



# NEW YORK CITY TAXI & LIMOUSINE COMMISSION

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## TLC NEWS | PRESS RELEASES

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### TAXI AND LIMOUSINE COMMISSION ANNOUNCES "SYMPHONY TRANSPORTATION SERVICE" WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE LIVERY SERVICE NETWORK

The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) today announced a new wheelchair-accessible livery service that is a joint venture of Easter Seals and the Executive Transportation Group. The program, which will be known as Symphony Transportation Service, will begin full service in approximately one month.

The program is an outgrowth of Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani's Quality of Life Initiative, a component of which has been the aggressive search for ways that accessible transportation options may be encouraged and developed through public/private partnerships, and available at a competitive market price.

"Symphony Transportation Service is an excellent program that will bring professional transportation providers together to provide much-needed accessible service," said Mayor Giuliani. "I am pleased that we were able to bring all the parties together to make this concept a reality."

"This exciting program will bring a new depth of service to many thousands of people with temporary and permanent disabilities," said TLC Chairperson Diane McGrath-McKechnie. "And thanks to Easter Seals and the Executive Transportation Group, it has the support and expertise to grow and succeed, and be seen as an inspiration for other transportation providers to get involved in this rewarding program."

At its inception, Symphony Transportation Service will feature a total of five accessible minivans with a full range of passenger amenities, to be dispatched at passenger request throughout the five boroughs. The service will be available 24-hours a day, seven days a week by calling **1-800-253-1443**. All Symphony drivers will undergo specialized training, conducted by Easter Seals, in the service of people who use mobility aids.

While Symphony Transportation Service will operate the accessible minivans, other licensed livery providers may offer the service to their own clients through a simple referral system.

"We are truly thrilled to be able to bring this service to New York City," said Christine McMahon, Chief Executive Officer of Easter Seals New York. "By partnering with professional transportation providers like the Executive Transportation Group, we ensure our success with just the right mixture of business experience and caring. We hope that the example John Acierno and the Executive Transportation Group has set will inspire other transportation providers to make use of this service and help us to expand it to the levels we know it can reach. We are also grateful to the Giuliani Administration for having the foresight and vision to bring us all together to provide this valuable service."

McMahon also emphasized the potential for the program's expansion, stating that "as the demand for this service increases, so will our capacity to meet it."

"This is the right thing to do, and the right time to do it," said John Acierno, president of the Executive Transportation Group. "People with temporary and permanent disabilities deserve a professionally-managed, accessible transportation service, and thanks to the leadership of the Giuliani Administration and the resources of Easter Seals, we will be able to offer such a service at a fair market price."

The Executive Transportation Group, through its seven duly licensed affiliates, operates 1300 vehicles and is responsible for between 5,000 and 6,000 rides per day in the City of New York.

No stranger to the transportation industry itself, the Easter Seals Special Transit Service has been in operation for 20 years in southern New Hampshire, operating 75 vehicles, and providing 3500 trips per day for people with permanent and temporary disabilities. As a leader in the field of accessible transportation, Easter Seals will specially train the drivers employed by Symphony, and will eventually offer this specialized training to any licensed drivers who wish to receive it.

The first of the five Symphony Transportation Service minivans, a fully accessible Dodge Caravan, cost approximately \$42,000.