

TRANSPORT CONTACT



December
2002

Communication and information newsletter for paratransit service users



• SPECIAL •

Changing to Respond More Effectively

Preparations

The activities surrounding the replacement of Paratransit's current reservation system are going well, and the new **ACCÈS** system will be implemented at the beginning of summer 2003 as planned. **ACCÈS** will enable us to:

- reduce the waiting time to speak to an agent;
- reduce the delay to obtain confirmation of a regular trip;
- provide a greater number of trips;
- go from the present seven numbers to one single telephone number to access Paratransit;
- simplify the instructions for use of the services;
- make the ***Interactive Line*** even more user-friendly.

Users

User representatives are being kept informed of the progress of the project at regular intervals via the *Comité usagers-transporteur*. As well, a working group comprised of the individuals responsible at the STM and user representatives has been set up to take clients through this transition. The objective of the team is to distribute the necessary information and tools so that users can familiarize themselves with the details of **ACCÈS**. The *User Guide* will also be reviewed and simplified as part of this process.

Rest assured that every effort will be made to ensure that the transition to the new Paratransit **ACCÈS** system takes place as smoothly as possible.



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Special Reservations Procedure for the Holiday **Season**

The special reservations procedure implemented each year at this time will again become effective for all your transportation requests during the Holiday Season, **from December 25 to January 3, 2003, inclusively.**

Therefore, during that period, ***all trips assigned to a regular transportation schedule will be automatically cancelled.*** However, as per usual, you can still submit an advance reservation request for each trip you want to carry out during that time.

Procedure

From ***November 25 to December 15 inclusively,*** regardless of the reason for your trip, you will be allowed to submit an advance transportation request by calling 280-5445 (taxi) or 280-5353 (minibus), or by faxing your request at 280-6313.

All mail requests received ***no later than December 15*** at the following address will be honoured:

STM - Paratransit Service
Advance Reservations
3111 East Jarry Street
Montreal, Quebec
H1Z 2C2

Beginning December 16, requests for an occasional transport or for modifications will be processed according to standard procedure.

December 24, 2002

Since several regular activities are expected to end earlier than usual on December 24, any request to ***modify the return time of a regular trip scheduled for December 24*** will be processed according to the above-described procedure.

Confirmation

You can obtain confirmation of your transportation, two days in advance, by calling, preferably after 6 p.m., 280-5444 (taxi), or 280-5313 (minibus), or by using the ***Interactive Line*** at 280-7400 at any time.

Please remember that if you have to change either the departure point or destination of a regular trip, you must first cancel that trip and submit a new transportation request.

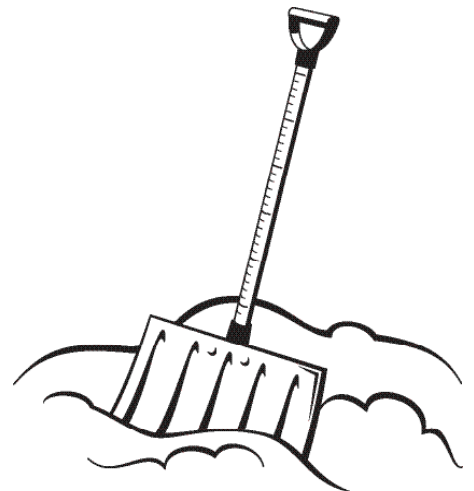
***Don't wait until the last minute.
Act soon !***

Keeping Accesses Clear of Snow

With winter knocking on our doors, we would like to remind you of how important it is to ensure that accesses to boarding and disembarking points are adequately cleared of all snow.

Built up by street and sidewalk snow removal operations, snow banks are a major stumbling block to boarding and disembarking manoeuvres. At this time of year, it becomes essential to check for accessibility before a paratransit vehicle arrives.

If accesses cannot be cleared of snow and conditions do not allow for boarding or disembarking, the trip should be cancelled as soon as possible before a vehicle is needlessly dispatched. Your help in this matter is greatly appreciated.



The Deactivation of a File

Various factors can lead us to deactivate a Paratransit user's file. Clients who do not use our services for at least two years will receive a letter advising them of the situation. We ask that these clients communicate with us if they wish their file to remain active. Clients who do not respond to our notice will have their file deactivated.

In addition, clients who have moved outside the STM's territory and those who have failed to advise us of a change of address will eventually have their files closed.

We invite you to read our article, *Provisional eligibility*, on page 11, which also deals with the closing of a file.



On-Call Return

A New Measure Responding to Your Need !

First of all, we should specify that this new measure applies only in the case of transportation for a medical appointment, wheelchair repairs or a court appearance.

Thus, in the future, no matter what method is used to send us the transportation request (telephone, fax or mail), the client will always have to **provide a desired return time**. This information will enable us to plan trips more effectively and, at the same time, offer better service. If the confirmed return time suits you, it is not necessary to call us back. You simply have to wait for your return transportation!

On the other hand, perhaps your appointment ends earlier than expected or something unforeseen occurs that prevents you from honouring the confirmed return time.

No problem!

You simply have to communicate with *Info-delay* as soon as possible and ask that the return time be rescheduled according to your needs.

Please call one of the following two numbers only!

Confirmation-minibus: 280-5313
Confirmation-taxi: 280-5444

To obtain an *Advance transportation request* form or a *Transportation request for a medical appointment* form, or for any further information, please contact Customer Service. You can also download these forms from our Internet site at the following address:

www.stm.info/English/t-adapte/a-guideta.htm

Note: The design of these forms requires that they be printed before being filled in. You **cannot** fill in the information on the screen and then print the form.



WHEELCHAIRS !

Reconciling Innovation And Safety !

As with a fair number of consumer goods, the manufacturers of motorized wheelchairs are constantly updating their products, putting new models on the market to respond to the diversified needs of their clients. You must be careful, however, as certain models are lacking the safety features required by paratransit.

In fact, certain motorized wheelchairs leave the plant without being equipped with the four anchor points necessary for secure attachment to the floor of a mini-bus or an accessible taxi. These vehicles are all equipped with



fastening systems designed for this purpose.

The situation becomes problematic for any client who wants to travel on adapted transport. For obvious

reasons of safety, the STM will refuse to transport a wheelchair that is not equipped with anchoring devices. In such a case, the client will have no choice but to use another wheelchair while modifications are made to the new model to ensure its compliance.

If you are planning to buy a new wheelchair or know someone who is perhaps considering such a purchase, think ahead ! Make sure that the wheelchair is equipped with the required anchors before it's delivered to you.

Think about it, you'll save yourself a lot of trouble !

Advance transportation request

One more reason to use this service!

Looking for work isn't always easy, especially in today's job market, so when the opportunity arises for an interview, no one can afford to miss out. The number of comments and requests made by paratransit users during the public consultation process last June were enough to have Customer service look into the matter.

As a result, you may now submit advance transportation requests for trips related to obtaining work, such as qualifying exams or interviews,

and your reservations will be handled according to the current procedure for advance requests.

The «*Advance transportation request*» form has already been modified to reflect this change. You may download it from the STM's website or obtain a copy by calling Paratransit Customer Service (refer to *Useful Numbers*, on page 10).

Demande de transport par anticipation
STM Service de transport adapté

Indiquez les seuls motifs de déplacement autorisés pour ce type de demande : (Cochez-en un)

Rendevous médicaux* Comparution en cour Présence à un spectacle
Correspondance avec : Aéroport Terminus d'autobus Gare de trains
Obtention d'un emploi (entrevue, etc.) Camp de jour (été seulement)
Réunion du conseil d'administration d'un organisme (Municipalité du c.a. seulement)
Nom de Forgasisme : _____

IDENTIFICATION DU CLIENT

Ambulant Fauteuil manuel Fauteuil motorisé Triporteur Chien guide
Marchette non pliante Présence d'accompagnateur Présence d'enfant(s)
Personne responsable : _____ Téléphone : _____

DÉTAILS DU DÉPLACEMENT

Date du déplacement : _____ / _____ / _____
Adresse d'origine : _____
Adresse de destination : _____
Heure d'arrivée : _____ Heure de retour : _____

POUR OBTENIR VOTRE CONFIRMATION

Vous devez téléphoner deux (2) jours avant la date de votre déplacement au numéro suivant : 280-5444 (taxis), 280-5313 (minibus), de préférence après 18h00.

☑ Acheminement de la demande par la poste : _____
Service de Transport adapté
Réservation par anticipation
3111, rue Jarry Est
Montréal (Québec)
H2Z 2C2
☑ Acheminement de la demande par télécopieur : _____
280-6313

✓ Nous devons avoir reçu la demande, par la poste ou par télécopieur, au moins 10 jours avant la date de votre déplacement.
✓ Une pièce justificative pourra être requise sur demande.
* Une nouvelle procédure existe pour ce type de réservation et un formulaire a été créé à cet effet.
Vous pouvez obtenir ce formulaire en téléphonant au 280-5341.

• **SPECIAL** •

Message from Mr. Marvin Rotrand

Chairman of the STM Customer Service Committee

It was with great interest that I participated, along with other members of the committee, in the public consultation held this past June 19. The purpose of this first public consultation on the subject of paratransit was to enable the STM's Board of Directors to better understand your concerns in order to help frame improvements to the paratransit service.

Among the some 100 people present, your individual accounts relating your real-life experiences brought a perspective that will enable us to go further, together, in the search for solutions. As well, the community groups did a remarkable job in coordinating their eloquent presentations. Everyone provided suggestions that were used in the drawing up of the action plan for paratransit.

This positive step has enabled us, among other things, to more accurately define communications problems, particularly for people with speech difficulties, delays in the delivery of service, the need for continuous and more specialized training for paratransit personnel, the problem of busy telephone lines, as well as the necessity for an evaluation of the needs and of the evolution of the clientele over the coming years, particularly considering the effects of an aging population.

This process has already enabled us to anticipate the resolution of several short and medium-term problems. The implementation of the ACCÈS system in June 2003 and the coming into effect of the new *Loi sur le taxi* are actions favouring improvement in the quality of customer service. However, despite these gains, I can assure you that we are more motivated than ever to continue our role in influencing the political decision-makers at other levels of government for commitments that meet your needs as users of paratransit in Montreal. It's a question of your quality of life.



*Standing, from left to right: Mr. Rotrand, Mrs. Paris and Mr. Olivier.
Sitting: Mrs. Bissonnet, Mrs. Turcotte and Mrs. Gauthier.*

The **Customer Service Committee** is composed of:

- Mr. Marvin Rotrand,**
*City of Montréal councillor
and Chairman of the Committee;*
- Mrs. Marie Turcotte,**
Paratransit Users' Representative;
- Mrs. Brenda Paris,**
Representative for the Users of the regular network;
- Mrs. Yvette Bissonnet,**
City of Montréal councillor;
- Mrs. Francine Gauthier,**
Interim Director General of the STM;
- Mr. Robert Olivier,**
*Interim Executive Director,
Operations Support and Planning for the STM
and serving as Committee Coordinator.*

The purpose of the Customer Service Committee is to propose recommendations to the STM's Board of Directors regarding:

- **Customer Service Orientation;**
- **Standard for service quality at the STM;**
- **Consistency and coordination of the STM's intervention with regard to customer service;**
- **Major service improvement projects;**
- **The fare structure;**
- **The STM's actions and results and distribution of the information;**
- **Policies for customer information;**
- **Strategies for increasing ridership.**

Highlights of our action plan

1. Improvement in communications with clients

A workgroup was specially created to jointly develop a plan of action to first improve communications with clients with language difficulties. The following people have agreed to participate:

- Mrs. Caroline Roussy (RUTA)
- Mr. Jean-Marie Grenier (RUTA)
- Mr. Christian Généreux

Their mandate consists of formulating recommendations on the organization of communications and on the training of clerks. Their recommendations are expected at the beginning of 2003.

2. The practice of reducing service during snowstorms

Another workgroup will review the practice of reducing service during snowstorms. Before the winter, client representatives, in collaboration with the Paratransit service, will review the present methods in order to identify areas of improvement during a required reduction in service. The following people will study this question:

- Mrs. Lise Séguin (representative, intellectual disabilities)
- Mrs. Caroline Roussy (RUTA)
- Mr. Jean-Marie Grenier (RUTA)
- Mr. Serge Poulin (representative, visual disabilities)

3. Improved access to the Call Centre

A definite improvement has been noted over the past two years in the availability of service at the Paratransit Call Centre. In addition, the implementation of the new ACCÈS computer system will facilitate the handling of transportation requests and will increase the optimum use of resources. The replacement of the RVI (interactive voice response) system is also planned as part of the replacement of the ACCÈS system.

4. New business approach to improve the quality of taxi services

The STM's Board of Directors gave us permission to negotiate by mutual agreement with the taxi service providers. This compromise presents undeniable advantages in terms of improving the quality of service. From now on, the Paratransit service will be able to take into account not only the lowest price offered by a taxi company but also the quality of its service. In addition, allocation by sector will be able to be more evenly balanced based on the actual capacity of the taxi associations.

We should mention that the new *Loi sur le taxi* and a revision of regulations also calls for the implementation of a training program approved by the ministère des Transports du Québec.

5. Evaluation of customer needs

In light of the evolution of our clientele, and particularly the phenomenon of the aging of the population, discussions with representatives from the ministère des Transports are continuing for the purpose of obtaining the necessary funding for a study.

6. Reservations for a job search now handled in advance

Requests for transportation for the purpose of obtaining a job are now handled according to the established *Advance request for transportation* procedure. The modification was first validated by the *Comité usagers/transporteur*, and Paratransit clerks were met in October on this subject before the change was implemented in November.

7. Financing

In order to meet the needs for 2002, the Board of Directors of the STM approved an additional amount of \$ 350,000 on October 9, pending receipt of the new financial framework from the ministère des Transports. The STM is presently evaluating the scope of decree 1106-2002 adopted by the Quebec Government on September 18, 2002, regarding the terms of the financial aid program for the paratransit service. Representations will be made at a later date.



Mr. Michel Lemay, Director of Paratransit Service, and Mrs. Denise Vaillancourt, Chief Operating Officer, Bus Network, discuss the action plan.

8. Accessibility to the regular bus network

The STM's regular bus network now includes 82 accessible lines. The STM is a pioneer in Quebec in offering this service, and it's thanks to the tenacity of the community agencies and the continuous work of STM employees that this achievement was possible. The STM is currently working to improve the reliability of the retractable ramps in its fleet of low-floor buses.

9. Accessibility to the metro network

A committee, consisting of representatives from the MTQ, community agencies, the OPHQ, the STM and the AMT, was constituted by the MTQ with a mandate to present recommendations to the Transport Minister in June 2002 regarding accessibility to the metro network for people in wheelchairs and, more specifically, whether or not to retrofit elevators in the existing network.



A big thank you to all the collaborators

On behalf of the Customer Service Committee, I take great pleasure in extending our warmest thanks to all those who came from near and far to participate in the STM's public consultation process. The goal of this first public consultation on paratransit was to enable the STM's Board of Directors to better understand your concerns and, in this regard, I can say, "mission accomplished".

Certainly, we are far from being finished from the point of view of the work to be done! However, you can be sure that everyone who made suggestions for improvements or who pointed out irritants contributed greatly to the advancement of the paratransit action plan.

Your perseverance, your ideas and your energy stimulate us to go further. Our thanks to the Comité usagers/transporteur, to ROPMM (Regroupement des organismes de promotion du Montréal métropolitain), to RUTA (Regroupement des usagers du transport adapté), to CRADI (Comité régional des associations pour la déficience intellectuelle) and to Ex æquo. Thank you also to the senior citizens' representatives, to the personnel at the Paratransit Centre, to the managers at the STM, as well as to all the participants who travelled here to listen or to provide us with their comments.

Mrs. Marie Turcotte

Paratransit Users' representative

STM Customer Service Committee

- Extracts from the papers and accounts from community groups and clients presented on June 19, 2002 •

"Paratransit will have to be sure that the financing meets the specific needs of the Montreal reality. We expect the STM's Board of Directors to play its role with the ministry in addition to the work that must be accomplished by the Paratransit service."

"When I telephone paratransit to reserve my transportation, I have great difficulty making myself understood. I'm not the only person with speech difficulties as, according to Statistics Canada, there are 18,500 of us in Quebec."

"I'd like to thank you for the opportunity you've given us to express ourselves on the difficulties that we're experiencing, and I hope this will help you to better understand what we go through and to find solutions."

The STM Increases The Budget For Paratransit

On October 9, the STM's Board of Directors approved an increase of \$ 350,000 in the 2002 budget for Paratransit. In a context of strong growth and insufficient financial resources, this decision enabled the Paratransit service team to ease the contingency measures that it had been applying since the beginning of the year to balance the budget.

Thanks to the decision of the Board of Directors, the 2002 budget increased from \$ 28.55 million to \$ 28.90 million. This increase should allow us to provide some 30,000 additional trips between now and the end of the year. Thus, total ridership for 2002 could reach 1,361,000, an increase of 6.4 % compared with 2001 when we provided a total of 1,279,000 trips.

Since the decision, we have been gradually reducing the time required to handle the numerous requests for regular transportation, and we are now in a position to respond more adequately to the need for occasional transportation.

In the short term, this decision enabled the Paratransit team to improve the service offer significantly.

This decision results from a recommendation by the STM's Customer Service Committee (SAC) and is in the same vein as the demands formulated on June 19 by user representatives, community bodies and certain partners in the context of a public consultation led by the committee, with which our management team was closely associated (see *Special report*).

Representations to the MTQ

We should remember that the Ministère des transports du Québec made an exception and handed out the 2002 budget for Paratransit at the very beginning of the year. Despite the quick action of the MTQ, the strong growth in the demand for services led the STM to forecast additional expenses of \$ 941,000. In order to free up funds and allocate the maximum resources to the service offer, the STM reviewed

its vehicle purchasing strategies as well as other expenses. As a result, on April 16, it submitted a new, modified request to the MTQ requesting authorization for additional expenses of only \$ 491,000, a full \$ 450,000 less than initially anticipated, a sum that would have potentially allowed for 1,393,000 trips in 2002.

The STM, community bodies and RUTA continued their representations to the MTQ. A meeting between the STM and the MTQ was planned for the end of October, as we wanted to obtain clarification on the regulations governing the new financing framework for Paratransit announced recently by the MTQ. We will return to this subject in a future issue.

If no additional contributions to the budget are received from the MTQ, financing of the STM's Paratransit service will be shared as follows: 22.5 % from the municipal government, 73.5 % from the provincial government and 4 % from users.



Safety of Users with Intellectual or Psychological Impairments

In order to ensure the safety of users with an intellectual disability or a psychological impairment, the STM requires that drivers accompany their passenger right up to the disembarking point and that they ensure someone responsible is there to take charge of the customer. By the same token, it is essential that a parent or other designated person be at the expected pickup or drop-off point upon arrival of the paratransit vehicle.

In spite of considerable improvements in the situation over the last year, sometimes drivers are still faced with a no-show by the expected person in charge, either

at home or elsewhere. When that happens, drivers must stay with their passenger and inform a Paratransit supervisor of the situation. Depending on circumstances, supervisors will take appropriate steps, mindful of potential delays caused to other paratransit users.

Such situations are unpleasant and stress-inducing for both customers and drivers. Allow us this opportunity to remind all those who take charge of paratransit users or provide assistance at the pick-up or drop-off point that their collaboration is crucial to a safe and efficient service.

Cancellation of Regular Trips

Sometimes users on a regular schedule have to cancel trips. However, some clients only make sporadic use of their regular schedule. It must be understood that maintaining a regular schedule in such circumstances is no longer justified. Rather, these clients should submit requests for occasional transportation.

During 2002, we continued our awareness campaign on this subject among hundreds of clients, reminding them of the negative effects of under-utilization of a regular schedule. The results have been encouraging, and several agreed to change their habits. Hundreds of weekly trips have thus

been recovered, enabling a greater number of clients to have a seat and attend their weekly activities. Without a doubt, everyone gains by being more disciplined.

It's simple: a regular schedule must be used regularly. Otherwise... it's cancelled!



Useful Numbers to Remember

Requests for regular or occasional transportation, or for trip modifications:

280-5353 (minibus)
280-5445 (taxi)

Cancellation:

280-6325

Info-delay, on-call return and confirmation:

280-5313 (minibus)
280-5444 (taxi)

Requests for advance reservations, medical appointments, a regular transportation schedule or for group transportation:

280-6313 (Fax)

Interactive Line:

280-7400

Telescriptor (TTY):

280-5308

Customer Service:

280-5341

Web Site:

www.stm.info

E-Mail:

transport.adapte@stm.info

Mailing Address:

**3111 East Jarry Street
Montreal, Quebec H1Z 2C2**

PROVISIONAL ELIGIBILITY

Don't forget to follow up on your evaluation, or you could lose your transportation !

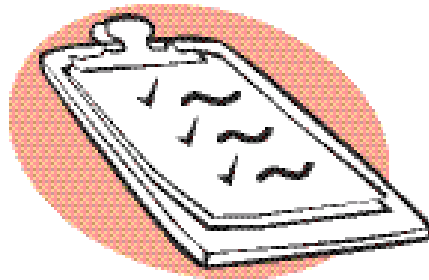
During the Paratransit admission process, several new clients are assigned provisional eligibility. When the provisional period ends, it is vital that you return any evaluation requested by the Admission Committee on time in order to avoid having your file automatically deactivated.

Clients with provisional admission are advised by mail of the committee's decision and of the follow-up necessary to have their file reviewed. Some time before the end of the provisional eligibility period, a number of clients receive a follow-up letter reminding them of how the transportation service works and of the documents they must send to the Admission Committee. Despite this reminder, some clients one day find themselves without transportation

because they have not fulfilled the requirements of the Admission Committee.

Avoid a similar unpleasant situation! The moment the committee's decision arrives, make sure that the person responsible for the user communicates with a health and social services professional so that the latter can help the client through the procedures and produce the required evaluation or the new request for admission.

Avoid unpleasant surprises by acting early !



Cancelling as soon as you can, it's important !

From the moment you are sure you won't need a transportation that has already been confirmed, we urge you to cancel it. Cancellations are made by dialing 280-6313 or through the **Interactive Line** at 280-7400.

The same goes for any trip in a regular transportation schedule. A regular schedule that is used only on occasion should always be cancelled, and the same applies if you need to change your departure point or destination. You must first cancel the old transportation schedule and submit a request for a new one.

Your cooperation in this matter means that more seats will become available for others. Perhaps for you some day !

Interactive Line

How to cancel your transport?

A confirmed transportation can easily be cancelled through the **Interactive Line**. First dial 280-7400, then press 1 to access the *Trip management module*. After entering your paratransit file number and authenticating your name, compose your four-digit access code, consisting of your date and month of birth. If your birthday was May 8, your code would be 0805.

You must then select option 21 (*Cancellation of trips scheduled for*

today, tomorrow or the day after tomorrow), and follow the instructions provided by the system to cancel each trip one by one. **Don't forget to cancel both going and return trips**, since they are considered two separate trips.

Another way of cancelling a trip is to call 280-6325 where an agent will cancel the trip for you.

Bad Weather Service Interruptions or Reduction

During a snow or ice storm, or for any other major reason, the STM may reduce Paratransit service, even shut it down for a while. Should such a case occur, AM and FM radio stations are notified of the situation. So stay tuned !

Help Us Help You !

Request for transportation sent by fax

Did you know that you can send us certain types of transportation requests by fax at 280-6313 ?

Types of transportation requests accepted by fax:

- Request for regular transportation (regular schedule)
- Request for transportation for a medical appointment
- Advance request for transportation
- Request for group transportation

A specific form has been created for each type of request in order to facilitate the sending and handling of these particular requests. Help us help you by proceeding as follows:

- Always use an STM form;
- Use the form specifically designed for the type of transportation request desired;
- Make sure that the information is legible.

Do not send your document more than once ! Repeated faxing of requests creates needless confusion. Your fax machine can probably confirm the receipt of your fax. Take advantage of it !

Request for regular transportation

Parents and attendants: The situation can quickly become confusing when more than one person submits transportation requests for the same paratransit user. To avoid such confusion, please call either 280-5444 or 280-5313 (minibus) **before faxing in your request and check** on the status of the client's requests.

Avoid cancelling your trips in advance for certain days before even receiving the confirmation of your schedule. It will be easier to cancel whatever day you wish after receiving confirmation!

Request for transportation for a medical appointment

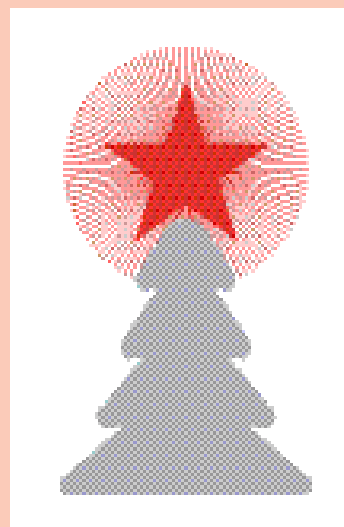
Indicate the name of the clinic.

To obtain forms or for help in filling them in, call Customer Service at **280-5341**.

You can also request your forms by email at the following address:
transport.adapte@stm.info.

Season's Greetings

*On behalf of all STM
Paratransit Service
employees and Admission
Committee members,
we wish you
a very Merry Christmas.
May the New Year bring
health and prosperity to
you, your families
and friends.*



STM

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Transport Contact

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