



Service provides free rides to treatment facilities

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LAWRENCE —The Merrimack Valley Project recently launched Wheels of Hope, a new service that provides free transportation to anyone from the Merrimack Valley who has a reserved bed at any treatment facility in the state.

Wheels of Hope is a service of the Massachusetts Substance Use Helpline in coordination with Lowell-based Lucos Transportation. This new service aims to close a critical gap identified by the Merrimack Valley Project in the fight against substance use disorder in the region.

This pilot program was modeled after the Substance Abuse Treatment Enhance Program in Hartford, Connecticut. Over the course of 15 years, that program has provided hope to thousands of Connecticut residents who did not have transportation to local or regional recovery centers.

Within the last year, the program expanded statewide, demonstrating its success. Seeing the parallels in both population and geographic area, Merrimack Valley Project leaders sought to emulate the service and over three years, created a broad coalition of faith, labor, and community partners willing to work to bring the program to the region.

This program is available in the following Valley towns and cities : Amesbury, Andover, Billerica, Boxford, Chelmsford, Dracut, Georgetown, Groveland, Haverhill, Lawrence, Littleton, Lowell, Merrimac, Methuen, Newbury, Newburyport, North Andover, Rowley, Salisbury, Tewksbury, Tyngsboro, Westford, and West Newbury. Transportation to recovery centers outside the region can be arranged as long as the ride originates in the Merrimack Valley.

To utilize this free transportation service, call the Massachusetts Substance Use Helpline at 800-327-5050. Visit [HelplineMA.org/WheelsofHope](https://www.HelplineMA.org/WheelsofHope) to learn more. Representatives from the Merrimack Valley Project and the Helpline are available to speak or provide training for the program at 978-686-0650.