

# Benzie Bus expands Health Rides program

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Record Patriot Staff

September 22, 2025



Starting Oct. 1, Benzie Bus is expanding its Health Rides program, which offers residents rides to medical appointments in Benzie County as well as Grand Traverse, Wexford, Leelanau and Manistee counties.

Courtesy of Benzie Bus

Benzie Bus recently announced the expansion of its Health Rides program starting on Oct. 1.

Previously available Monday through Wednesday, the service will operate Monday through Friday, offering more flexible and reliable non-emergency medical transportation to residents in need.

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"We are thrilled to expand our Health Rides program to Monday through Friday, making it easier for Benzie County residents to access essential medical services without the stress of transportation challenges," said Rob Scott, mobility manager at Benzie Bus. "This step forward

reflects our ongoing commitment to mobility equity and community health, ensuring that no one has to forgo care due to limited transportation options. We're grateful for the support of our Benzie County residents and riders as we continue to grow this vital service."

The Health Rides program provides direct rides to medical appointments, including doctor visits, therapy sessions, and other healthcare services, both within Benzie County and to neighboring areas such as Grand Traverse, Wexford, Leelanau and Manistee counties. This expansion aims to address growing demand for accessible transportation, ensuring that more individuals can reach essential care without barriers.

Key benefits of the expansion include:

**Increased accessibility:** By adding Thursday and Friday service, the program boosts availability by nearly 67%, allowing residents to schedule appointments on more days of the week and reducing wait times for rides.

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**Enhanced flexibility for riders:** Patients, especially seniors, individuals with disabilities, and those without personal vehicles, can now align transportation with a wider range of appointment slots, promoting timely healthcare and better health outcomes.

**Community health support:** The program helps reduce missed appointments, which can lead to improved preventive care, mental health support, and overall well-being for residents of Benzie County.

**Affordable and Inclusive:** Rides remain cost-effective, with options for free or discounted fares for qualifying individuals, including Medicaid recipients and seniors aged 60 and older.

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**Economic and social impact:** By facilitating access to medical facilities, Health Rides contributes to a healthier workforce and community, potentially lowering long-term healthcare costs and supporting local economies.

Riders interested in Health Rides can book appointments by calling 231-325-3000 or visiting [benziebus.com](http://benziebus.com). More advanced notice is recommended for the best compatible scheduling.

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