

HF3445 WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Testimony concerning HF3445

Study on Disability Services Accessibility

I am the parent of an adult son with multiple disabilities, and I am writing in favor of this urgently needed legislation. Professionally, I was a service coordinator for children with disabilities until I had to resign to coordinate (and provide the majority of) David's supports in his home and community. I have continued to assist and advocate for other families as a volunteer because I understand the complex service systems and barriers to access.

Although I am considered an expert in service navigation, David has had difficulty and delays obtaining additional services and supports needed because of changes to his health in the past year. Specific examples include:

- because his waiver stopped when he was hospitalized for a month, he experienced a 2-month delay in ordering the equipment he needs at home for transfers and bathing (two people had to lift and carry him for every transfer, and he had to lie on shower floor to be bathed);
- we were unable to order wound care supplies for home use until he was actually home from the hospital; since he required specialty products unavailable from a pharmacy, we had to pay hundreds of dollars out of pocket so the products would arrive by the time he came home;
- the skilled nursing visits that were ordered for wound care are only partially covered by his primary insurance; we were told to move funding from his direct support to cover the nursing; actually, the need for nursing services should have triggered a new MN Choices evaluation to address the significant change in need, resulting in an increased waiver budget.

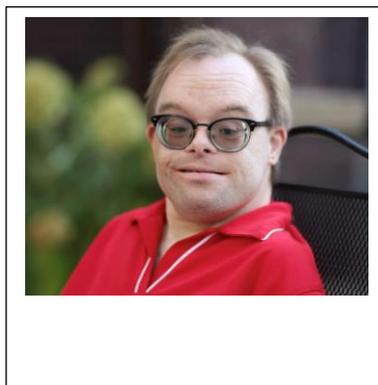
In previous years, despite my privileges of experience, education, system expertise, social capital, and white middle class background, we have had to file multiple appeals for goods or services denied to David over the years. Reasons given varied from not enough documentation, too much documentation (case manager missed the “magic words” needed and I had to cite page, paragraph and sentence where they were written), case manager opinion of what is “reasonable” (individual bias), new case manager not knowing what was allowed, county guidelines stricter than state, no knowledge of previous appeal decisions or service approvals. It's worth noting that several of the appeal hearings were cancelled because the county agreed to provide the services after we filed, and we won all appeals that went to hearings—**because I am good at keeping records, filling out forms, documenting needs, and explaining why the requested items meet the needs and are allowable under waiver guidelines.** A visit to any online forum or Facebook group for individuals with disabilities and their family members demonstrates the inconsistencies in accessing services depending on county, language or culture, individual case managers or their supervisors, companies providing services, etc. Consumers should not have to be experts on the systems they are trying to access, be able to use the scripts required or DHS jargon, or personally know an advocate who will assist them.

I believe the proposed legislation will result in a more equitable service system that is easier to access. The proposed accessibility study will be the first step towards identifying specific barriers to services, underserved populations, and discrepancies between counties.

Please support HF3445.

Sincerely,

Jean Bender, David's Mom
1150 Fairmount Avenue
Saint Paul, MN



Proactive government

"Estonia plans a big push towards automated, proactive public services. This means that the government preemptively steps in to help or assist when the citizen needs it, instead of when they request for it."



Ott Velsberg, The Chief Data Officer of Estonia

The implementation of digital services to increase public sector efficiency started in Estonia more than twenty years ago. Today, a shift in the service delivery approach provides the basis for a truly seamless digital state. The Estonian government approved a plan for proactive services in 2018 already. Proactive services are the next evolutionary step following the Estonian once-only principle.

As citizens have no need to be aware of government complexity and do not wish to fill multiple complex paper or web forms, government services as a whole, or partly, need to become more seamless, reusable, and proactive. Once one institution inside the state has the information, other institutions would not need to ask this from the citizen twice. People must be able to get things done in one interaction, intervening only if prompted by the government, if at all. Proactivity in Estonian state policies adds another layer to the services and ties multiple government processes into a seamless singularly activated service. This means that the state does not have to wait for the citizen to ask for grants, assistance, advice. Instead, the government can proactively offer citizens unique opportunities, as all the information is available, and citizens have agreed to the use of this information for those purposes.

List of proactive services

LIVE RIGHT NOW:

- **Childbirth** - Parents will no longer have to apply for family benefits after the Social Insurance Board completed its automatic proactive service in 2019. As soon as a child has been born and registered in the population register and given a name, a population entry activates all of the following services. Also, the Social Security Agency will send an email to the parents to receive family benefits.
- **Starting a business** - This service is already available on the entrepreneur portal as an event logic-based solution. The service combines the company registration process, applying for the VAT nr and registration of employees.
- **Retirement** - At least six months before retiring, a citizen will receive an email from the government about this life event. The offer will describe various paths regarding their pensions' savings and present the total amount received from the state as an old-age pension. On that life-event page, a person could either postpone the pension (continue working) or apply for an early leave. The citizen will go through the planning within a single interface, but in the back-end, at least four institutions are offering more than six different services during that process.

IN PROGRESS:

- **Change of residence or building a new property** - These life-events usually require plenty of paperwork, especially building, so handling them in a single gateway saves time. Being up to date in real-time how far the administrative process is should also help keep some nerves.
- **Driving licence, buying a car** - This service gathers the following events into a once-only step for a citizen: application for a driver's licence, replacing the licence, health-related documentation needed for applying, or replacing the licence, vehicle ownership, and the change of ownership.
- **Military service** - Military service is mandatory for most men in Estonia. Therefore, approximately 3000 citizens per year will need to go through this process. As soon as a person is being listed, an invitation will be sent to a medical examination, offering preferences regarding the service type
- **AI in healthcare** - algorithms can help predict when people need to have medical checkups based on their healthcare records and pre-existing conditions. Diabete sufferers, for instance, may be called into doctors' office more frequently in a year than healthy people.

AI in Public Sector

In May 2019, an expert group led by Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications (MKM) and Government Office presented proposals on advancing the take-up of artificial intelligence (AI) in Estonia aka for Estonia's national AI strategy.

The strategy is a sum of actions that Estonian government will take to advance the take-up of AI in both private and public sector, to increase the relevant skills and research and development (R&D) base as well as to develop the legal environment. According to the earlier strategy, the country invested around 10M euros into governmental AI solutions and today more than 80 AI projects have been performed.

Current Kratt Strategy for 2022-2022 aims to increase the use of AI in Estonia and thereby increase the user-friendliness and accessibility of e-services and the efficiency of the state by contributing at least 20M throughout 2022-2023.

BÜROKRATT

→ **A vision** - how public services should digitally work in the age of artificial intelligence (AI).

For more information:

e-estonia.com

- **AI-based interface** - opportunity for people to use public direct and informational services by voice-based interaction with AI-based virtual assistants.
- **Interoperable network of AI applications** - (agents, bots, assistants), which would work from the user perspective as a single, united channel for accessing public direct and informational services.

Facts and figures

- Estonia has implemented more than 80 AI use-cases in government by August 2022.
- The country approved its second national AI strategy aka Kratt strategy for 2022-2023 with the aim to invest 20M euros.
- In Estonian mythology, a Kratt is a magical creature. Essentially, Kratt was a servant built from hay or old household items. Therefore, the Estonian government uses this character as a metaphor for AI and its complexities.

Chair Fischer and Committee Members,

I'm Jonathan Murray, co-chair of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the Minnesota Consortium of Citizens with Disabilities.

I'm here as a client of disability service providers, person with disabilities who is reliant on waiver services to supplement the capacity lost by my disability and expert in designing for disabled for disabled populations. I'm in support of this bill.

Through the CDCS system, I am being asked to run a small business and coordinate my care. But by statute, four layers of bureaucracy are entitled to interfere and deny the items I budget for. In the meantime, I am the person with the least access to my files, reporting, and accounting information.

Consumer-Directed Supports and its successor, Community First Services and Supports exist with the specific goal of creating supports that work *with* people with disabilities, not against us—but this is not being put into practice.

An example from my own case is the 192+ unpaid hours, \$1016 in unpaid reimbursable expenses I submitted receipts for, the more than \$18,000 in vocational time that could have been spent elsewhere, and more than four to one overhead to service delivery ratio that my case would have had if I didn't know DHS division lead willing to lean in and ask "What seems to be the problem here?"ⁱ

I am treated like the product, not the person being expected to direct my care and obligated to be the CEO of a small healthcare business.

A *Health care business* for which the HIPAA compliant communication I am obligated to have was denied in my budget, by Ramsey County, then again by the administrative law judge on appeal.

All of whom are **mandated reporters** legally obligated to report when clients rights were being abused.

This kind of treatment is not unique in my case, and my case is not unique within this system. Without coordinated care systems that center around the disabled person's needs, the county, DHS, and providers are farming the income streams generated by caring for disabled people without involving them in their care.

And they are all running through state and federal funding streams to do their jobs, which means they are beholden to their constituents to use that money properly.

By supporting this bill and centering the needs of disabled people, you will save an incalculable amount of time and money. As just one example, consider the scripts built by Veronica Cary and the MN Script Team in 2014. Cary built the equivalent of autocorrect for financial case management that had been deployed statewide.ⁱⁱ It caught errors in caseworkers' data entry and greatly reduced the amount of time needed to process paperwork.

Anoka County Board of Commissioners Chair Rhonda Sivarajah, who also chairs the county's Human Services Committee, said that it "sav[ed] hundreds of hours of worktime each month, reduc[ed] errors, and promot[ed] standardization within the DHS."ⁱⁱⁱ The project continues to save time in Hennepin County and a couple of other county partners.^{iv}

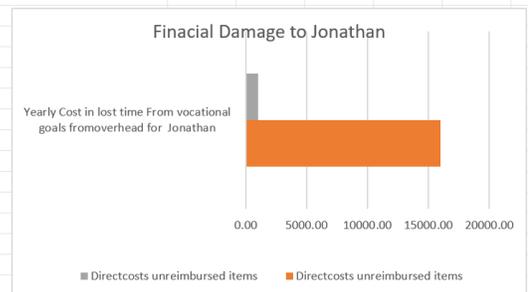
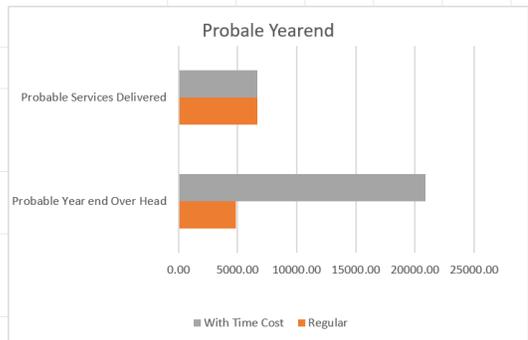
However, MNDHS and MNIT didn't provide funding to make it sustainable and closed the project quickly when Cary left the agency, just before as the number of applications was massively increasing when the online application process changed.

Refunding this effort would be a quick and easy investment to build collaborative teams, help improve efficiency for the disability community, and save a huge amount of money. This is just one of many options that you'll find using this improvement study.

Engaging a team of disabled people like myself who study workflow is the minimum that you can do to stop the fraud, waste, and abuse going on.

Jonathan Murray
Roseville, MN

	Regular	With Time Cost
Current Admin Overhead YTD as of 2023 10 04	3657.52	18441.52
Current services delivered YTD as of 2023 10 04	3818.89	3818.89
Current Ratio	0.96	4.83
	Regular	With Time Cost
Probable Year end Over Head	4857.52	20873.52
Probable Services Delivered	6690.89	6690.89
Probable year end Ratio	0.73	3.12
	Roundtable Average Rate	
Jonathan's minimum consulting rate for Paid HHS system work	55.00	55.81
Jonathan's cript time ratio	0.40	0.40
Estimated number of hours Jonathan has spent on Waiver overhead to date	192.00	192.00
Current Cost in lost time From vocational goals for Jonathan	14784.00	15002.75
Yearly Cost in lost time From vocational goals fromoverhead for Jonathan	16016.00	3.00
Directcosts unreimbursed items	1016.22	1016.22



<https://1drv.ms/x/s!AnB3uVIC0bGL8mdQWqP1wIB-x2dZ?e=VdhNST>

ii An archive of the project page, as the public project page was taken down:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20170816190849/https://github.com/mn-script-team>

iii https://www.hometownsource.com/sun_focus/news/local/anoka-county-receives-state-recognition-for-two-programs/article_37f942a3-0b85-5fcc-9916-51de8d18f904.html

iv <https://github.com/Hennepin-County/MAXIS-scripts>