

Improving Alzheimer's Disease Clinical Trials Through Participant Transportation Services

Strapline: The Global Alzheimer's Platform Foundation addresses transportation barriers in Alzheimer's disease clinical trials.

The Global Alzheimer's Platform Foundation (GAP) partners with more than 70 research centers (GAP-Net) in North America to accelerate Alzheimer's disease (AD) clinical trials by optimizing study processes and improving recruitment and retention of trial participants and study partners.

Currently, 5.8 million Americans suffer from AD at a national cost of \$290 billion. One in three seniors die with AD or another dementia which is greater than deaths from breast cancer and prostate cancer combined.^{1,2} The magnitude of AD places significant burdens on the community and healthcare system (Figure 1). The discovery of a cure for AD hinges on the recruitment of the ~25,000 participants needed to complete the trials scheduled for the next two years in North America.³

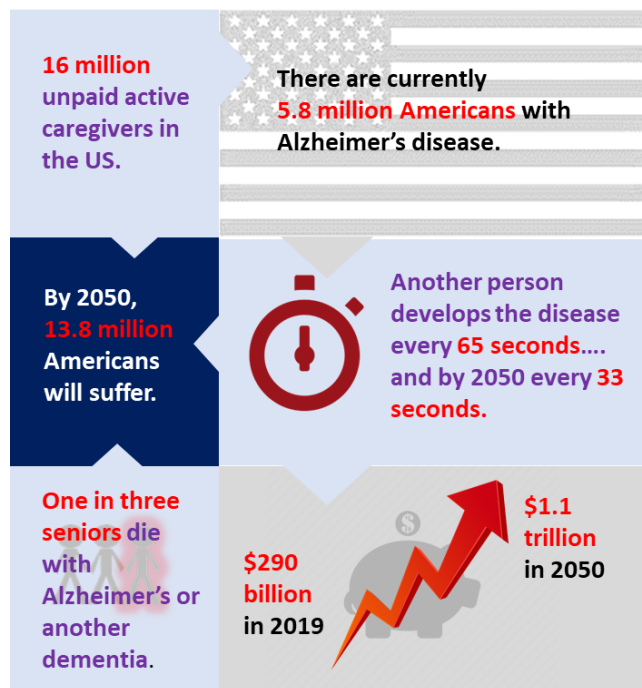


Figure 1: Alzheimer's disease prevalence and impact in America.^{1,2}

Transportation Barriers in Alzheimer's Disease Clinical Trials

Several factors make recruitment for AD trials unusually difficult, but the research community agrees that the lack of transportation for this cognitively vulnerable population and their study partners is one of the leading barriers to rapid enrollment into AD trials.^{4,5,6} Clinical trial sites are challenged to provide convenient and affordable transportation given the diverse demands of their trial participants and study sponsors. Most AD and dementia trials require study partner participation at some or all of the visits. Some study partners must travel from their place of employment to meet the participant at the site, thus doubling the transportation burden.

GAP | Lyft Clinical Trial Transportation Service

To address the transportation challenge, GAP began partnering with Lyft in early 2018 to offer transportation services to GAP-Net sites. Participating sites use the Lyft Concierge platform to schedule rides on behalf of their clinical trial participants and study partners. There is no cost to the GAP-Net sites to set up a Lyft Concierge account, and GAP is responsible for all payments to Lyft for the rides. Since the initiation of the program, research participants and their study partners have benefitted from more than 1200 rides to and from GAP-Net research sites participating in the Transportation Service (Figure 2).

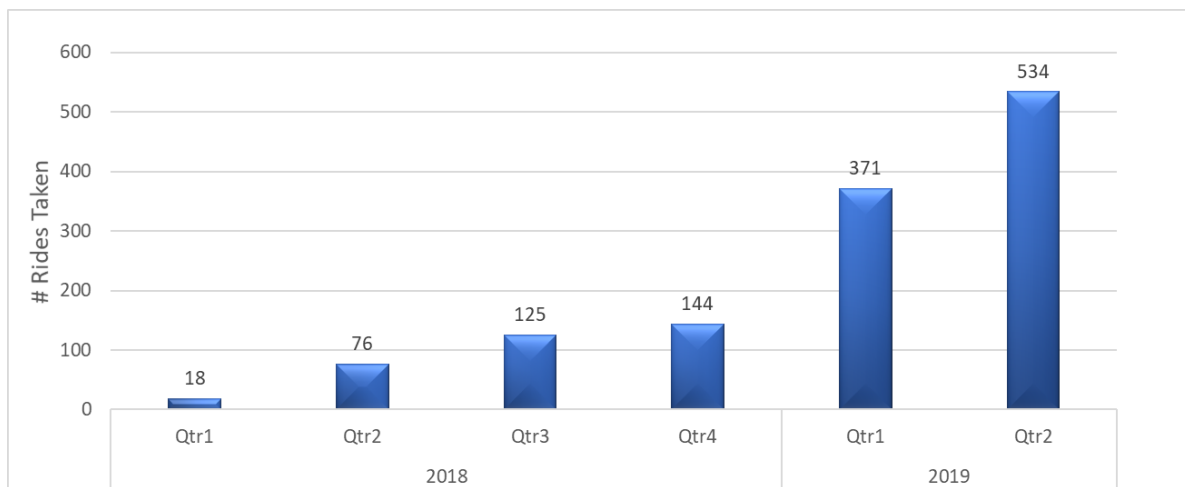


Figure 2: # Rides taken by quarter (as of June 2019) – GAP | Lyft Clinical Trial Transportation Service.

The Transportation Service offers more than a free ride (Figure 3).

- **Participant and study partner benefits:** Participating in a clinical trial requires considerable commitment from both participants and study partners. A transportation service saves time by offering door-to-door convenience. Study partners have used the service to minimize the amount of time spent away from work by meeting the participant at the site. Both participants and study partners are released from the anxiety of navigating traffic and finding parking. Participants who do not have access to a car or who do not feel comfortable driving now have one less barrier to participating in a clinical trial.
- **Site benefits:** Each site has unique transportation challenges depending on parking availability, area traffic, and local weather. Sites using the Lyft Concierge platform to schedule rides report fewer appointment cancellations, fewer late appointments, and reduced burden on participants and study partners. Sites are also relieved of the administrative burden of collecting receipts and invoicing since GAP handles the payments for the trial sites. Sites are committed to making the trial experience more convenient for participants. As the director of one GAP-Net site explains, “It comes down to what matters to the participants and getting them to the clinic. These little things can make all the difference.”

- Sponsor benefits: Transportation services are rapidly becoming a standard feature in clinical trials. One survey published in 2017 showed that 43% of clinical trial sites offer free transportation to trial participants upon request (Lau, 2017).⁷ Transportation services may also help remove barriers for participation by under-represented populations such as African-American, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Latinos.⁸



Figure 3: More than a free ride -- GAP | Lyft Clinical Trial Transportation Service.

Conclusion

Transportation is a key barrier to successful recruitment and retention in AD trials – especially in vulnerable populations. Clinical trial sites are challenged to provide convenient and affordable transportation given the diverse demands of their trial participants, study partners, and study sponsors. The GAP | Lyft Clinical Trial Transportation Service seeks to change the clinical trial transportation experience for participants, study partners, and sponsors and drive new best practices in the field. The program provides GAP-Net clinical trial sites with funds to address the unique transportation needs of participants and study partners and thereby improve recruitment and retention in AD trials.

References

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