

Operational Capability Showcase Plan

HIRTA ITS4US Deployment Project

www.its.dot.gov/ITS4US/index.htm

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16. Abstract Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency (HIRTA) is one of four awardees of the ITS4US Phase 2/3. The deployment site for this project is Dallas County, located in central Iowa west of Des Moines. This deployment will provide enhanced access to health care options for "all travelers" in Dallas County with a specific focus on underserved communities. The project will deliver a solution to provide transportation access to healthcare facilities located in Dallas County using HIRTA and its contractor vehicles. The solution will enable coordination among HIRTA and its partners (e.g., Dallas County Health Department, healthcare providers, Access2Care, funding entities). In Phase 1, the deployment concept for the Health Connector application was developed. In Phase 2, the project shifted from establishing a conceptual framework to design and testing of the system. Phase 2 consisted of system architecture and design, data management planning, procurement of a Mobility-On-Demand (MOD) vendor, middleware development, and systems testing. In Phase 3, Health Connector is being deployed and pilot operations are being evaluated. The Operational Capability Showcase Plan (OCSP) describes a plan to execute an Operational Capability Showcase in Phase 3. The showcase is intended to demonstrate the capabilities, intent, and value of the Health Connector deployment to the media. The OCSP identifies showcase activities and invited attendees.					
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1 Introduction

HIRTA, as part of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) ITS for Underserved Communities (ITS4US) Program, is required to plan and stage an Operational Capability Showcase (OCS) no later than the first 12 months from the beginning of Phase 3, which began on August 15, 2024. The OCS is intended to be a media and demonstration event to communicate the capabilities, intent and value of the deployment.

The HIRTA OCS is scheduled for July 17, 2025. This Operational Capability Showcase Plan (OCSP) outlines the details of this event.

1.1 Intended Audience

The intended audience for this OCSP includes HIRTA and its deployment partners, the USDOT and the USDOT representatives. The HIRTA deployment partners include Arcadis, Capture Marketing Solutions (CMS), Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), Dallas County Health Department (DCHD), Iowa State University (ISU), Flexlynqs, NaviLens, and Via.

1.2 Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the Operational Capability Showcase Plan (OCSP) is to document the execution strategy of the planned OCS event. This document was shared with partner and stakeholder organizations for feedback and consensus on the plan.

1.3 Plan Organization

The OCSP consists of the following sections:

- Project Overview (Section 2);
- Operational Capability Showcase (Section 3);
- Structure of the Operational Capability Showcase (Section 4);
- Resources Developed or Updated for the Operational Capability Showcase (Section 5);
- Engagement with Media (Section 6); and
- Post Operational Capability Showcase Activities (Section 7).

2 Project Overview

2.1 Background

This section provides a background on the HIRTA service area and a high-level conceptual overview of the system that will be deployed as part of this HIRTA ITS4US project.

2.1.1 Service Area

Health Connector is being deployed in Dallas County, Iowa. Dallas County comprises 18 municipalities, with the largest being West Des Moines (population 66,641), and the smallest being Bouton (population 119). Portions of Dallas County are located in the Des Moines – West Des Moines Metropolitan Statistical Area and the county features a mixture of suburban and rural densities.

Dallas County is one of the fastest growing counties in terms of population in the United States, with an increase of 36.4% since 2010 focused largely on the southeastern portion of the county in the western Des Moines suburbs. Dallas County was selected as a service area for this project since population growth, proximity to the Des Moines Metro, and unique public health program services available in Dallas County stood out as key determining factors.

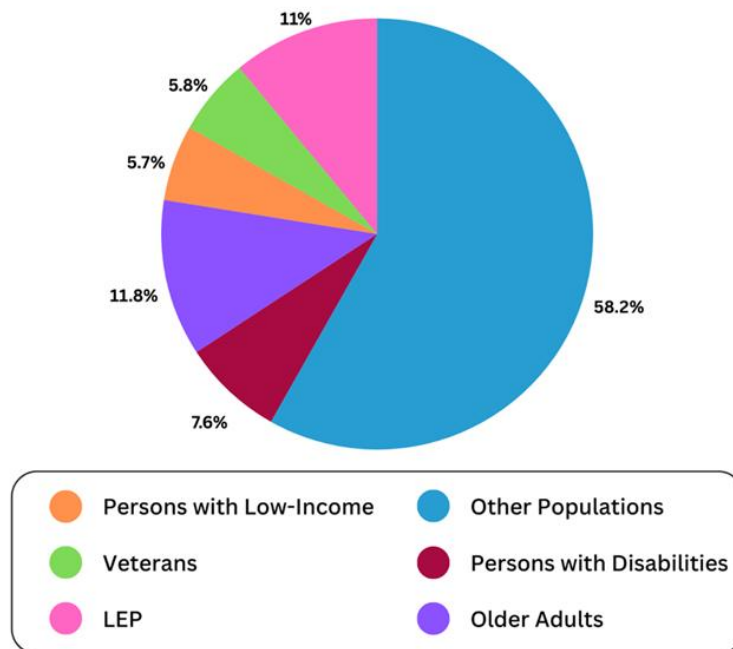


Figure 1. Dallas County, Iowa (Source: HIRTA)

In 2019, out of a total population of 93,000, the county was home to approximately 3,700 persons with disabilities, 11,200 older adults, 4,000 low-income individuals, 4,000 veterans, and 10,500 people speaking a language other than English (Figure 2 shows the distribution of underserved populations in Dallas County). Dallas County's older adult population grew 12% from 2000 to 2010 and is expected to double by 2030. The overall growth represents a shift from an agricultural to a suburban commuter community. Such challenges require HIRTA to utilize the available driver and vehicle resources in the most efficient manner. The change in population brings opportunity and access to health care services for many residents. Older adults make up a larger portion of rural populations (17%) than urban populations (13%), and rural residents with disabilities rely on public transit and take about 50% more public transit trips than those who do not have disabilities.

2.1.2 System Concept

Health Connector is an innovative solution that addresses various bottlenecks associated with transportation access to healthcare for HIRTA communities. Some of these challenges are key reasons behind missed appointments or the unacceptable level of preventive or as-needed healthcare in the HIRTA service area. The project has deployed emerging and innovative technologies and services through an inclusive customer-focused design process to engage stakeholders to address the related non-emergency medical transportation needs of underserved populations and their caregivers. The solution utilizes emerging technologies to enable the customer to schedule and manage medical appointments and transportation services through a smart device (e.g., smartphone, smartwatch) or equally effective alternate method. Further, the application provides context sensitive wayfinding and customer information to enhance end-to-end experience and guide customers through their trip. This

solution leverages preexisting demand response service management technologies at HIRTA and brings other advancements as well. Any additional capacity needs will be fulfilled by seamless integration with Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), taxis and other third-party service providers.

This deployment aims to enhance transportation access to healthcare options for all travelers in Dallas County with a specific focus on underserved communities, including persons with disabilities, low income, rural, older adults, veterans, and persons with limited English proficiency. In addition to addressing mobility needs, the deployment aims to recognize the net impact that access to health services has on patient healthcare outcomes as well as both the financial and health outcomes from the perspective of the healthcare community/Dallas County Health Department (DCHD).

Key capabilities of the technology solution are as follows:

- Enable the Traveler to use a smart device (e.g., smartphone, smartwatch) application or equally effective alternate methods to schedule and manage transportation services to medical appointments through the Health Connector Traveler app. This app will:
 - Provide Travelers options to choose from available providers.
 - Provide on-demand response if needed by Travelers.
 - Send Travelers an alert before arrival and again when the vehicle is approaching.
 - Keep Travelers informed on trip progress.
 - Provide directions (audible and visual) on where to meet the vehicle/driver. On arrival, drivers should have the ability to automatically confirm Traveler identity.
- Provide the Traveler with wayfinding solutions through indoor and outdoor navigation technologies to provide personal concierge-style travel from origin to destination through a wayfinding app. This will include:
 - Locating the healthcare facility entrance when dropped off by vehicles
 - Locating the desired room when inside the healthcare facility
 - Locating the correct vehicle when boarding
- Allow Travelers to use Health Connector for any contactless payment needs at any point for transportation-related payments.
- Enable Travelers or their caregivers to book and pay for another local trip as an additional leg along with the medical trip.
- Allow healthcare staff to book transportation for patients while medical appointments are made, using the mobility on demand operations center
- Track the status of linked transportation and healthcare appointments using a webpage to ensure that any changes to medical appointments include an accompanying change to transportation services.

Figure 2 provides an overview of the Health Connector concept.

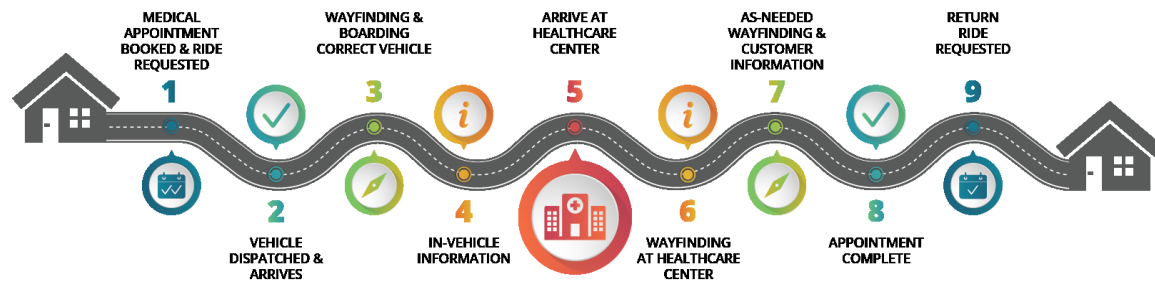


Figure 2. Typical Workflow for the Proposed Concept (Source: HIRTA team)

3 Operational Capability Showcase

3.1 Objective of the OCS

The Operational Capability Showcase (OCS) is intended to demonstrate the capabilities, intent and value of Health Connector to the media and other invited attendees. During the OCS, HIRTA will showcase the operation of technologies deployed under Health Connector with the goal of highlighting the added value of the project to HIRTA operations, riders and other related stakeholders. The showcase will include a series of presentations and demonstration activities that will be open to the public. The media should come away from the OCS with an understanding of the direct impact of the project in reducing bottlenecks related to transportation access to healthcare for HIRTA serviced communities.

3.2 Core Operational Capability Elements

The Operational Capability Showcase (OCS) will act as a demonstration of the use cases and performance of the key technology systems deployed through Health Connector. The core operational capability elements will be showcased through demonstrations highlighting the functionality of the following technology systems:

- **Health Connector Registration:** Consists of the webpage and call-in process that can be used to register for Health Connector rides.
- **MOD Platform TMS:** The Mobility-on-Demand (MOD) Platform Transportation Management System (TMS) is a system used by HIRTA for scheduling, dispatching, and managing Health Connector trips. A limited-access version of the platform is used by health navigators and other care facility employees to book and track trips for patients. This central management system also contains a back-end that collects and reports on performance and can assist with customer service operations.
- **MOD – EHR Middleware:** An open-source middleware product that allows data exchanged from the MOD Platform TMS and the Electronic Health Record (EHR) Software system into a centralized web application. The middleware uses bi-directional APIs provided by Via as part of the MOD Platform TMS and the EHR software provider, Veradigm, to implement the transmission of data. This solution is vendor agnostic and can be implemented with a variety of electronic health record or MOD softwares.
- **MOD – Medicaid Middleware:** An open-source middleware product that allows data exchange between the MOD Platform TMS and the State of Iowa Medicaid broker system. The Medicaid broker system uses Access2Care, which provides Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) services to Medicaid members, allowing Medicaid-funded trips through Health Connector for eligible Travelers. The middleware uses bi-directional APIs provided by Via in the MOD Platform TMS and the Medicaid broker through Access2Care to implement the transmission of data. The goal of this middleware solution is to automate the process of requesting and accepting Medicaid trips between the broker and HIRTA.

- **Traveler Application:** A component used by Travelers for many Health Connector features. The Traveler App allows Travelers to plan, book, and pay for trips. Trips can be requested on-demand or scheduled in advance.
- **Driver Application:** A component used by drivers utilizing the MOD vehicle subsystem. The driver app provides scheduling, navigation, and trip performance functionality to drivers.
- **Wayfinding Application:** A component used for providing outdoor wayfinding, indoor positioning, orientation, and navigation on request to Travelers. It may also assist with translation functionality. NaviLens was selected as the wayfinding subsystem application provider.
- **Infotainment Devices:** Refers to screens and media players on HIRTA vehicles which provide information relevant to a trip in progress, as well as provide a general overview of the destination facility and facility information.
- **Kiosk:** A standing tablet installed at healthcare facilities that allows for booking trips through HIRTA. The kiosk uses custom UI and interfaces with Health Connector middleware to make booking requests through the MOD platform.

3.3 Anticipated Outcomes of the OCS

The goal of the OCS is for all attendees to leave the showcase with an understanding of the impact of the project and how to engage with Health Connector. Upon completion of the OCS, attendees will be provided time for a question-and-answer session with the Health Connector team to learn more about any of the operational capability elements demonstrated during the showcase, performance of the system in its current state, goals of the project, or where to obtain more resources related to Health Connector. Highlights from the OCS will be presented during a webinar and article/journal/podcast that will be conducted and released following the event.

Specific anticipated outcomes from the showcase include:

- More people in the community and in Dallas County understanding what Health Connector is and how it could be of service to them
- Media coverage and resulting media content related to the event including articles, news clips, or radio segments
- Boosted enrollment of eligible Health Connector Riders for the service
- Demonstration of benefits to additional care facilities, transit providers and/or public agencies who may be interested in participating or replicating components of the health connector model

4 Structure of the Operational Capability Showcase

4.1 OCS Location Details

The OCS will be held at Dallas County Hospital (DCH), located at 610 10th Street in Perry, Iowa on July 17, 2025. The showcase will begin at 10:00 AM (CT) and last until 1:00 PM (CT).

4.1.1 Conference Room

Presentation portions of the showcase will take place in a conference room located within the DCH facility. The conference room will be set up to contain ample seating for attendees and is equipped with an audio/visual (AV) system that will ensure presentations and live screen demonstrations can be seen and heard by all audience members.

4.1.2 Hospital Entrance/Lobby

Demonstration elements related to the Wayfinding Application will be conducted at the entrance of DCH and within the lobby. These areas are equipped with NaviLens wayfinding technology. The DCH lobby will also be used as the location for demonstration elements that utilize the Kiosk.

Attendees will be able to view demonstrations of the Wayfinding application and kiosk from the entrance/lobby. HIRTA staff will have devices available to demonstrate the technology to attendees who do not have access to a smartphone or do not wish to download the application onto their personal device. HIRTA staff and staff from the Dallas County Health Department (DCHD) will be onsite to explain the technologies and answer any questions.



Figure 3. Dallas County Hospital lobby main registration area (left) and Kiosk (right) (Source: HIRTA team).

4.1.3 Field Demonstration Location

All demonstration elements requiring the use of a HIRTA vehicle will take place in the Dallas County Hospital (DCH) north parking lot and remain within the Health Connector service area. A HIRTA vehicle will be parked in the DCH parking lot for demonstrations of the on-board infotainment device, where attendees will be able to board the vehicle to view the demonstrations and take pictures of the system.

4.2 Demonstration Elements

4.2.1 Presentation Activity and Middleware Demonstrations

For the first hour of the Showcase, the Health Connector team will provide an overview and update of the project to the Showcase attendees. The intent of the presentation is to give a broad overview of the importance of Health Connector to members of HIRTA communities seeking healthcare related transportation, HIRTA's operational staff, as well as participating healthcare facilities. The presentation will be led by Brooke Ramsey and Emily Koss and will introduce the project team and status of the project. The presentation will outline an overview of the system design, including explanations of all subsystems and data flows. The various demonstration elements that will be presented throughout the Showcase will be introduced, along with an explanation of how each relates to the overall goal of the project.

Attendees will also be walked through a presentation on the Health Connector registration process, including registration online and via phone, as well as a live demonstration of how the Via Traveler App can be used to book rides. The HIRTA team will utilize a pre-registered Health Connector test rider for the purposes of demonstration. Questions related to the registration and trip booking process will be fielded during this time.

Also, a live demonstration of the MOD-EHR Middleware dashboard will be shown, to demonstrate to attendees the synchronization of booked medical appointments at DCH with transportation bookings through HIRTA's Health Connector. Patient/rider information required for this demonstration will be configured prior to the OCS. If requested, a live demonstration of the Via Operations Center (VOC) used by HIRTA for booking and managing rides, and the limited access VOC, used by Health Navigators and healthcare staff to assist patients in booking rides, will be shown.

The formal presentation portion of the Showcase will be concluded with a discussion of the value of the deployment to various stakeholders. This includes value for travelers, healthcare facilities, and HIRTA, amongst other stakeholders and will highlight anecdotal experiences as well as any relevant measures of performance collected thus far.

4.2.2 Wayfinding Demonstration

The project team will lead attendees in a demonstration of the Wayfinding application in the entranceway/lobby of DCH. Showcase attendees will be instructed on how to download the NaviLens (wayfinding) application and utilize the application to scan NaviLens codes located at the hospital entrance and at various locations throughout the lobby. Download instructions will be printed out and distributed to all attendees wishing to test the NaviLens application. A demonstration on how to use the application to scan the NaviLens codes and for translation services will be shown. During this demonstration, attendees will be able to test navigate through the hospital lobby and participate in a question-and-answer session regarding the wayfinding technology with the project team. A member of the HIRTA team will have a smartphone with the NaviLens application downloaded prior to the OCS to demonstrate to attendees who are not able or wish to download the application themselves.

4.2.3 Kiosk Demonstration

Following the demonstration of the Wayfinding Application, the project team will lead attendees in a demonstration of the Kiosk, located in the lobby of DCH. This demonstration will walk an existing Health Connector rider through the steps to book a ride using the Kiosk and request assistance from hospital staff if need be. The features of the Kiosk that will be highlighted include booking a ride, checking ride status, and calling HIRTA for ride booking assistance if needed. A test Health Connector rider will be pre-registered prior to the OCS to demonstrate the booking.

4.2.4 On-Board Vehicle Demonstration

Showcase attendees will be invited to board a HIRTA vehicle in the DCH parking lot for a demonstration of the Infotainment Device. The Infotainment Device will be pre-configured with sample information that a Health Connector rider might see during service. A HIRTA driver will be available to demonstrate the Driver Application to attendees.

4.3 Roles and Responsibilities

The Health Connector team will be responsible for organizing and executing the Operational Capability Showcase (OCS). The roles of the various team members are described below.

4.3.1 HIRTA

The HIRTA team will be responsible for leading the Showcase, including presentations and live demonstrations. The members of the HIRTA team that will be present at the Showcase include:

- Brooke Ramsey, Project Management Lead (PML)
- Danny Schnathorst, Outreach Lead
- HIRTA Driver to be determined

4.3.2 Capture Management Solutions

Capture Management Solutions is responsible for assisting in the creation of the media kit developed for the OCS, as well as the distribution and presentation of event related materials. The members of Capture Management Solutions that will be present at the Showcase include:

- Emily Koss, Outreach

4.3.3 Flexlynqs

Flexlynqs will be responsible for helping to address questions about the project lifecycle or technologies throughout the course of the OCS. The members of the Flexlynqs team that will be present at the Showcase include:

- Jenna Kubiak, O&M Lead

4.4 Agenda

The following agenda represents the run of show for the operational capability showcase.

Table 1. Health Connector OCS Agenda

#	Subject	Time	Description	Speaker
1	Welcome and Introduction	10:00 AM	Welcome and get people settled	Brooke Ramsey

#	Subject	Time	Description	Speaker
2	Team Presentation	10:30 AM -11:00 AM	Project overview and updates on status and performance to date. This will include program impacts and relevant data about participation.	Brooke Ramsey Emily Koss
3	Registration and Trip Booking Demonstration	11:00 AM – 11:15 AM	Presentation on registration process and live demonstration of trip booking sequence through the Via Traveler App.	Brooke Ramsey
4	Middleware Demonstrations	11:15 AM – 11:30 AM	Live demo of the EHR dashboard, overview of Medicaid capabilities	To be determined
5	Presentation Conclusion: Value & Q&A	11:30 AM – 12:00 PM	Discussion of anecdotal evidence and performance data related to value of the deployment, as well as time for final Q&A related to overall presentations	Brooke Ramsey

#	Subject	Time	Description	Speaker
5	Wayfinding & Kiosk Demonstration	12:15 PM – 1:00 PM	Instruction on the use of the NaviLens application and live demonstration of a ride booking using the Kiosk. Allocated time for attendees to test the Wayfinding application, interact with the Kiosk and ask questions.	To be determined
7	On-board vehicle demonstration	1:15 PM – 1:30 PM	Live demonstration of the on-board infotainment device	HIRTA Driver
8	Final Q&A/Media session	1:30 PM – 2:30 PM	Time for question and answers and additional photos/interviews from the media. This time can also be used by attendees for one-on-one questions with the HIRTA team.	Brooke Ramsey Emily Koss

4.5 Invited Non-Media Attendees

In addition to the speakers and members of the demonstration team described above, invitations will be sent and advertised to existing HIRTA riders and members of the communities located within HIRTA service areas. Health Connector stakeholders as identified in the Health Connector stakeholder registry will also be invited to attend. Media outlet contact information available through Capture Management Solutions and Dallas County Health Department will also be leveraged to ensure coverage of the event.

5 Resources Developed or Updated for the Operational Capability Showcase

5.1 Presentation

The final slides developed for the Health Connector Operational Capability Showcase (OCS) presentation will be provided in the OCS Summary (OCSS) deliverable. This is further described in Section 7 of this OCSP document.

5.2 Video(s)

The following Health Connector videos have been produced for advertisement and educational purposes. Links to these videos will be shared to all invitees through the OCS invitation and are available through the Health Connector Media Kit described in Section 5.4.

- Health Connector Information for Travelers
- Health Connector Information for Partners
- Overview of Health Connector
- Registration Walkthrough

5.3 Press Release

HIRTA will develop and provide a press release and updated project fact sheet to advertise the OCS event. The press release will summarize the project goals, use cases, technologies, and some of the observations and data collected at the time of release.

5.4 Media Kit

A media kit has been developed for Health Connector and is available on the [Health Connector webpage](#). The media kit contains an overview of the Health Connector, frequently asked questions, information on branding and graphics, flyers available for download for partners and travelers, as well as links to videos and other resources. This media kit will continue to be updated as new material is developed.

6 Engagement with Media

6.1 Invitations

HIRTA will be responsible for sending invitations to the OCS. The invitation will be sent electronically via email to the list of invited media described in Section 6.3.

6.2 Engagement Activities

HIRTA will send out invitations to the media outlets listed in Section 6.3 prior to the Showcase. These media outlets were selected due to their local presence and relevance to the Health Connector and HIRTA community. The invitation will include details of the event and highlight the anticipated impact Health Connector will have on the local community to draw attention to the event.

6.3 Invited Media

A contact list of anticipated media outlets that will be invited to the Showcase will be shared with USDOT via email prior to the OCS.

7 Post-Operational Capability Showcase Activities

7.1 OCS Summary

Following the Health Connector Operational Capability Showcase (OCS), the results and observations of the OCS will be recorded and documented in the OCS Summary (OCSS). The OCSS will include the following elements:

- Final documents and material from the OCS
- Copy of press release and fact sheet (if requested)
- List of OCS attendees
- Questions and answers, comments, and action items raised during the OCS
- List of any media articles produced after the OCS
- Copy of media invitations (if available)

The OCSS will detail lessons learned during the demonstrations to the general audience during the OCS and engagement processes. The Phase 3 Lessons Learned Logbook (LLL) will also be updated accordingly.

7.2 Continued Engagement

Resources developed for the Health Connector Operational Showcase (OCS) will be shared with the USDOT. Following the event, these resources will be made available to the public via the HIRTA's Health Connector webpage (<https://transithealthconnector.org/>). The final 508-compliant version of this Operational Capability Showcase Plan (OCSP) will be posted on the USDOT's ITS4US website (<https://www.its.dot.gov/its4us/>).

Appendix A. Acronyms

Table 2. List of Acronyms

Acronym	Description
DCH – Dallas County Hospital	Healthcare facility Partner.
DCHD – Dallas County Health Department	One of the project Partners who will lead integration with healthcare services.
DOT – Department of Transportation	The government department responsible for transportation. In this report this generally refers to either the State of Iowa's DOT or the United States DOT referred to as Iowa DOT and USDOT, respectively.
EHR – Electronic Healthcare Record	Refers to the healthcare information management system used by hospitals for patients' healthcare-related appointments, transactions and records management.
HIRTA – Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency	Rural, regional public transit agency in central Iowa. HIRTA will serve as Proposer/Applicant for the ITS4US project.
MOD Platform TMS – Mobility on-Demand Platform Transportation Management System	The system used by HIRTA provided by Via for booking, managing, and dispatching rides and shifts for the Health Connector.
NEMT – Non-emergency Medical Transportation	The provision of transportation to patients for medical appointments, lab visits, and other routine care.
OCS – Operational Capability Showcase	Media-focused demonstration event that is part of Task 3 of Phase 1.
OCSP – Operational Capability Showcase Plan	The plan is Task 3 Phase 3 and will describe the objectives and logistics around the Operational Capability Showcase event.

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