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Testimony by Lyft, Inc. Opposing House Bill 8217
Rhode Island General Assembly
House Corporations Committee
May 7, 2024

Dear Chairman Solomon and Honorable Members of the House Corporations Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective and contribute to this important discussion on H-8217. Lyft Healthcare is committed to and in support of enhancing options to reduce critical barriers to care posed by lack of access to transportation, especially for those utilizing Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) services. However, we write to express our concerns about the potential unintended consequences of the bill as currently drafted.

Currently, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) effectively manages regulation and oversight of Rhode Island's Medicaid NEMT program, which includes strong regulatory standards for transportation providers to ensure member safety and system efficiency. H-8217 proposes to shift regulatory authority of NEMT providers to the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers, instituting additional NEMT certification requirements with associated costs. In addition to introducing fragmentation to the regulatory framework for NEMT, this change would **impose unnecessary financial and administrative burdens on NEMT providers and subsequently risks reducing the availability of these critical services provided by a wide variety of transportation providers**. As a result of reducing transportation provider availability, **enacting this bill could lead to the unintended consequence of reducing health access and negatively impacting outcomes for Medicaid members** – from increased instances of missed appointments to the worsening of health disparities and increased utilization of higher cost health services due to foregone care.

This bill would place undue burden on drivers using the Lyft platform to provide access to valuable, time-sensitive NEMT rides to RI Medicaid members. EOHHS authorized MTM to utilize Lyft in their NEMT network; further, drivers on the Lyft platform are already extensively regulated under the state's Transportation Network Company (TNC) statute, including being subject to background checks, vehicle, and insurance requirements. In RI, MTM often uses rideshare as a tool to provide access to rides that other transportation providers are unable to fulfill, such as on-demand or same-day ride requests, "recovery" rides when another provider does not show up to pick up a member, discharges outside of regular business operating hours, or for ride types that are particularly successful use cases for rideshare (e.g., substance use disorder treatment,

which accounts for nearly 60% of NEMT trips in RI). EOHHS limits TNC utilization to 5% of total NEMT trips per month; however, best practice indicates that incorporating rideshare into the NEMT provider network without restrictions on use significantly benefits members and the system. Thus, we encourage the Committee to consider the role TNCs can play in improving RI's Medicaid NEMT program as it evaluates H-8217.

For context, Lyft Healthcare is one of the largest providers of access to NEMT services across the United States, supporting access to reliable rides for millions of eligible patients who lack transportation. Since 2016, thousands of leading healthcare organizations have partnered with Lyft to **reduce costs, improve the patient experience, and expand access to care**. Lyft Healthcare has deep experience partnering with state Medicaid agencies to help bolster their NEMT programs by providing access to rides for eligible members, and **over 24 states have incorporated Lyft as part of their Medicaid NEMT program**. Through these partnerships, Lyft serves as one tool in the toolbox – we use our national rideshare platform to effectively plug into the existing Medicaid NEMT ecosystem and reinforce transportation provider networks, which relieves operational stress, adds flexibility, reduces costs, and improves access to care for Medicaid members.

Drivers on the Lyft platform provide Medicaid members with the opportunity to receive on-demand (in addition to pre-scheduled) rides, potentially eliminating longer wait times and also allowing for quick access to transportation for urgent situations. By including TNCs in their transportation networks, our transportation partners can more easily accommodate time-sensitive trips for authorized riders.¹ Under our existing partnerships with State Medicaid programs across the country, **Lyft has made an impact in reducing patient no-show rates by 27%, member grievances by 66%, per-ride costs by 32%, and unfulfilled trips by 47%**. In addition, our transportation partners have found that **TNCs can free up supply-constrained ambulances and medical vans to focus attention on populations needing medical attention and expertise**, which ultimately allows for traditional transportation providers to practice at the top of their license.

In light of these considerations, we respectfully urge the committee to reconsider the implications of H-8217 on the NEMT ecosystem and Medicaid members in Rhode Island.

We appreciate your time and attention to this matter and are eager to discuss further or provide additional information as needed.

Thank you for your consideration.

¹ Appropriate Level of Service: Lyft provides access to curbside-to-curbside ambulatory non-emergency medical transportation for riders who are cognitively and physically capable of getting in and out of a vehicle themselves, without assisted support from a driver. Lyft Healthcare is not an option for riders who have medical needs or conditions that would typically require transport via ambulance or medical van.

Sincerely,

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Lyft, Inc.