

Health Connector



About Health Connector

The Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency (HIRTAs) Health Connector, developed under USDOT's ITS4US Program, demonstrates how integrating mobility-on-demand (MOD) technology with healthcare appointment systems can improve access to non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) for rural communities. Built on open-source middleware and a demand-response platform, Health Connector enables riders to schedule rides tied directly to medical appointments, with real-time wayfinding, on-demand dispatch, and care coordinator tools built into a single connected system.

Community Demand

"At one point the dialysis center in Perry was closing, and we didn't have HIRTA to take us. We were paying \$150 round trip to get from Perry to West Des Moines to our dialysis three times a week – and we paid that for about three months. We don't count on taxis ... around here.

***So when you do need a ride,
it's HIRTA or no one."***



— Health Connector Rider,
Dallas County, Iowa



Zero Safety incidents
recorded across all Phase 3
reporting months

Key Performance Highlights



2,000+ rides completed
since August 2024 launch



**Ride options met the needs
for 100% of surveyed riders.**



95–100% on-time pickup
performance across most
reporting months



8:1 repeat rider ratio:
Riders rely on this service
consistently each month

How a Health Connector Trip Works



Source: HIRTA

Health Connector



The System: Health Connector

Health Connector deployed a fully operational system serving real riders with real medical needs. For agencies ready to deploy, the following Health Connector elements are readily replicable:

- **Open-source middleware** connecting transit scheduling, Electronic Health Records (EHR), and Medicaid broker systems. This reduces manual coordination burdens for healthcare and transit staff.
- **Multiple accessible booking pathways** including a mobile app, web portal, phone booking, and an in-hospital self-service kiosk — so no rider is left out regardless of technology access.
- **Indoor wayfinding** deployed on Health Connector vehicles and throughout Dallas County Hospital, giving riders with visual impairments independent, auditory navigation from pickup to the exam room.

Open-source software on ITS CodeHub:

- MOD-EHR – Links appointment data with ride scheduling
- MOD-Medicaid – Connects Medicaid broker systems to transit dispatch
- HC-Kiosk – In-facility ride booking terminal



Scan the QR code to explore the software.

Agency Demand: System Expansion

Health Connector is not waiting to be discovered. Transit agencies, state health departments, and national transportation organizations have come to HIRTA asking how to bring this model to their communities:

- Transit agencies in Iowa and Pennsylvania have engaged HIRTA directly to explore replication.
- Iowa Department of Health and Human Services and Iowa Department of Transportation have featured Health Connector as a statewide model for rural healthcare access.
- National RTAP invited HIRTA to present on healthcare partner engagement as a nationally transferable model.

The Opportunity: ITS4US Deployment Accelerator

USDOT's ITS4US Deployment Accelerator exists to scale what works. The program focuses on bringing outputs from the Health Connector to new communities, faster, at lower cost, and with the full benefit of everything HIRTA already learned.



Up to 5 awards | 12-month deployment cycle

Awardees receive tested open-source code, direct technical support from the HIRTA team, and a peer cohort of fellow deployers. This is seed funding designed to get proven technology into the communities that need it most.

Solicitation: Expected FY2026