

Story of an individual that was served by Alternative Transportation:

An individual that has been hospitalized numerous times in the past and has a history of being challenging for law enforcement and hospital staff was one of the first individuals to be served by Steadfast Investigations & Security through the Alternative Transportation Pilot in November, 2015. He was transported to the Southwest Virginia Mental Health Institute (SWVMHI) in Marion, VA, and was calm and cooperative with Steadfast staff when they assumed custody of him and throughout the transport. Upon their arrival, SWVMHI staff were surprised that he had not been transported by law enforcement, as he was reported to be usually agitated and combative at admission. They remarked at how calm and cooperative he was and, later, reported that his demeanor continued throughout his time there and that his stay was shorter than previous visits. He has since utilized alternative transportation a few more times and has remarked at enjoying not being handcuffed or “treated like a criminal”, not riding in a police car, being able to listen to the radio, and appreciated how the drivers treated him through the process.

There have been other individuals that have remarked how relieved they were to not be handcuffed and not having to ride in a police car. Steadfast drivers have reported that there have been many individuals that they have transported several times and that they have developed a rapport with them that puts them at ease when assuming custody and driving them to a destination facility.

Through the regular meetings of the Alternative Transportation Quality Assurance Committee, Wytheville Police Chief Rick Arnold and Mount Rogers CSB Emergency Services staff have reported many comments from sheriffs, police chiefs, and law enforcement officers expressing their relief and appreciation that the program allows officers to remain focused on their primary duties.

The alternative transportation pilot has proven to be a valuable service that benefits both individuals in crisis through a recovery-oriented transportation experience that is less traumatizing, and law enforcement officers through enabling them to stay in their localities providing safety and security for their communities. Its discontinuation will be a significant loss for the region.