

Written Statement for the House/Policy Committee
Submitted by Ellen Mazo, Director, Government Affairs
Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC
June 17, 2010

Thank you for this opportunity to explain the significance of reliable mass transit as it applies to the patient families and employees of Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC.

As you know, Children's Hospital moved last May from Oakland to our new campus in Pittsburgh's Lawrenceville neighborhood. Before our move, we had had few, if any, public transportation concerns in Oakland. Often referred to as Pittsburgh's "second Downtown," Oakland is a major transportation hub for the Port Authority of Allegheny County.

This wasn't the case in Lawrenceville.

We were concerned because we learned that our patients, families and visitors accounted for about 400,000 PAT bus riders a year.

Moreover, about 30 percent of Children's almost 3,000 employees said they were PAT riders. That is 1,620 PAT transit trips a day. About a third of Children's PAT-riding employees told us that PAT is their only transportation option; the rest said they rode PAT for economic reasons. Children's offers a before-tax payroll deduction for monthly bus passes.

One employee who is losing her eyesight said she and her husband moved from the North Hills to a home on a bus line in the East End so that she could easily take a bus to work.

We quickly learned, however, that public transportation between Lawrenceville and the East End of Pittsburgh was less than ideal. So, months before our move, PAT representatives went to Children's to talk with employees. While we continue our discussions with PAT, the authority has made initial strides in improving transportation access.

This includes extending its service to directly link Children's to other parts of Lawrenceville, Bloomfield, Shadyside Squirrel Hill, Greenfield and the Waterfront. This change came this past spring, so I don't have numbers on ridership. But PAT says early reports show that ridership is steady.

Construction of our new campus was one of the largest development projects in the state, and – as we grow our medical and research resources to meet the healthcare needs of children in Pennsylvania, throughout the country and throughout the world – we continue to add jobs.

We believe that Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC is a solid contributor to the economy of Pennsylvania. We also understand the difficult economic issues facing the state.

With that, we ask that as you make your budgetary decisions you take into consideration the patient families and employees who rely on public transportation in Allegheny County – those for whom a public transit system means access to health care for their children and access to jobs.

Thank you.