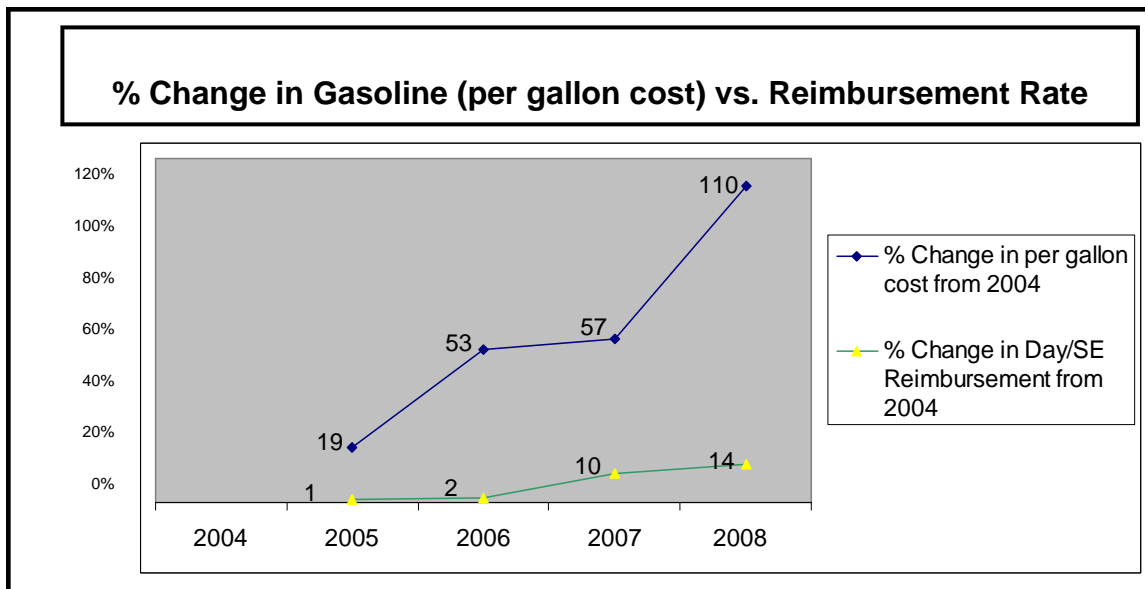


As you may know, the Developmental Disabilities Administration commits, in its Mission Statement, to enable all individuals with developmental disabilities to exercise the four principles of self-determination. The fourth freedom identified is “Supports necessary to live in the community”.

One of the significant prerequisites to living successfully in the community is the ability to interact with the community by moving through the community. For all citizens, accessible transportation is the key to this freedom. For most individuals with developmental disabilities, transportation must be provided by others; for those individuals who are supported within the DDA system, non-profit agencies across the state typically provide this critical aspect of successful community integration. Agency staff routinely transport individuals to and from jobs, medical appointments, day programs, and social activities.

Unfortunately, the reimbursement rate received by agencies for transportation, which has historically been significantly less than the actual cost of providing these services, has grown only minimally over the years while direct costs, such as fuel, have aggressively increased. In fact, while the **cost of gasoline alone has increased by 110%** since 2004 (increasing from an average of \$1.57/gallon to \$3.25/gallon), the **reimbursement rate for providers of day programs has increased by only 14%** (from \$9.06/day to \$10.29/day) over that same period.



Not only is the relationship of rising costs to flat reimbursements a significant problem, but a typical day program provider reports that their state reimbursement rate (\$372,000 annually) covers only 62% of their total FY 07 transportation costs (\$595,000 annually); the remaining 38% needs to come from remaining funds intended for the support of individuals.

This untenable situation continues to become more acute as fuel costs rise, and is worsened by the obvious increase in other transportation costs (insurance, vehicle purchase, and maintenance, for example). As provider agencies are forced to reallocate the finite dollars available for an individual's support to offset transportation cost deficits, it becomes increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to provide the full range of supports needed to meet the goal of successful community living.

The flat funding for transportation costs over the past several years, combined with the explosive rise in fuel costs, has created a crisis for community-based agencies serving people with developmental disabilities, and threatens the financial stability of community-based providers.