Removing transportation barriers for persons with spinal cord injuries: An ongoing challenge to community reintegration

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Affordable, reliable transportation options are critical to successful community reintegration for individuals with spinal cord injuries (SCI). Lack of access to these options can significantly impact one's capability to gain and maintain employment, access medical and other essential community-based supports and services, and participate in social and recreational activities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as a variety of other federal, state and local legislation has systematically addressed the spectrum of accessibility issues regarding both public and private sector transportation. For the most part however, individuals with SCI and other disabilities continue to report limited transportation options as a primary barrier to full reintegration back into their homes, schools and communities. With this in mind, regional disability advocacy organizations, social service agencies, and vocational and employment service professionals have taken a more active role in designing and implementing innovative programs and creative options to assist individuals with SCI in overcoming the transportation-related barriers that interfere with community mobility. This article provides:

1. an overview of the ADA as it pertains to transportation
2. options available to assist individuals with SCI to overcome barriers to community mobility
3. (3) strategies of facilitating regional systems change
4. (4) a list of national advocacy organizations and transportation resources