

Medicaid Fraud in Wisconsin

Personal Care Travel Time



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
of HEALTH SERVICES
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What Is Travel Time?*

Personal care providers are reimbursed for reasonable travel time of the personal care worker traveling to and from the member's home and the personal care worker's previous appointment, residence, or office. It is not for running errands or taking the member to appointments. Members who live with their caregiver are not eligible for travel time.

- Prior Authorization is required for all reimbursed travel time.
- Wisconsin Medicaid calculates travel time by using the average time it takes to drive the shortest distance by car.
- Travel time between appointments within the same building is not covered.
- Multiple round trips within the same day to the same member are not covered unless the care is provided during separate intervals.
- Providers are required to schedule personal care worker visits to minimize travel time, per Wisconsin Admin Code § DHS 101.03(96m).

*WI MA Handbook Topic #2462 & #2509

Cost of Travel Time Services

- Wisconsin Medicaid paid **\$11.6 million** for travel time in 2019.
- The travel time reimbursement rate increased to \$4.79 (per 15 minutes) on January 01, 2020.

Since July 2016, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has identified **\$500,000** in potentially **wasteful** or **fraudulent** travel time reimbursement.

How Is Travel Time Calculated?*

For travel time, one unit of service equals 15 minutes. Calculate the time spent traveling per day, and round up or down according to the table:

Accumulated time	Unit(s) billed
1-22 minutes	1.0
23-37 minutes	2.0
38-52 minutes	3.0
53-67 minutes	4.0
68-82 minutes	5.0
83-97 minutes	6.0
98-112 minutes	7.0
113-127 minutes	8.0
Etc.	9.0+

*WI Medicaid Handbook Topic #2479

Since July 2016, OIG has identified \$91,000 was paid for travel time when services were not delivered.

Non-Delivered Care

- Travel time is only a payable service when covered personal care services are also provided.
- If care is not provided because the member was not home, was out of state, hospitalized or unavailable travel time should not be billed.
- Billing for services and travel time when the service never occurred is **fraud**.

Inflated Mileage

- Personal care workers must use the shortest, most convenient travel route.
- Personal care workers must maintain accurate mileage records.
- Extending travel routes to stop for personal meals, errands, or unnecessary trips to the office is **waste**.

Multiple Members in a Single Location

- If an agency is providing personal care service for two members in a single location, travel time should only be billed for one member.
- Billing travel time for each member separately is considered duplicative and therefore **abuse**.

