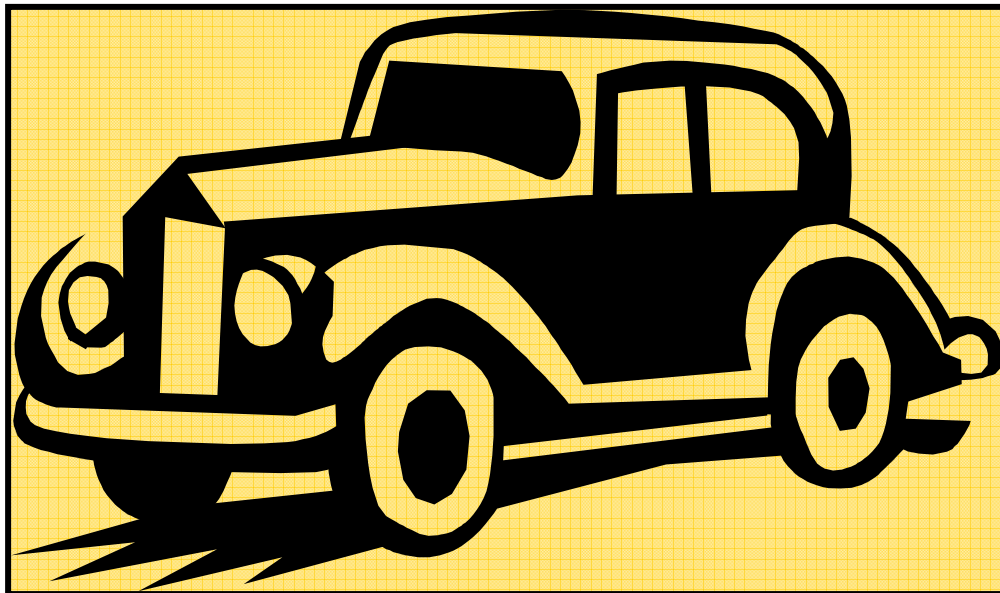




PROP's Transportation Department

*An 'Empowerment Evaluation'
To Assess Customer Satisfaction*



April 28, 1997

PROP's Transportation Department

An Empowerment Evaluation To Determine Customer Satisfaction

Executive Summary

The following evaluation report summarizes the results of PROP's first effort at evaluation under the newly adopted agency policy using the 'empowerment evaluation' model (Fettermen, 1996). The Transportation department volunteered to initiate this effort to develop standards of measure to be used to respond to State DHS requirements on certain attributes of transportation services. Secondly, Thomas Bartell, Transportation Department Manager, and Ms. Betsy Sawyer-Manter, Director of PROP's Community Services, and Mr. Bartell's immediate supervisor, wished to begin testing customer satisfaction of Transportation services.

The Glenwood Research Group was retained to facilitate an empowerment evaluation effort. The following report is organized around the three 'customer' groups identified by the Transportation Department: DHS Case Worker Provider Customers; Medicaid Eligible Customers; and Department Drivers. Each customer group was tested on specific attributes of the current service. Some of the attributes tested were repeated for each of the three groups, and some were only appropriate to one or more of the customer groups.

Summary of Findings of Significance

I. In General

- ◆ Reliability and timeliness were among the highest ranked attributes in Expectation Score for both DHS and Medicaid clients.
- ◆ However, these same two attributes were among the lowest ranked on the client Perception scales completed by both client groups.

II. From DHS Case Worker Respondents

- ◆ DHS Case Workers rated all nineteen attributes as **Important** to **Very Important**
- ◆ DHS respondents ranked the following service attributes as **most important** to service:

- Driver attitude
- Driver skills
- Timeliness**
- Reliability**
- Required use of seat belts

- ◆ At this time, perception among customers of quality service delivery appears to be influenced by how well the department delivers on these five service attributes.
- ◆ Case Worker perception of PROP's Transportation service delivery is, in all cases, ranked lower than their expectations
- ◆ 80% of respondents listed PROP as the first agency called when they needed transportation
- ◆ Although **Arrival time**, **Ride completion time**, and **Overall reliability** were ranked by Case Workers as being **Very Important**, the perception of the level of service actually delivered for these attributes was ranked as **Unsatisfactory to Fair**.
- ◆ The Department is perceived as providing certain aspects of the service at clearly acceptable levels - **Administrative call handling**, and **Vehicle appearance** demonstrate perception scores close to expectation levels.
- ◆ On demand rides are not a high priority for this customer group, and the current 48 hour scheduling notice requirement is acceptable.
- ◆ The majority of respondents,(69%), reported that their clients would rate PROP's Transportation services as Fair (2) on a scale of 1 to 4.

III. From Medicaid Clients

- ◆ This client group generally perceives PROP's transportation services to be delivered at a level closer to their expectations than DHS Case Workers
- ◆ Top ranking attributes among this customer group included:
 - Driving skills
 - On-time arrival
 - Reliability
 - Call handed knowledgeably
 - Vehicles appearing safe
- ◆ 77% of respondents rated PROP's transportation service as **Good** or **Exceeding their Expectations**
- ◆ Of the 37% who had used RTP, 80% reported PROP's service to be **As Good** or **Better**.

- ◆ 78% of respondents indicated that a driver would be considered late if he/she arrived up to fifteen minutes or more past the scheduled arrival time.
- ◆ **Over 60%** of responding clients considered PROP drivers to be late picking them up on at least 2 or more occasions.

III. From Drivers

- ◆ Drivers most often reported the following three reasons for volunteering:
 1. For the extra money
 2. For something to do
 3. To help others
- ◆ Drivers listed their top training need to be on PROP policies and procedures
- ◆ 50% of the drivers answered that they would consider themselves late if they arrived up to 15 minutes after the scheduled pickup time

Yet, 64% of clients considered anything up to fifteen minutes to be “on-time”.

Since 82% of clients responding indicated they experienced a late driver, we have to conclude that drivers are arriving 15 minutes or more after scheduled pick-up times in those cases. Further, as reported earlier, 60% of the clients reported that drivers were late on at least two or more occasions.

- ◆ Cash and Gasoline topped the list of suggested driver incentives

Introduction

In 1996, PROP initiated an Evaluation Committee as part of its GPLEx activities. The Evaluation Committee developed an evaluation policy for the Agency, which was subsequently adopted on June 19, 1996. The recommended evaluation model, adopted by the agency, is a model known as the 'empowerment evaluation model' (Fetterman, 1996). The empowerment model is described in Empowerment Evaluation: Knowledge and Tools for Self-Assessment & Accountability edited by Fetterman, Kaftarian, and Wandersman.

Briefly, the empowerment model is grounded in the belief that evaluation concepts, techniques and findings should be used to foster program improvement and self-determination. Empowerment evaluation is designed to assist program personnel with the process of continuous improvement, using self-evaluation and self-reflection as the basis of change. We recommend that the empowerment evaluation process be visualized as a cyclical process whereby information is gathered from staff and clients on program interventions. This information is then considered and analyzed. Knowledge gained from the assessment and analysis of this information is then fed back into the program planning process. Program intervention design changes are then made in response to the information. After introduction of the intervention revisions, the evaluation process is repeated.

Evaluation necessarily becomes a collaborative group activity, involving staff, clients and professional evaluator. The role of the professional evaluator is one of collaborator, teacher, and facilitator. In this case, the Glenwood Research Group was retained to facilitate the Transportation Department's evaluation effort.

After the adoption of the empowerment evaluation model by the Agency, the Transportation Department volunteered to undertake the first program evaluation using this model. The Transportation Department had recently executed a new performance-based contract with the Maine Department of Human Services, and was interested in developing a capacity to collect and report on Transportation program performance measures as identified by the State DHS.

In addition, the Transportation Program Manager indicated an interest in measuring the effectiveness of various attributes of the Department not otherwise identified by the Maine DHS.

Methodology

The Transportation Department initiated the evaluation process by identifying three distinct customers of its service: Provider customers (such as DHS Social Workers); Medicaid eligible out-patient clients; and Transportation Department drivers. In consultation with Glenwood Research, it was decided that three survey instruments would be developed to collect “customer” information because of the unique nature of the relationship between the Department and each of its three customer groups. Each instrument was designed to solicit information unique to that customer group.

For the DHS customer, draft surveys were developed and field-tested on a sample of DHS Case Workers at the Portland DHS office. The client survey and the driver survey were not field-tested prior to administration.

DHS management personnel were contacted, and their assistance solicited in distributing the survey instrument to all thirty-one (31) Case Workers in the Portland office. Client surveys were mailed to 413 adult clients. Driver surveys were distributed to all forty-five (45) drivers.

The following analysis was developed from the survey returns for each of the three Transportation Department customer groups. The report narrative is organized by customer group.

After interviews with the Transportation Program Manager, Glenwood Research recommended the use of an ‘*Expectation / Perception scale*’ designed to obtain customer scores for each of the Department performance attributes to be evaluated. The expectation - perception scale design was deemed appropriate to this assignment because it is effective in measuring customer satisfaction levels on services as opposed to products.

Expectation - Perception

Whenever we, as consumers, consider using a particular service provider, like the Transportation Department, we approach the relationship with a certain number of preconceived *expectations*. For example, when we need transportation, we might expect that our call will be handled in a friendly and courteous manner, that our request for a specific ride time and day will be honored, that the driver will arrive as scheduled, and the ride will be completed in a timely and comfortable manner. These expectations are usually the product of either our prior experience with similar service providers, prior experience with the same service provider, or claims by the provider indicating the type of service we should expect.

After we have personally experienced the requested service, we will leave the experience with certain *perceptions* on how well the service was provided. We judge the level of our satisfaction with the service, and with its provider, by comparing how well the service was provided against our preconceived expectations. If the provider failed to meet our expectations, we might judge the service to be poor. Conversely, if the provider delivered the requested service in such a way that it either met, or exceeded our expectations, then we will most likely judge the service to have been delivered in a satisfactory manner.

The *Expectation - Perception scales* used in this evaluation were developed by Glenwood, by identifying the attributes of the service which both DHS and PROP believed were important to customers. The customer was asked to complete the expectation scale first. They were provided with a Likert-type interval scale that assigned a value to each of four possible answers. For each service attribute, the client was asked to tell us how important each was by selecting an answer corresponding to a value of 1 through 4, where 1 = Not important; 2 = Somewhat Important; 3 = Important; and 4 = Very Important.

Customers were then presented with the identical list of service attributes, but asked to rate “how well PROP performed in the delivery of that aspect of the service”. Again, a Likert-type scale was used whereby a numeric value was assigned to each of four possible answers. In the case of the ‘*perception scale*’, the possible answers were different than those provided for the expectation scale. Perception answer options were: 1 = Unsatisfactory; 2 = Fair; 3 = Good; and 4 = Exceeded My Expectations.

The use of such an interval scale allowed for the calculation of mean (average) respondent scores for each attribute, resulting in the development of both an ‘expectation’ and a ‘perception’ mean score for each of the identified service attributes. By comparing the two scores for the same attribute, the Transportation Department would have a numerical rating which directly compared the customer’s collective expectation to its collective perception on each service attribute.

An additional benefit of tabulating the scale in this manner is that it will allow Department personnel to measure changes in scores over time. It is assumed that the Department will re-issue this instrument periodically to sample customers about service quality. The instrument may be modified to address new service attributes, or to test new service concepts, but retention of the nineteen key attributes, assuming they remain valid to the service, will result in a valid comparison of attribute mean scores as time passes.

One would expect to see certain changes made to the service based upon this first test. Re-test scores will enable Department personnel to measure what impact, if any, changes in service have had on perception of service quality. As such, this survey instrument becomes a valuable tool in the ‘empowerment evaluation’ efforts of continuous self-reflection, and improvement.

The actual raw score responses to each of the surveys is contained in the appendices.

Customer Group I - DHS Case Workers

Expectation / Perception Results

The Transportation Department identified the nineteen service attributes, listed in Table 1, for inclusion on the Expectation / Perception scale. As noted earlier, the State DHS office, as part of its newly introduced performance-based contracting procedure, developed a portion of this list. The remaining service attributes were identified by Transportation Department and PROP Agency personnel.

Identified Service Attributes For Transportation

(The order of listing has no significance)

Table 1

1	Auto interior is neat & clean	12	Service reliability
2	Driver appears neat & clean	13	The call for service is answered in a friendly and courteous manner
3	Auto looks well maintained	14	The call is answered in a way that indicates we think it is important
4	Driver is courteous	15	The call is handled by someone knowledgeable about your needs
5	Driver has positive attitude	16	The call is completed satisfactorily
6	Driver demonstrates excellent driving skills	17	The customer gets his/her first requested ride time and day
7	Driver arrives on time	18	The vehicle appears safe
8	Ride is completed on time	19	The driver requires passengers to use seat belts
9	Driver relates well to children		
10	The same driver is assigned to subsequent rides		
11	Rides are available in demand		

Of the 31 DHS Case-Worker surveys distributed, fifteen (15), or 50% were returned for analysis.

Table 2 contains the Expectation scores calculated for each of the nineteen service attributes. Service attributes were ranked by Expectation score, in descending order, so that we can examine those attributes ranked most important by DHS customers.

PROP Transportation Department DHS Expectations (Ranked By Mean Expectation Score)

Table 2

* Driver has positive attitude	4.0	* Driver appears neat & clean	3.4
* Driver has excellent driving skills	4.0	* Same driver assigned to subsequent rides	3.4
* Driver arrives on time	4.0	* Call handled with knowledge	3.4
* Ride is completed on time	4.0	* Call completed satisfactorily	3.4
* Reliability	4.0	* Call answered friendly and courteous	3.3
* Driver requires use of seat belts	4.0	* Get first requested time & day	3.3
* Driver is courteous	3.8	* Call answered As important	3.2
* Driver relates to children	3.6	* Auto looks well maintained	3.0
* Vehicle appears safe	3.6	* Auto interior neat and clean	2.8
* On demand rides	3.0		

Table 2 demonstrates two important pieces of information. First, as you can see, the range of Expectation scores is 2.8 to 4.0, indicating that DHS Case Workers consider all nineteen attributes to be **Important to Very Important**.

Secondly, it is clear that the attributes around driver attitude, driver skills, timeliness, reliability, and required use of seat belts, are the most important attributes of the service for those surveyed. It then becomes clear that the perception among customers of quality service delivery will be heavily influenced by how well the Transportation Department delivers on these service attributes.

In Table 3 we have added the mean calculated Perception score, as recorded by DHS customers against each of the nineteen attributes. Again, the chart is organized by mean Expectation score so that we can see how the Transportation Department scored in relation to the level of importance assigned to each attribute. The third column provides the calculated difference between the Department's performance perception score and the customer expectation score.

Table 3

PROP Transportation Department DHS Expectation / Perception (Ranked By Mean Expectation Score)			
	Expectation Mean Score	Perception Mean Score	Difference
Driver has positive attitude	4.0	2.5	-1.5
Driver has excellent driving skills	4.0	2.6	-1.4
Driver arrives on time	4.0	1.7	-2.3
Ride is completed on time	4.0	1.8	-2.2
Reliability	4.0	2.0	-2.0
Driver requires use of seat belts	4.0	2.8	-1.2
Driver is courteous	3.8	2.5	-1.3
Driver relates to children	3.6	2.7	-0.9
Vehicle appears safe	3.6	2.7	-0.9
Driver appears neat & clean	3.4	2.5	-0.9
Same driver assigned to subsequent rides	3.4	2.4	-1.0
Call handled with knowledge	3.4	3.2	-0.2
Call completed satisfactorily	3.4	2.7	-0.7
Call answered friendly / courteous	3.3	2.7	-0.6
Get first requested time & day	3.3	2.6	-0.7
Call answered As important	3.2	2.8	-0.4
Auto looks well maintained	3.0	2.5	-0.5
On demand rides	3.0	2.5	-0.5
Auto interior neat & clean	2.8	2.5	-0.3

Table 3 demonstrates that Case Worker perception of PROP's Transportation service delivery is, in all cases, ranked lower than their expectations. Further, in three instances: **Arrival time, Completion time, and Overall reliability**, Case Workers have ranked these attributes **Very Important**, yet their perception of the level of service actually delivered was ranked **Unsatisfactory to Fair**.

Some insight into the perception scores in reliability and timeliness may be gained by reviewing other survey questions. For example, respondents were asked if they were ever reluctant to use PROP's transportation services. 79% answered "YES". Respondents were then asked, ***"If you answered 'YES' to being reluctant to use PROP's transportation services, tell us why?"*** A sample of responses provided included the following:

"I'm never sure if they will show on time or have car seats as needed. Our cases depend on good transportation".

"There have been many problems over the years - forgotten rides - even when they are regular, weekly assignments; problems with drivers, even one who smelled of alcohol in the early afternoon, etc".

"The driver had been told not to feed the child junk food because of dietary issues, but continued to feed the child with junk food, stating: 'I don't believe in special diets'".

"Rides are not always on time or consistent"

"Driver reliability varies by driver - you're never sure what you will get"

(A complete summary of respondent responses is included in the Appendix)

Three important notes of explanation are appropriate here.

☞ First, although the Case Workers were asked to respond to this survey, they are not the recipient of the service. They arrange the transportation on behalf of their clients, and do not have first-hand knowledge of the service delivered.

However, Case Workers were asked whether they follow-up with the client to determine if the service was provided as promised. 86% of respondents reported that they did follow-up.

Responses to this survey constitute Case Worker interpretations of their client perceptions, and therefore may be somewhat biased. However, Transportation Department management has confirmed that regardless of how they are getting their information, the perceptions held by the Case Workers is important to them, and will shape service delivery level decision-making.

☞ Second, perception may not reflect reality. If drivers are perceived as being unreliable, customers may tend to retain this view even though actual performance indicates otherwise. This may be especially true within a ‘closed system’ of customers like Case Workers, whose close working proximity may act to influence the opinions of co-workers - even if some workers never had an unreliable ride experience.

Further, because of the level of personal energy required to deal with the aftermath of a poor ride experience complaint, customer opinion may be more heavily influenced by a poor experience than by a good experience, which would require little or no energy to deal with the aftermath.

☞ Third, and perhaps most important to a service provider like the Transportation Department, marked improvement in those areas of the service considered to be **most important** by the customer may act to increase all perception scores. This ‘coat tail’ effect is the result of a customer’s paying less attention to those service attributes which he/she may consider to be of less importance.

If we re-rank the Expectation / Perception chart by the Difference in the Expectation to Perception score, we can readily see those areas of the service with which DHS Case Worker customers are most satisfied. Further clarification can be accomplished by sub-dividing this chart into four sections, designating those differences in scores at 0.5 points or less; those scoring differences between 0.6 and 0.9; those scoring a difference between 1.0 and 1.9; and those scoring a difference of over 2 points.

Table 4

PROP Transportation Department DHS Expectation / Perception			
(Ranked By Difference Mean Score)			
	Expectation Mean Score	Perception Mean Score	Difference
Call handled with knowledge	3.4	3.2	-0.2
Auto interior neat & clean	2.8	2.5	-0.3
Call answered as important	3.2	2.8	-0.4
Auto looks well maintained	3.0	2.5	-0.5
On demand rides	3.0	2.5	-0.5
Call answered friendly / courteous	3.3	2.7	-0.6
Call completed satisfactorily	3.4	2.7	-0.7
Get first requested time & day	3.3	2.6	-0.7
Driver relates to children	3.6	2.7	-0.9
Vehicle appears safe	3.6	2.7	-0.9
Driver appears neat & clean	3.4	2.5	-0.9

Expectation Mean Score	Perception Mean Score	Difference
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Same driver assigned to subsequent rides	3.4	2.4	-1.0
Driver requires use of seat belts	4.0	2.8	-1.2
Driver is courteous	3.8	2.5	-1.3
Driver has excellent driving skills	4.0	2.6	-1.4
Driver has positive attitude	4.0	2.5	-1.5
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Reliability	4.0	2.0	-2.0
Ride is completed on time	4.0	1.8	-2.2
Driver arrives on time	4.0	1.7	-2.3

From a review of this information, Transportation Department management personnel may wish to focus on those areas of service where DHS customers are indicating that the largest gap exists between the expected level of service and the perception of the actual quality of the service as delivered.

Secondly, a review of the first two sections of the Table indicates the Department is perceived as providing certain aspects of the service at clearly acceptable levels. **Administrative call handling**, and **vehicle appearance** demonstrate perception scores close to expectation levels.

On demand rides was an attribute of the service included on the scale to test whether the Department should consider eliminating the current 48 hour schedule notice requirement, and provide on-demand service similar to that provided by taxi companies. Based on the respondent scores, one would conclude that on demand rides are not a high priority for this customer group, and the current forty-eight (48) hour scheduling notice requirement is acceptable.

Further confirmation of this conclusion was provided by an additional survey question. We asked: *"PROP currently requires that you call at least 48 hours in advance of your requested ride time. Do you find this notice requirement to be reasonable or unreasonable?"* **93%** of respondents selected **'reasonable'**.

Other DHS Survey Responses of Interest

Some additional questions were included on the DHS survey form for the purpose of gaining customer opinions. The results of these questions are summarized below:

- ✍ 80% of respondents reported that they call PROP first when they need to arrange for transportation for their clients
- ✍ In 86% of cases, calls for transportation are answered within three rings.
- ✍ However, only 62% of those surveyed reported they actually got the ride and time they requested the last time they called.
- ✍ 54% reported that the last scheduled ride was **not** completed as promised.
- ✍ 66% of Case Workers recalled receiving Transportation Department information, and 73% indicated they would like to continue to receive such information.
- ✍ 60% report PROP Transportation is user friendly
- ✍ The majority of respondents, 69%, reported that their clients would rate PROP's Transportation services as **Fair**

Customer Group II - Medicaid Eligible Out-Patient Clients

Expectation - Perception Results

Of the nineteen service attributes identified for DHS Case Worker clients, seventeen were repeated for Medicaid Eligible Clients. The two attributes that were changed were; *‘driver relates well to children’*; and, *‘the same driver is assigned to the same child on subsequent rides’*. Substituted in their place were: *‘driver talks with you’*; and *‘driver assists you getting in and out of the vehicle’*.

For these client surveys, the Department chose to mail a survey form to each of its Medicaid-eligible clients, as included in current records. The total number of surveys mailed was 413. Of this number, 91 clients (22%) returned completed survey forms in the PROP supplied self-addressed, return envelopes.

Table 1 contains the Expectation scores calculated for each of the nineteen service attributes presented to this client group. Again, as we did in the DHS client section, service attributes are here ranked by Expectation score, in descending order, so that we can examine those attributes ranked most important by customers.

PROP Transportation Department
Client Expectation / Perception
(Ranked By Mean Expectation Score)

Table 1

* Driver has excellent driving skills	4.0	* Call completed satisfactorily	3.2
* Driver arrives on time	4.0	* Driver has positive attitude	3.1
* Reliability	4.0	* Get first requested time & day	3.1
* Call handled with knowledge	4.0	* Driver requires use of seat belts	3.0
* Vehicle appears safe	4.0	* Driver appears neat & clean	2.9
* Call answered friendly and courteous	3.5	* Auto looks well maintained	2.9
* Ride is completed on time	3.3	* On demand rides	2.8
* Driver is courteous	3.2	* Auto interior neat & clean	2.5
* Call answered as important	3.2	* Driver talks with you	2.3
		* Driver assists you in and out of vehicle	2.1

Not surprisingly, clients ranked some service attributes in a similar fashion to that of the DHS client group. Specifically, as depicted in Table 2, **driving skills**, **timeliness**, and **reliability** received **Very Important** ratings from both groups. The Medicaid client group placed a higher value (4.0) on call handling than did DHS Case Workers, who rated it 3.4. Conversely, this group rated **ride completion** as less important than did Case Workers (3.3 vs 4.0). This client group also placed much less importance on **driver / passenger conversation**, or **driver assistance getting in and out of the vehicle**.

As with DHS Case Workers, the attributes of **timeliness** and **reliability** rank **Very Important** to this client group, and customer perception of quality service delivery will be heavily influenced by how well the department delivers in these service areas.

A further comparison of attribute ranking between DHS and Medicaid clients is provided here.

Table 2

Comparison of Attribute Ranking DHS vs Medicaid Clients Ranking by Medicaid Client Expectation Score		
	Medicaid	DHS
* Driver has excellent driving skills	4.0	4.0
* Driver arrives on time	4.0	4.0
* Reliability	4.0	4.0
* Call handled with knowledge	4.0	3.4
* Vehicle appears safe	4.0	3.6

* Call answered friendly and courteous	3.5	3.3
* Ride is completed on time	3.3	4.0
* Driver is courteous	3.2	3.8
* Call answered As important	3.2	3.2
* Call completed satisfactorily	3.2	3.4
* Driver has positive attitude	3.1	4.0
* Get first requested time & day	3.1	3.3
* Driver requires use of seat belts	3.0	4.0

* Driver appears neat & clean	2.9	3.4
* Auto looks well maintained	2.9	3.0
* On demand rides	2.8	3.0
* Auto interior neat & clean	2.5	2.8
* Driver talks with you	2.3	n/a
* Driver assists you in and out of vehicle	2.1	n/a

In the next table, Table 3 we have added the mean calculated Perception score, recorded by Medicaid clients on each of the nineteen attributes. Again, the chart is organized by mean Expectation score so that we can see how the Transportation Department scored in relation to the level of importance assigned to each attribute. The third column provides the calculated difference between the customer expectation score and the Department's performance perception score.

Table 3

PROP Transportation Department Client Expectation / Perception			
(Ranked By Mean Expectation Score)			
	Expectation Mean Score	Perception Mean Score	Difference
Driver has excellent driving skills	4.0	2.6	-1.4
Driver arrives on-time	4.0	2.5	-1.5
Reliability	4.0	2.5	-1.5
Call handled with knowledge	4.0	2.5	-1.5
Vehicle appears safe	4.0	2.8	-1.2
Call answered friendly / courteous	3.5	2.5	-1.0
Ride is completed on time	3.3	2.6	-0.7
Driver is courteous	3.2	2.7	-0.5
Call answered As important	3.2	2.4	-0.8
Call completed satisfactorily	3.2	2.4	-0.8
Driver has positive attitude	3.1	2.6	-0.5
Get first requested time & day	3.1	2.4	-0.7
Driver requires use of seat belts	3.0	2.5	-0.5
Driver appears neat & clean	2.9	2.7	-0.2
Auto looks well maintained	2.9	2.7	-0.2
On demand rides	2.8	2	-0.8
Auto interior neat & clean	2.5	2.6	0.1
Driver talks with you	2.3	2.7	0.4
Driver assists you in and out of vehicle	2.1	2.1	0.0

Unlike the Case Worker ranking, Medicaid clients do perceive the Transportation Department as providing service at levels equal to or greater than expectation in three areas: **Auto interiors**; **Driver conversation**; and **Driver assistance**. In these three areas, the Department is perceived to be providing service at levels higher than or equal to expectation levels. However, these three attributes received the lowest expectation ratings by this client group, indicating they are considered to be less important in comparison to other attributes.

It is interesting to note that Medicaid clients perceive the quality of service delivery, in general, to be better than the Case Worker client group. In these rankings, the largest gap between expectation and perception is 1.5 points or less. This may be further evidence that within a closed client system, like that of the DHS Case Workers from the same office, perceptions may be negatively influenced by co-worker opinions.

Of particular note is the fact that both **Reliability** and **On-time arrival** are two attributes with wide gaps between expectation and perception for this customer group. This matches similar concerns raised by the Case Worker rankings.

Again, we can turn to customer comments for some insight into this situation. On the Medicaid client survey we asked: If you indicated you had used RTP transportation services, and you had ranked PROP’s services to be *Not As Good* as RTP, then tell us why you feel this way. 16 percent (16%) of respondents rated PROP **Not As Good** as RTP. Sample responses included:

“Because appointments get screwed up. They show up on days I don’t need them. They forget to pick us up at the appointment. We were 1 hour late”.

“I have been late because of non-scheduling, and drivers being late or not showing up”.

For additional insight into this attribute, we also asked clients to define how many minutes would have to pass before they considered the driver to be late. The following choices were provided: 5 minutes; 10 minutes; 15 minutes; and 16+ minutes.

Seventy-eight percent (78%) of respondents indicated that drivers would be considered late if they arrived anywhere from between 5 to 15 minutes past the scheduled arrival time. Of these respondents, 41% selected 15 minutes; 36% selected 10 minutes, and 11% selected 5 minutes.

We then asked: **“How many times have we been late in picking you up?”** Responses were:

Times Late	
1 time	22%
2 times	17%
3 times	14%
4 times	6%
5 or more times	23%

This indicates that **over 60%** of responding clients considered PROP drivers to be late picking them up on at least 2 or more occasions.

In Table 4, we have presented the Medicaid-eligible client attribute rankings, organized by the calculated difference between Expectation and Perception score.

Table 4

PROP Transportation Department Medicaid Client Expectation / Perception (Ranked By Difference Mean Score)			
	Expectation Mean Score	Perception Mean Score	Difference
Driver arrives on-time	4	2.5	-1.5
Reliability	4	2.5	-1.5
Call handled with knowledge	4	2.5	-1.5
Driver has excellent driving skills	4	2.6	-1.4
Vehicle appears safe	4	2.8	-1.2
Call answered friendly / courteous	3.5	2.5	-1.0
Call answered as important	3.2	2.4	-0.8
Call completed satisfactorily	3.2	2.4	-0.8
On demand rides	2.8	2.0	-0.8
Get first requested time & day	3.1	2.4	-0.7
Ride is completed on time	3.3	2.6	-0.7
Driver is courteous	3.2	2.7	-0.5
Driver has positive attitude	3.1	2.6	-0.5
Driver requires use of seat belts	3.0	2.5	-0.5
Driver appears neat & clean	2.9	2.7	-0.2
Auto looks well maintained	2.9	2.7	-0.2
Driver assists you in and out of vehicle	2.1	2.1	0.0
Auto interior neat & clean	2.5	2.6	0.1
Driver talks with you	2.3	2.7	0.4

The administrative call procedures, listed as '**call handled with knowledge**', and '**call answered friendly and courteous**' appear to be problem areas with this client population. The perception rankings of 2.5 are similar to those by DHS Case Workers, who ranked them at 3.2 and 2.7, respectively.

Other Survey Responses of Interest

- ✍ 53% reported they were not aware that they could receive Medicaid reimbursement for use of their own vehicle for transportation to Medicaid appointments.
- ✍ 41% of respondents indicated a need for rides before 8 A.M. or after 5 P.M., and 46% indicated no such need
- ✍ 25% of respondents reported that ‘a friend’ told them about PROP’s Transportation service, while 30% indicated they heard about it from a Case Worker.
- ✍ 81% reported that PROP’s transportation service is easy to use
- ✍ 77% of respondents rated PROP’s transportation service **As Good or Exceeding their Expectations**
- ✍ 37% reported using RTP
- ✍ Of the 37% who had used RTP, 80% reported PROP’s service **As Good or Better.**

Customer Group III - PROP's Volunteer Drivers

PROP's Transportation Department Manager was interested in surveying volunteer drivers to determine five primary issues:

1. Assess driver training needs
2. Clarify driver motivation
3. Assess driver perception of Department support
4. Test the attractiveness of existing and possible rewards and incentives
5. Assess driver perception of PROP's level of appreciation of them as volunteers

Eighteen (18) out of 45 drivers (40%) responded to the survey.

Driver Motivation

Drivers were asked to tell us why they volunteer. Three reasons were often repeated:

1. For the extra money
2. For something to do
3. To help others

When asked how they came to choose PROP for their volunteer work, there was considerable variation to the answers, but the one most often repeated was that *they knew someone who was already a volunteer driver at the agency.*

Training

Drivers were asked to rate how important various topics of training were to them. They were asked to rank seven training topics, using a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 = Not Important and 4 = Very Important. The results are listed here, ranked by mean score, highest to lowest, and indicate that all topics listed are considered **Important** to **Very Important**.

PROP policies and procedures	4.0
Driver safety training	3.3
The proper use and installation of child car seats	3.1
DHS policies and procedures	3.1
Defensive driving	3.0
Child psychology	3.0
Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	2.9

Transportation Department Call Administration

The next series of questions tested driver perception of Transportation Departments call administration activities.

We asked: *“the last time you called the Transportation Department, and after you were connected to the Transportation Dispatcher, was your call:*

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| a. | Answered by the third ring? | 78% answered YES |
| b. | Answered in a friendly and courteous manner? | 82% answered YES |
| c. | Answered in a way that indicated your call was important? | 63% answered YES
31% answered NO
6% answered Don't Know |
| d. | Completed to your satisfaction? | 65% answered YES
35% answered NO |

Recognition and Attitude

Drivers were asked to rate PROP, from 1 = Unsatisfactory, to 4 = Exceeds My Expectation, on recognition and attitude items. Results are reported here using mean score, ranked from highest to lowest score. Note that no tested subject ranked higher than 2.5; mid-way between Fair and Good, and the majority of responses are ranked in the **Fair** category.

* Making you feel you want to continue to volunteer	2.5
* Honoring driver scheduling Requests	2.5
* Making it easy for you to work with the Transportation Department	2.3
* Driver ability to get assigned rides	2.3
* Giving drivers all relevant details of the assigned client	2.2
* Providing drivers with worthwhile training	2.1
* Recognizing you for your efforts	2.1
* Attitudes of paid staff to volunteers	2.1
* Driver reimbursement rates	2.1

Lateness

Like Medicaid clients, drivers were asked to define how many minutes after a scheduled pick-up time could they arrive before they considered themselves late. There was no clear-cut majority answer from the drivers. 50% of the drivers answered that they would consider themselves late if they arrived up to 15 minutes after the scheduled pickup time. Driver responses were as follows:

5 minutes	22%
10 minutes	28%
15 minutes	39%
16+ minutes	11%

You will recall that Medicaid clients answered a similar question as:

5 minutes	11%
10 minutes	25%
15 minutes	41%
16+ minutes	23%

Sixty-four percent (64%) of clients considered anything up to fifteen minutes to be “on-time”. And, since 82% of clients responding indicated they experienced a late driver, we have to conclude that drivers are arriving 15 minutes or more after scheduled pick-up times in those cases. Further, as reported earlier, 60% of the clients reported that drivers were late on at least two or more occasions.

Rate Transportation

Sixty-six percent (66%) of drivers rated PROP’s Transportation service as **Good** to **Excellent**.

Rate PROP

Eighty-three percent (83%) rated Prop, as an organization, **Good** to **Excellent**.

Driver Incentives

The Department wished to test the popularity of various rewards as incentives for drivers. Drivers were asked to rate each suggestion on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 = No Interest, and 4 = High Interest. **Cash** and **Gasoline** topped the list of suggested incentives. No item listed received a mean score higher than 3.4, indicating that there may be other incentive ideas, not yet mentioned, which may prove more popular to all drivers. Incentives are listed by mean score, highest to lowest.

Cash Prizes	3.4
Tank of Gas	3.3
Dinner Out	2.8
Oil Change	2.7
Free Car Wash	2.6
Movie Tickets	2.4
Tickets for Sporting events	2.0
Tickets to Plays/Concerts	2.0
Tickets to Symphony	1.8
Movie Rentals	1.8

Additional Comments

Drivers were invited to add any additional comments. A complete listing of comments is provided in Appendix C. No one topic was repeated enough to result in any trend, but numerous procedural suggestions were offered, and management may wish to examine these for validity and reasonableness.

Conclusions

Glenwood Research would like to thank PROP's Transportation Department for its considerations and assistance provided to us during the course of this evaluation effort. The Transportation Department should be commended for volunteering to undertake this task, and we hope that the process and results will prove to be useful in its commitment to improving client service.

The instruments developed to conduct these client surveys should continue to be useful to the Department in the future. We recommend that the Department consider administering the client surveys on an annual schedule. If changes, or modifications to the service are introduced, then more frequent, but more limited testing is recommended to assess the impact of these changes and/or modifications.

One note of caution is in order. The act of asking your customers for their comments raises some level of expectation among them. By providing you with their comments and/or complaints, they will now expect to see some changes to the service in response to their provided information. Therefore, it is now important to consider those changes and improvements that will make the greatest impact on customer perception. If such changes are implemented, the Department should make the extra public relations effort to notify customers that the changes are being initiated, and the reason for the change is to improve service in response to customer comments. We believe this type of customer recognition will result in a continued willingness among the customers to continue to respond to your survey requests.

One final note -- it should have been obvious from the body of this report that the Department needs to give immediate attention to the perceived problems of **timeliness** and **reliability**. It was clear from both DHS and Medicaid clients that these attributes are most important, yet perception of service is far less than what is expected.

Glenwood Research wishes to thank PROP and its Transportation Department for the opportunity to assist them in this undertaking. We would be pleased if you would consider us for any future evaluation and/or marketing needs you may wish to consider in the future.