

**PIT RIVER HEALTH SERVICE, INC.  
TRANSPORTATION**



Approved: April 1, 2021

*Pammi Hayward*  
Health Board Chairperson

7/2/21  
Date

*Loren Elbery*  
Chief Executive Officer

7/2/21  
Date

PIT RIVER HEALTH SERVICE, INC.  
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT POLICIES

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## **Authorization and Scope**

This policy is enacted under the authority of the Pit River Health Service, Inc. (PRHS) Board of Directors, in their capacity as the governing body of the health clinic. This policy identifies the standard practices for the Transportation Department of PRHS.

## **Policy and Procedures**

### **1.1 Purpose and Eligibility**

The purpose of the Pit River Health Service, Inc. (PRHS) Transportation Program is to provide efficient and coordinated transportation to and from health-related appointments for patients who are unable to transport themselves without assistance.

Eligibility criteria include:

- American Indian / Alaska Native (AI/AN) heritage
- Patients must be registered with PRHS as an active patient
- Be enrolled in Medi-Cal or be unable to drive due to medical reasons.

Live within the PRHS Service Area (See Service Area definition in the PRHS PRC Policy)

Transportation services are not included or funded in the PRHS Self Determination contract with the Indian Health Service. PRHS has determined that transportation assistance to our eligible native patients is an essential extension of our health care services, and therefore a priority use of third party funds generated by PRHS billing operations. The limited supply of third party funds serve numerous purposes and therefore transportation services are limited. Patients with personal means are encouraged to self-transport in order to reserve PRHS resources for those in greater need. Transportation is for valid PRHS services only. Transportation is a privilege not a right. Misuse will result in termination of a rider's services.

## **2.0 Patient Transportation**

### **1. General**

1. Alternate means of transportation are encouraged before requesting transportation services. Such alternative means may include Senior Van Service for patients over 55 years of age or private family vehicles.
2. Patients will be picked up at whatever time necessary to coordinate with other patient transports. This also pertains to return home transports.
3. PRHS will assist with transportation to the nearest facility that offers the care needed by the patient, as determined by the referring PRHS provider. Should the patient wish to receive services from a more distant facility, the additional travel costs will be the patient's responsibility.

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4. In order to insure transportation is available, appointments for transportation will be made at the same time the medical/dental appointment is scheduled by PRC staff, at least 48 hours prior to need. Every effort will be made to coordinate appointments with other transportation requests.
5. The PRC department must take the referral for patients going out of town to the Transportation Coordinator within 48 hours of the needed transport.
6. All schedules are completed before 12 PM the day before. Any patient added after this time will need to contact the transportation coordinator and ask if the patient can be added to the schedule.
7. It is our policy to transport only patients with appointments. Someone accompanying the patient may be transported based on the following criteria:
  - a. The patient is a minor and requires the presence of an adult due to age.
  - b. The provider has determined a patient requires an escort due to the patient's health status or disability (e.g. caretaker, sign interpreter).
7. If a transportation vehicle is traveling in the same direction as an unscheduled walk-in appointment to an outside referral or to a PRHS medical or dental clinic, the driver may be able to transport the client, only after the driver gets approval from the Transportation Coordinator. Drivers may only transport the unscheduled eligible patient, when it does not interfere or conflict with prescheduled transportation appointments.
8. Patients needing transportation to or from the XL Clinic must make their requests to the XL Clinic Office Manager.
9. Transportation will NOT be provided for the purpose of shopping, visiting, or other purposes not related to health care appointments or referrals. Exceptions may be made for Elders age 55 or older, for the purpose of picking up medications, only if the transportation schedule permits. If the driver has a busy schedule to keep, they will not be able to accommodate these requests.
10. Patients with transportation appointments must notify the PRHS Transportation Department at least four (4) hours in advance if they wish to cancel. Failure to notify the agency may result in the loss of transportation privileges.
11. Patients must be ready within five (5) minutes after Transportation vehicle's arrival. The driver may have to leave if the patient is not ready. If the patient is not at home, a written note will be filled out and left at the door indicating the time and date the driver arrived. However, if there is a safety concern (such as loose dogs) the note will not be left. The driver will notify the appropriate clinic department as soon as possible, as well as the Transportation Coordinator. A copy of the form will be provided to the Transportation Coordinator.
12. Pit River Health Service, Inc. complies with all applicable rules and regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act when transporting patients and/or staff.
13. All patient incidents or complaints shall be documented, reported to the

Transportation Coordinator, and will be reviewed and resolved (Refer to Patient

Grievance Policy).

14. Under NO circumstances will patients be transported for clinic purposes in an employee's personal vehicle.

## 2. Medical /Dental Patients

1. Patients should request transportation services if they are needed at the time their provider makes a referral. Priority will be given to eligible AI/AN patients living within the PRHS Service Area with Medical and Dental appointments to the Burney or XL facilities or referrals to other health care providers requested by PRHS providers, and based on their level of care, i.e. Level I and Level II (These Levels are defined in the PRHS PRC Policy).
2. Transportation will only be provided for eligible AI/AN who live within the PRHS Service Area boundaries with valid appointments to the Burney or XL facilities or with approved referral appointments made through Pit River Health Service, Inc. providers.

## 3. Behavioral Health and Outreach Services Patients

1. Eligible AI/AN PRHS registered patients living within the PRHS Service Area Boundaries should request transportation for health services and other related needs from the appropriate department, arranging the appointment to the medical facility.
2. Transportation in these departments will be for appointments pertaining to health needs associated with the clinic, e.g. transporting to an inpatient facility.
3. The Family Service Worker may transport clients to and from Social Services appointments in the course of assisting the acquisition of alternate resources.
4. It is the policy of the PRBH Department that the Substance Abuse Counselor may transport current, active clients to and from court appearances. The court appearance must be directly related to their treatment at the Behavioral Health Department. For example; a patient is in treatment for substance abuse related charges and is required to court related appearances for being under the influence of controlled substances.
5. The PRBH Department Substance Abuse Counselor will coordinate with the Transportation Department; transporting to and from residential treatment centers when necessary.

## 4. Safety Rules for Patients

1. Persons under the influence of alcohol/drugs, exhibiting violent/aggressive behavior or in the possession of a weapon will not be transported.
1. For blood, vomit, urine, and feces spills refer to Infection Control policy

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2. Smoking is NOT permitted within any PRHS vehicle.
3. Patients with infants or toddlers will provide the child seat for transport. It is the parent / legal guardian's responsibility to install all car seats or restraints.
4. The driver and all passengers will correctly wear seat belts when a clinic vehicle is being operated. An extension seat belt will be available for those patients that the factory seat belt will not accommodate.
5. Patients will not be allowed to ride in the front passenger seat.
6. Persons refusing to comply with the safety regulations will be denied transportation.
8. No child under the age of 18 years old will be transported to an appointment without a parent or legal guardian to approved medical/dental treatment.
9. No children will be left unattended or with the drivers at any time.

**5. Locations and Distances**

Transportation will be provided to the Burney facility from the following locations and their immediate vicinities:

<b>Location</b>	<b>Round Trip Time / Distance</b>
Alturas	4 hours / 200 miles (for services not available at XL Clinic)
Burney	n/a
Burney Falls	1/2 hour / 11 miles
Big Bend	2 hours / 72 miles
Smith Camp	1 hour / 20 miles
Big Bend Cove	1 1/2 hours / 52 miles
McArthur	1 hour / 40 miles
Fall River Mills	50 minutes / 35 miles
Dana	1 hour / 55 miles
Bieber / Nubieber	1.5 hours / 80 miles
Wilcox Road	1 hour / 50 miles
Montgomery Creek	1 hour / 46 miles
Round Mountain	1 hour 50 miles
Hat Creek	1/2 hour / 36 miles

### **3.1 Patient Travel Stipend Policy**

When it is not feasible or efficient for PRHS to transport eligible AI/AN (see Section 1) to PRHS referral appointments, such clients can apply for a travel stipend under (e) below.

#### **1. General Stipend Policies**

- a. Travel stipends are intended to assist clients with their travel expenses. They are NOT intended as a complete reimbursement for all travel expenses.
- b. Clients will not receive any travel stipend if any person in your vehicle has received any other travel stipend for that day.
- c. If a patient requests lodging, it may be awarded at up to 50% of GSA rate for the area of the appointment. If other, more economical lodging options (such as the Ronald McDonald House) are available, they will be used.
- d. Any and all travel funds that have been advanced to a client must be returned in full to the PRHS accounting department if the client does not attend their appointment. Failure to return such funds will result in denial of future stipends.
- e. Clients must apply for transportation through the Transportation Department and be denied before requesting a travel stipend..
- f. Referrals must be for services defined by the current operating levels of care. Prior authorization must be obtained before stipends will be issued. Travel stipends for mileage are currently calculated at a rate of twenty five cents (\$0.25) per mile.
- g. A Patient Travel Stipend Request & Reconciliation (Appendix VII) must be completed and submitted to the Transportation Coordinator a minimum of five (5) business days in advance of the appointment and a copy of the approved PRHS referral must be attached to the stipend request.
- h. Dialysis, chemotherapy and/or radiation treatment eligible patients will be paid \$15 per visit for meals. Other patients will not be provided with travel meal stipends.
- i. Acceptance of travel stipend does not hold PRHS liable for any accidents or injuries while traveling to or from appointments
- j. Stipends for meals will be calculated as follows:

	Persons 10 yrs and older	Persons 9 yrs and vounger
<b>Half</b> day of travel	\$15	\$10
<b>Full</b> day of travel	\$30	\$15



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2. Overnight Travel

- a. When travel requires an overnight stay, the travel stipend will include lodging and means at the above listed rates. (See 3.1.j)
- b. When travel requires an extended (more than five (5) days) stay, the travel stipend will include meals at \$100.00 per week and lodging at most economical rates. Every effort will be made to utilize hospital sponsored lodging facilities.
- c. Costs for meals and lodging may be included in the stipend for one escort for the client, if it is medically necessary for the client to have an escort or the client is under the age of 18 years.

3. Travel Stipend Reconciliations

- a. Receipts for lodging MUST be turned in to the Fiscal Office within three (3) working days of the client's return in order to reconcile the travel advance.
- b. If receipts are not turned in, all funds must be paid back the clinic.
- c. 3. Clients with outstanding balances due will not be eligible for additional self-transport mileage funds until such balances are paid in full.

4. Veterans Administration Travel

Eligible AI/AN Veterans, registered as a patient of PRHS, living within the PRHS/1.H.S Service Area Boundaries requesting travel stipends to Veteran's medical agencies are reimbursed by the Veterans Administration ("VA") for mileage for authorized appointments. PRHS will reimburse the difference between the VA and what PRHS would pay under these policies, upon the presentation of verification of the amount paid by the VA.

5. Emergency Family Member Travel

In the event that an eligible Pit River Tribal Member client, registered as an active PRHS patient who lives within the PRHS Service Area Boundaries is hospitalized, PRHS may pay lodging for up to five (5) days at 50% the current Federal rate to allow a spouse, significant other, or parent to be in attendance along with a \$100 flat rate for meals for 5 days. If more days are required, up to five (5) more days may be provided upon review. Such assistance may also be available for a parent whose infant child (who may not yet be a registered/active PRHS patient) is hospitalized. If additional assistance is needed the patient is responsible for sending a medical report to the PRHS medical department from the hospital where the patient is staying, since a referral will not be available in this situation.

#### **4.1 Employee Travel**

The purpose of this policy is to delineate the guidelines for the use of the PRHS (the clinic) vehicles and personal vehicles in the performance of clinic business

1. The Executive Director must authorize all employee travel outside the service delivery area in advance.
2. Employees requesting travel for employee training purposes will be required to obtain prior approval from their Department Head, Transportation Coordinator (if requesting a clinic vehicle), and Executive Director. All requests for travel will be subject to all of the requirements contained in this policy regarding receipts or other documentation of expenses and reimbursement.
3. All PRHS business travel involving overnight stay must be documented. A travel voucher (Appendix VI) shall be completed and submitted for approval in advance of travel.
4. Reimbursement for authorized travel will be made in accordance with Federal Travel Regulations.
5. All receipts and any other documentation of expenses must be submitted to the Fiscal Office no later than five (5) working days after the travel is completed.
6. Any money advanced for travel that exceeds actual expenses incurred must be repaid within five (5) working days after completing travel.
7. In the event that a prior travel advance has not been reconciled, no new travel advances may be issued.
8. If there is no company vehicle available, or if the employee is not on the authorized driver list, the employee's personal vehicle may be used to travel. Round trip mileage will be documented, e.g. with Google Maps. Any excess mileage for personal entertainment purposes is not reimbursable.
9. Any employee who uses his/her personal vehicle is responsible for any and all accidents, vehicle breakdowns, maintenance, etc. Furthermore, the employee must have insurance for any personal vehicle used to travel on authorized business for PRHS.

#### **5.1 Vehicle Use Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to define the regulations for the use of vehicles owned or leased by PRHS.

1. Authorized Drivers
  - a. Only persons on the approved drivers list may drive clinic vehicles. To be eligible for the approved list, the following steps must be completed:

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- h. Must be 18 years of age or older.
- ii. Possession of a valid state driver's license and a current DMV printout.
- iii. No DUI within the last 5 years and no more than 2 points on the DMV printout.
- iv. Submit to and pass a drug screen.
- v. The Transportation Coordinator will update the current list of approved drivers with PRHS' insurance broker when any changes are made.
- vi. All employees must complete a DMV Pull Notice before operating a clinic vehicle.

2. Use of Vehicles

- a. Priority use of vehicles shall be for Medical, Dental, and Referral appointments.
- b. Clinic vehicles may be used for Board approved activities.
- c. Transportation of Behavioral Health patients with appointments or referrals to other health care providers based on levels of care (Level I and Level 2).
- d. Upon request, the Board of Directors may have a vehicle assigned for their use to carry out clinic business or attend meetings as a group.
- e. Requests for vehicles must be made to the Transportation Coordinator at least 48 hours prior to need.
- f. Escort drivers, field, and outreach staff may be assigned a vehicle for their use during working hours. Drivers of assigned vehicles will be responsible for cleanliness, upkeep, and maintenance.
- g. Personnel other than Transportation Department staff using PRHS vehicles will note their usage in the Vehicle Log, along with the accounting code related to their use. The Transportation Coordinator will submit the total mileage for each department to the Fiscal Office at least quarterly. Based on these submittals, Department budgets will be charged at the current Federal mileage rate for their use of company vehicles.
- h. Persons using the vehicles will be responsible for cleaning the inside of the vehicles after use. Keys will be returned to the Transportation Coordinator or designee and the vehicle inspected (See Vehicle Daily Checklist,).

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- i. Vehicles not in use will be parked properly in a safe area such as PRHS parking lot and secured lot. Keys and credit cards will be returned to the Transportation Coordinator.
- j. With prior authorization, drivers may from time to time, be required to take a vehicle home for the evening. This will occur only when a patient has an early appointment and the driver lives within close proximity of the patient.
- k. At the end of the driving period (daily for regular users), the following are required to be turned in to the Transportation Coordinator:
  - i. Receipts for credit card use with notation of charges if for other than gasoline
  - ii. Comments on any mechanical problems
- l. Clinic vehicles may be used for employee overnight trips if the Transportation Coordinator determines that a vehicle is available for that time period.
- m. Any employee's personal vehicle left overnight will be locked in the Clinic Vehicle Yard.

3. Logs

a. Master Log:

The master log will be maintained by the Transportation Coordinator and will contain the following information (Appendix IV):

- i. Vehicle ID, name, and license number
- ii. Name of driver
- iii. Credit Card number (if a card is issued to that specific vehicle)
- iv. Date, time, and mileage when vehicle is checked out
- v. Date, time, and mileage when vehicle is returned

b. Trip Log

A trip log complying with the requirements of the reimbursing agency (See Appendix V) must be completed by each driver for the vehicle driven.

- c. A Daily Activity Log (Appendix VI) will be kept by each driver and will include date, time, trip destination, and infractions by passengers (i.e. patient not ready, patient not located, etc.). Also Accident forms and Incident forms will be kept in each vehicle and filled out when appropriate.
- d. A separate log will be kept in each vehicle that is used by other departments to track their use (see 2.g above). Mileages driven by other departments will be tallied and provided to the Financial Director once per quarter for accounting purposes.

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- e. Vehicle logs and Daily Activity Logs will be turned in to the Transportation Coordinator at the end of each day and calendar month.

4. Communication System

- a. Company mobile phones assigned to transportation drivers are for the purpose of communicating with the base facility and the transporter. Mobile phones are to be used only for work related calls. Abuse of the privilege will result in loss of phones and payment for non-work related calls.
- b. Phone bills may be used to monitor abuse

5. Credit Cards

- a. Company credit or gas cards are the property of Pit River Health Service, Inc.
- b. Credit or gas cards issued to PRHS drivers are for authorized business and travel only. Any personal use is absolutely prohibited and subject to disciplinary action, which may include termination.
- c. Drivers are to report loss of credit or gas cards immediately to the Transportation Coordinator. The Transportation Coordinator will immediately notify the Financial Director.
- d. Any abuse of credit or gas cards will result in disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, restitution of costs, loss of driving privileges and/or termination of employment. In addition, abuse of GSA cards may result in legal actions from the US Government and/or termination.
- e. Credit or gas cards are NOT to be used by patients to book lodging when the patient is receiving mileage to transport themselves to their appointments.
- f. Credit cards are ONLY intended to book lodging while an employee is transporting for overnight stay. A meal stipend will be granted in the form of a check.

6. Insurance Coverage

- a. In general, PRHS vehicles and Individual drivers are covered for public property damage and liability under the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA). This coverage however, will only apply if it is determined that the individual is acting within the course and scope of his/her employment and when the service provided is within the PRHS scope of work.
- b. Only persons who are approved drivers acting within the course and scope of their employment and within the PRHS scope of work will be protected from liability by the FTCA
- c. PRHS maintains separate insurance for damages to company vehicles.

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- d. In the case of an accident, drivers must get all appropriate information and call 911 (if warranted) and contact the Transportation Coordinator. Copies of reports, along with date, time, name, and address of others involved must be given to the Transportation Coordinator as soon as possible.

## 7. Violations

- a. Violations of this policy and the procedures contained herein by employees will result in disciplinary action up to and including loss of driving privileges and/or termination of employment.
- b. The following actions or omissions by employees may result in suspension of driving privileges, disciplinary action, or termination of employment:
  - i. Traffic violations, other infractions, or collisions resulting in a driver's license suspension or refusal of PRHS' insurance to continue to cover the employee.
  - ii. Neglecting to maintain properly an assigned vehicle.
  - iii. Accident or vehicle-related problems not reported in a timely manner.
  - iv. Failing to provide justification and documentation for destinations or operation of a clinic vehicle.
  - v. Failing to return a clinic vehicle immediately upon the demand of the Executive Director or his/her authorized representative.
  - vi. Using a clinic vehicle to transport self or anyone else for personal use rather than work-related purposes.
  - vii. Using a clinic vehicle to transport any unauthorized persons.

## 7. Infection Control -

The policy and goal at Pit River Health Service is to minimize the risk of exposure and infections to patients and employee.

Universal precautions are defined as the steps that should be taken to prevent and spread infection from person to person and from contaminated environmental surfaces and health care items when there is an anticipated contact with:

- Blood
- Bodily Fluids
- Secretions
- Excretions, such as urine and feces
- Non-intact skin, such as an open wound
- Mucous Membrane, such as the mouth cavity

Universal Precautions are designed to reduce risk of transmission of blood borne pathogens, pathogens from moist body substances and respiratory substances. They are applied to all patients regardless of their diagnosis or presumed infection status. The application of standard precautions during patient care is determined by the nature of contact/interaction with the patient and the extent of anticipated blood exposure which includes:

- Hand Hygiene
- Use of Personal Protective Equipment (gowns, gloves or masks)
- Safe handling of potentially contaminated equipment or surfaces
- Respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette

(The above is taken from SECTION 2 of the Infection Control Plan and Prevention Policy)

Escort Drivers will screen patients for any symptoms when they call to inform the patient what time they will be picked up.

Our drivers are trained to wipe down the vehicle using Sani-Wipes and seat coverings are changed and disposed of properly after each client.

Universal masking protocol for PRHS is applied during transportation as well as in our clinic and facilities.

## **11.0 Chain of Command**

The chain of command relevant to the Transportation Department is defined on the PRHS Organizational Chart.

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**Review**

The Executive Director and Board of Directors shall review this policy to ensure its consistency with Federal, state, and local regulations, as well as other PRHS policies. This review will also ensure the policy is practicably implementable and realistic for the day-to-day operations of PRHS.

Legislative History:

Originally approved by the PRHS Board of Directors 2/6/2015

Amended by the PRHS Board of Directors 10/13/2017, 4/30/2018, 7/10/2018, 4/17/2020, 4/7/2021