



How to get private pay medical clients for NEMT

Description

If you run a non-emergency medical transportation company, you know that your success directly correlates to the customers you find and keep. Whether you work with clients who simply need one ride or those who want to book recurring trips, it's a good idea to constantly be on the lookout for new passenger opportunities. It's especially important that you understand how private pay passengers can help your business. These customers give you a chance to make a little extra cash, because you control the prices you're charging.

What is private pay NEMT?

Non-emergency medical transportation is a Medicaid benefit created to provide transportation for elderly folks, people with disabilities, or anyone else who can't drive or travel alone to healthcare appointments. However, there are a great number of people who don't receive Medicaid but also don't drive or have access to transportation. This group poses a huge opportunity for NEMT businesses everywhere. Why? Because they pay out of pocket for your transportation services. This means that you set the rates, and you get paid that amount as soon as the trip is over. Working with Medicaid clients and transportation brokers is a great way to get your foot in the door and make sure you're completing daily trips, but you shouldn't get so caught up in these opportunities that you forget about private pay customers.

Benefits of working with private pay clients

If you aren't already working with private pay customers, it's time to reassess your strategy. This group of passengers can make your NEMT business much more profitable with just a handful of trips per day. Check out how you can start working with private pay clients as soon as possible.

When you work with Medicaid, your reimbursements are dependent on your state's Medicaid rules and regulations. In other words, you don't have a say in how much you make per trip. Private pay, on the other hand, puts the financial power in your hands. You set the rates as you see fit—whether it's a flat fee for round trips, a fee per mile, or something else. These payments are charged as soon as a trip is completed, and passengers can easily pay for your services with cash, credit, or even a check. The

important thing is that you have your payment instantly, whereas with Medicaid clients, you have to submit the claim to the insurance company and wait for your reimbursement to come in.

Factors to consider when structuring your private pay cost

Once you decide you want to take on private pay trips, you have to develop a price structure to properly charge each trip. This can be a bit trickier than it sounds. While you want to charge an amount that affords you a comfortable profit, you also want to advertise prices that will attract potential customers to your business and away from competitors. Below are just some of the factors you should consider when planning your prices.

Trip distance

As you probably already know, the distance you're traveling will impact the overall cost of the trip. Most non-emergency medical transportation providers charge on a per-mile basis, but that doesn't mean you can't use another method you see fit. As long as you clearly communicate to your customers how you're charging them, there shouldn't be an issue.

Last-minute vs. planned trips

Last-minute trip requests cut your planning time down, which can be stressful and take you away from other responsibilities. That being said, charging a fee for a trip scheduled with little notice is fair. You should clearly outline this policy on your website and any customer-facing materials.

Trip frequency

Many trips will be singular round trips—trips that are a one-time request to and from a specified location. But in some instances, you'll come across passengers who need repeat trips. For example, a person who receives dialysis will need a ride a few times per week. If you find clients who need to schedule repeat trips, you should absolutely work with them. These passengers are a great opportunity for consistent cash flow. Plus, if they're a private paying customer, you have a chance to build a pricing plan that works for both parties.

Provider experience

The amount you charge should correlate with your time in the business. If you're a new company, you need to be realistic about your prices. Customers value experience, so if you're a new name in the area and you're charging an arm and a leg for rides, you probably won't have much luck. If your company has been in business for a while, you have more room to play with pricing.

Prioritize private pay clients

When you're ready to incorporate private pay clients into your business strategy, there are a few big ways you can go about this. It's important to understand going forward that targeting private pay clients

isn't the simplest task. If you want to explore an in-person and word-of-mouth strategy, checking in with your local nursing homes, hospitals, and long-term care facilities is a great way to build relationships with places that almost definitely need transportation on a daily basis. Additionally, you should look at your marketing strategy and adjust your SEO tactics to accompany key search terms that clients are using to find NEMT services in their area. You might not get results instantly, but you're setting yourself up for success.

Build a profitable NEMT business today

Running an NEMT business is an incredibly important job. As a provider, you're responsible for transporting patients who otherwise wouldn't have a way to get to their important healthcare appointments. When you first get your foot in the door, it's natural to partner with transportation brokers to get Medicaid trips. But eventually, you'll want to expand your offerings to private pay customers in order to boost your profit and build your repertoire. When you're ready to make this change, be sure you have your strategy fleshed out, with the proper tactics in hand. No matter where you end up, having a nice mix of Medicaid and private pay patients will allow you to run a successful NEMT business.

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