the accreditation process. He recalled that the process forced him to look at an existing practice or document and ask himself, “Is this right?” or “Do we need to add or change something?”

For providers who have not yet sought accreditation, Mark offers this advice: “Accreditation will make your training, policies and procedures more comprehensive.” Mark was also bullish on NEMTAC’s move to ProCredex, which he called “the next big step” for NEMTAC’s maturing accreditation program.

*Knowing that NEMT Today is read by a wide variety of stakeholders—brokers, MCOs, state officials, etc.—what would you want them to know about accreditation?*

Mark wants stakeholders to know that:

“Accredited providers are serious about being better operators by meeting the standards that NEMTAC has established. As word of this process spreads, accredited companies will stand out as the go-to groups in the very near future”

He believes that NEMTAC accreditation: “will help down the road when payers are looking for the best-in-class companies that stand apart from the industry as a whole.” Mark further stated that, “there will be opportunities for companies that are accredited; those that are not accredited will miss out on those opportunities.”

Mark encourages payers to seek out accredited providers “to get professional and high-quality providers.” This will result in higher satisfaction scores and retention for their members.



**Mark Porterfield, Owner, Careavan**

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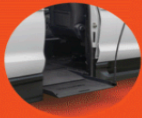
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Welcome to the second edition of *NEMT Today's* Reading List. Reading List is a survey of important publications about NEMT since the publication of the prior edition of *NEMT Today*. We hope you will find this useful.

Transportation broker, MTM, [launched](#) a national mobile health solution to enhance healthcare delivery, especially in rural areas. The platform integrates non-emergency transportation with healthcare services, linking with resources like EMS and telehealth.

Meanwhile, Modivcare, [advanced](#) its non-emergency medical transportation mobility app, The app has new features including a new interface that allows members and caregivers to book, manage, monitor, track, and cancel rides in real time.

Uber Health [blogged](#) on its pilot with Findhelp.com and New York Medicaid to provide transportation to Medicaid beneficiaries to provide transportation to sites, such as grocery stores, to meet an individual's social determinants of health needs.

Minnesota's public radio affiliate [reported](#) on the potential exit of Uber and Lyft from the Twin Cities and the potential for fare increases to taxi drivers to in order to gin up that workforce to meet impending needs, including with respect to NEMT delivery.

A NBC affiliate [reported](#) on difficulties in the delivery of NEMT in Rhode Island, including a drunk driving incident that resulted in a fatality and fines against the broker charged with delivery of the NEMT benefit.

A CBS affiliate [reported](#) on the decision of several NEMT providers in Westchester County, NY, to stop accepting Medicaid transports and the resulting impact on Medicaid clients.

The Minneapolis *Star-Tribune* [reported](#) on a shortages of NEMT providers in parts of Minnesota and quality gaps in which a wheelchair-bound client flipped backwards because he was not secured in the ambulette.



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NEMT Today is a quarterly digital publication available in the Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall seasons, measuring 8.5" x 11" in a vertical format that offers an interactive reading experience. Our focus is on educational articles that cover various aspects of Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT), including business operations, industry trends, regulatory compliance, technology, and customer service. We welcome submissions that highlight these topics.

## Submission Deadlines

Final copy for articles and advertisement is due on the following dates:

- Winter issue -December 15th
- Spring issue - March 15th
- Summer issue - June 15th
- Fall issue- October 15th

Each issue will be published approximately one month after the submission deadline.

### Article Specifications:

- Furnish articles in Word files format
- 1000 word maximum or less preferred
- All font will be Open Sans 9.6 pt.
- All articles must be submitted with author name and title
- All articles must be submitted with a title
- All articles must be submitted with a minimum of 1 photo relevant to the article
- Articles that heavily promote an organization will be considered sponsored content and the editor will contact you for approval and payment

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The Board of Directors has forged an alliance with Professional Credentials Exchange, giving rise to NEMTCredEx—an innovative online platform designed to streamline the credentialing process. This advanced system empowers applicants to assess their readiness prior to requesting an assessment survey.

Under the revamped process, applicants are required to submit an application fee of \$600 upon applying. They have the flexibility to pay the accreditation fee either upfront or in monthly installments. This comprehensive fee encompasses access to all the services offered by the credentials exchange. Accredited organizations are presently undergoing seamless integration into the new system.

### Accredited Organizations

- Care aVan October 6, 2020\*
- Call The Car February 16, 2021\*
- SouthStar EMS March 10, 2021\*\*
- Grove Transit October 29, 2021\*
- AmeriCare Mobility Van November 12, 2021\*
- Black and White Transportation May 18, 2022\*
- Superior Shuttle. June 17, 2022
- M7 March 21, 2023
- Clear Choice Express March 21, 2023
- Secure Medical Transport March 21, 2023
- Ride YourWay May 18, 2023
- 360 Care + Transport September 7, 2023

#### Seeking Accreditation

- Prestige MedCare, LLC
- RNR 365 Solutions
- Blue & White Taxi
- Raider Ram, Inc. dba Reliant Transport
- Handi Van
- H & M Transport
- HealthLift
- Great Lakes NET
- CNC Healthcare dba CNC Medical Transport
- Go Ride
- Transportation Plus, Inc

Updated: 04/25/2024

\*Actively Seeking Re-Accreditation  
\*\*Expired, Not Seeking Renewal

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# NEMTAC® Advisory Committees

The Board of Directors would like to thank the continued outstanding efforts of the volunteer Advisory Committee Members. These are the power behind the engine that keeps this organization moving.

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Oct 2



The Transportation Alliance (TTA)

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September 29- October 2nd  
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Oct 7-11



International Association of Transit Regulators (IATR) -

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

October 7th-11th, 2024  
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

Sept 18-20



National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA)

**FALL VIRTUAL CONFERENCE -**

Online

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

September 18-20, 2024

Jun 9-12



Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA)

**EXPO** June 9-12, 2024

Palm Beach, Florida

Mar 11-13  
Jun 7-9



National PACE Association (NPA)


**SPRING POLICY FORUM** March 11-13

**SUMMER CONFERENCE** June 7-9,  
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Standard Exhibitor Booth (includes 2 staff): \$4,500

 Date: September 8 - 10, 2024

 Location: Renaissance Phoenix  
Glendale Hotel & Spa 9495 W Coyotes  
Blvd, Glendale, Arizona

For any questions, reach out to Eva Keidel, CMP, at [conference@nemtac.co](mailto:conference@nemtac.co)