

“The Power of Networking”

I received a referral from a primary care doctor's office for an older woman in rural Western Maine. The client needed to come into the office to continue receiving her medications, and she was experiencing transportation challenges.

In my initial outreach to the client, I gained a clearer picture of her current situation through motivational interviewing. I discovered that the client had not been able to leave her home in 3 years, as she was wheelchair bound and did not have a safe way to exit her home. She knew that she had transportation services available to her, but she was unable to get outside. The client also had food insecurity and was now facing the possibility of losing her medications if she failed to make it physically to her primary doctor's office. The client did have some support from family, but it was limited to light housekeeping and prescription delivery.

After navigating local organizations that address social drivers of health, I reached out to a food pantry that specializes in food delivery to clients with transportation needs and with which I had previously worked. With my client's permission, I called the pantry to explain her needs, set up a weekly food delivery, and inquire about their suggestions on how to help the patient attend her appointments. The director helped me coordinate with some people in her network, and we were able to find a donated, brand-new steel ramp and a contractor willing to bring his team to install it free of charge.

Within just a couple of weeks, the ramp was delivered and installed for the client. I was then able to help set up an in-person appointment for her to see her doctor. She was so excited and incredibly grateful. By advocating for this client, I provided more than just the ramp that solved her current situation; I also significantly improved her quality of life. Now that she could leave her home safely, she began seeing her family more often, riding with them to pick up her prescriptions, going shopping, and attending church again.

Whitney's Story