Informal Caregivers, Older Adults and Transportation

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Project Overview

- **Michigan Department of Transportation project: Low-cost, high-impact measures to meet the transportation needs of Michigan's aging population**

- **Maintain the safety and well-being of Michigan's older adults by developing measures to be implemented by MDOT**

- **Literature review, demographic analysis, older driver survey, caregiver survey, recommendations for MDOT**

Background

- **The number of Americans age 65 and older will grow from 40 million currently to more than 88 million in 2050**

- **Dependence on the personal automobile for mobility**

- **Declines in abilities needed for safe driving**
  - **Age-related medical conditions**
  - **Medications used to treat conditions**
  - **Perceptual, cognitive, and psychomotor skills**

- **Mobility following driving cessation**

Caregiving in the United States

- **Caregiver: family member or other person that provides unpaid care to an older adult**

- **Estimated 36 million adults provided unpaid care to someone age 65 or older**

- **The current economic value of caregivers' unpaid contributions is estimated to be $450 billion**

- **Most frequently reported IADL performed is providing transportation (84%)**

Caregiving in Michigan

- **By 2030, Michigan's older adults age 70 and older will comprise 14% of the state's population**

- **Michigan has an estimated 1.3 million caregivers providing care to someone age 60 and older**

- **1.4 billion hours of time**

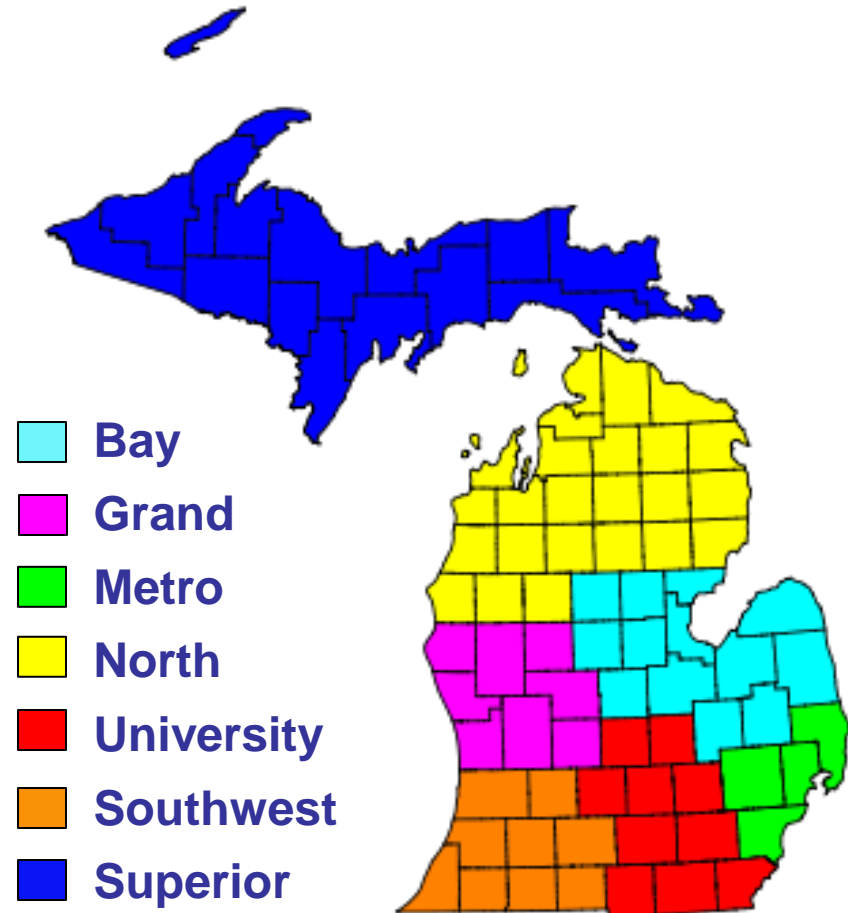- **$13.4 billion in economic value**

Purpose

- **Comprehensive understanding of caregivers in Michigan that provide transportation or other assistance to someone age 70 or older**
    - **Characteristics of caregivers**
    - **Types of transportation assistance provided**
    - **Frequency of transportation assistance**
    - **Where and how caregivers seek information/services**

- **Purpose achieved through a statewide representative telephone survey of informal caregivers in Michigan**

Questionnaire design

- **Cognitive interview process and pilot testing**

- **Final questionnaire contained 41 questions regarding:**
  - ☐ **Demographics**
  - ☐ **Driving status and frequency**
  - ☐ **Work and/or volunteering activity**
  - ☐ **Health**
  - ☐ **Types of transportation assistance provided**
  - ☐ **Characteristics of care recipient**
  - ☐ **Caregiver burden**

Sample of Informal Caregivers

- **Michigan Driver History File**

- **Adults 45-80 years**

- **300 residents of the 7 MDOT regions**

- **Provided transportation assistance or other unpaid care to a Michigan senior age 70 or older within the last 12 months**

Bay
Grand
Metro
North
University
Southwest
Superior

Demographics of Caregivers

- **61 years**
- **66% Female**
- **76% Married**
- **95% White**
- **95% live in own home/apartment**
- **Nearly all are licensed and drive regularly**
- **Completed at least some college or more**
- **Frequency of providing care varied**
- **Household income ranged widely**

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Employment and Volunteer Work

- **Half of caregivers work outside home for pay**
  - **67.7% Full-time**
  - **27.0% Part-time**
  - **5.3% Occasional**

- **Slightly more than half volunteer in the community**
  - **Average 5.5 hours per week**

Overall Health

- **56.4% Excellent/Very good**
- **25.5% Good**
- **13.6% Fair**
- **4.5%   Poor**

Demographics of Care Recipient

- **84 years**
- **70% female**
- **62% widowed; 22% married**
- **Relationship to caregiver**
  - **57% parent**
  - **18% other relative**
  - **15% friend**
  - **6% spouse**
- **More than half no longer drove**
- **Close proximity to caregiver**
  - **Nearly 20% lived together**
  - **Most within 1 hour driving time**

Health Issues of Care Recipient

- **65% Mobility**
- **43% Vision**
- **36% Cognition**
- **34% Other condition**

Types of Assistance Provided

- **Majority of caregivers do not assist with ADLs**

- **91% transportation**

- **55% housekeeping**

- **40% finances**

- **38% food preparation**

- **35% medications**

- **34% laundry**

- **23% shopping**

Transportation

- **97% provided rides in the car; 22% arranged rides**

- **Frequency of providing rides per week**
  - **36% 1-2 times**
  - **19% 3-4 times**
  - **9% 5-7 times**

- **Purpose of rides**
  - **91% medical**
  - **68% shopping**
  - **64% family/personal**
  - **59% social/recreational**

Caregiver Burden

- **"a multidimensional response to physical, psychological, emotional, social and financial stressors associated with the caregiving experience" (Kasuya, Polgar-Bailey & Takeuchi, 2000)**

- **Bakas Caregiver Outcomes Scale: 15 items on self-esteem, physical health, relationships, financial well being; scale ranged from changed for worse to changed for best**

- **Caregivers reported little change in their lives associated with providing care; change reported was slightly more positive than negative**

Information Seeking by Caregivers

- **43% sought information or services**

- **Types of information/services sought**
  - **13% training/education**
  - **11% transportation services**
  - **8% respite care**
  - **6% counseling/support**

- **Sources of information/services**
  - **20% physician or other health professional**
  - **11% senior center**
  - **10% family/friends**
  - **10% government agency**

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Recommendations

- **In developing and distributing educational/training materials, take into account role that caregivers play in providing transportation assistance to older adults**

- **Ensure that materials are available and easily accessible to caregivers**

- **Consider medical/health professionals as partners for disseminating transportation safety information for caregivers**

Discussion

- **Caregivers play a critical role in maintaining safe mobility for older adults**

- **Increases in life expectancy and aging of the baby boomers**

- **Programs to assist caregivers**

- **Backbone of our long-term care system**

Publication

- **Eby, D.W., Molnar, L.J., Kostyniuk, L.P., St. Louis, R.M., & Zanier, N. (2011). *Recommendations for Meeting the Needs of Michigan's Aging Population*. Report No. RC-1562. Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Transportation.**

- **Available on MDOT website**