Methods
The needs assessment used multiple data sources to create a comprehensive picture of transportation for cancer care in the state. The methods included:

- Availability and access to treatment
- Transportation experience and need
- Gaps in services and barriers by geography

Results
The transportation provider survey contained a number of questions about the travel services available to cancer patients, their experiences, and barriers that exist with transportation. Nearly half of transportation providers reported having to turn away patients because they lacked the resources to meet demand. Many patients, especially those with the lowest socioeconomic status, often lack alternate forms of transportation or the ability to travel to appointments.

Public transportation providers are funded through a combination of public funding, grants, and donations, so changes in any component of that flow can severely impact their ability to provide services. In particular, organizations are worried that changes or cuts to Medicaid would have a severe negative impact on the availability and capacity of transportation services.

Results (continued)
Using Rural-Urban Commuting Areas, from the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy and the Economic Research Service, communities were classified into one of four categories ranging from urban to isolated rural. Those living in the most rural areas of the state travel 4-6 times further overall to receive cancer treatment than those living in metro areas.

Transportation Summit Discussion Groups
What are the unique challenges of serving cancer patients in your community?
- Cancer patients in rural areas face significant transportation barriers and lack access to treatment.
- Many of the transportation providers in the state are small, community-driven, and made up of volunteers.
- Half of transportation providers reported not being able to meet demand for services.
- A lack of public transportation in rural areas leaves patients without affordable transportation options. Taxis are not public transportation.
- Disruptions in funding, such as a cut to Medicaid, could have a catastrophic impact on patients.
- Those living in the most rural areas travel 4-6 times further to receive cancer treatment than those living in urban areas.
- Lower socioeconomic status is associated with higher levels of cancer incidence and longer travel distances. Results in higher need, and more barriers to travel among this critical group.
- A lack of oncologists in the most rural areas (such as Washington County in Maine) results in excessive travel distances of 100+ miles for patients in these areas.

Potential Solutions
Even in predominantly rural areas, each community is unique and requires solutions that meet the specific needs and circumstances of patients in the area. Some of the potential solutions include:

- Increasing access to and capacity of regional transportation services
- Increasing the number and capacity of informal volunteer and community-based transportation networks
- Improving and expanding public transportation options and funding
- Partnering with hospitals to provide transportation to their cancer patients
- Advocating for transportation funding
- Education and outreach to inform patients about transportation options and services
- Funding innovative solutions that help overcome transportation barriers, reduce costs, and increase capacity
- Increasing capacity of existing transportation providers and facilities in the most rural areas (telemedicine)

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Discussion

- • Cancer patients in rural areas face significant transportation barriers and lack access to treatment.
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- Maine Cancer Foundation (MCF) is a public foundation with the mission of reducing cancer incidence and mortality in Maine. 100% of funds raised by the Foundation are used to benefit the people of Maine. Since 2008, MCF has funded transportation providers for Maine cancer patients. In 2017, to continue effective funding of Maine transportation providers, MCF contracted with Market Decisions (MDR) to execute a needs assessment, statewide needs assessment of transportation for Maine cancer patients.

- Maine is one of the most rural states in the U.S. and lacks the public infrastructure of larger, more urban, states. Maine cancer patients are particularly vulnerable to lack of transportation for the following reasons:
  - The number of appointments required for advanced, cancer care
  - The cost of travel for both patients and caregivers
  - The inability of patients to drive themselves to care due to illness
  - The distance to cancer care

- MCF will continue to fund transportation services for Maine cancer patients and, taking into account the results of the Needs Assessment findings, actively support statewide collaboration between Maine transportation providers.

Methodology

- The distance to cancer care
- The cost of travel for both patients and caregivers
- Many of the transportation providers in the state are small, community-based networks driven, and made up of volunteers.
- Even in predominately rural areas, each community is unique and requires solutions that meet the specific needs and circumstances of patients in the area. Some of the potential solutions include:

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- Increasing capacity of existing transportation providers and facilities in the most rural areas (telemedicine)
- Convoying a cancer transportation surcharge to continue moving transportation funds for Medicaid

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