



Oregon Support Services Association (OSSA) Testimony
Katie Rose, Executive Director, OSSA
Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood
Invited Testimony on eXPRS History
February 10, 2015, 3:00 pm, HR B

My name is Katie Rose and I am the Executive Director of the Oregon Support Services Association, representing Oregon's 13, primarily non-profit, Support Services Brokerages. The Brokerages were established as part of the Staley Lawsuit settlement in 2000 to facilitate services to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in their own or in their family homes. Our services are based on a strong philosophy of self determination where the individual and, in some instances, the family, direct their services. We currently support over 7,000 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who employ over 8,000 Personal Support Workers.

We are here today to talk about the Express Payment and Reporting System (eXPRS). eXPRS is a data system built by Oregon, which is now becoming the centralized location for service authorization and provider payment. The Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS) is transitioning from having Brokerages and counties manage these authorizations and payments at their localities to centralizing them in one database owned by the state.

The business of I/DD services here in Oregon has long needed to enter the modern age. Old systems waste time, money, and impede our ability to best serve Oregonians. No one you hear from today will be asking to go backwards. The concerns we bring to you today center on the way that this modernization has developed, the system that has been crafted, and the implementation that is currently wreaking havoc in the field.

ODDS and the Support Service Brokerages began conversations about moving services into the eXPRS system as many as 10 years ago. Our message has been consistent: we support

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creating a centralized data system that supports and enhances the work of serving Oregonians with I/DD. We cannot support, and have actively worked against, creating a system that is inefficient, duplicative, overly restrictive, and which directs rather than supports the work of operations. This appears to be what we are implementing today. Services to Oregonians are being changed in order to meet the needs of eXPRS, rather than eXPRS being changed in order to meet the needs of Oregonians.

History

- The vast majority of our conversations with ODDS around eXPRS occurred prior to Don Erickson and Lilia Teninty's installation, and we're aware that this is a difficult inheritance for both of them.
- Repeated offers were made to partner with ODDS to create a high-quality system; we've developed quality assurance mechanisms and processes over our now 14 years of business that could have been instructive.
- Instead, the field has been shut out of development for months and years a time, only to be invited back and told that it's "too late" to fix glaring problems within the built system. Basic requests, such as a clear mechanism for uploading data, were denied.
- Choices made without proper stakeholder involvement in designing eXPRS are now driving the services that are and are not available to Oregonians, despite rules and regulations to the contrary.

Structural Problems

- Due to the design of the system, we have lost flexibility to move resources to meet the real-life needs of Oregonians in service. For example, services, which were previously allocated on an annual basis, are now restricted to month-by-month or week-by-week

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allocation. People's needs are not the same in winter as in summer, in sickness as in times of health, in February (28 days) as in March (31 days).

- Data and coding are built in eXPRS as a person seeking services moves through the system; each new layer can only be added if the previous data was entered correctly. Many people from many different agencies and office locations have to get everything just right in order for service providers to be paid, and human error can and does hold things up at every step of the way.
- We are not currently allowed to upload data into eXPRS--to populate the Plan Of Care, which are the service authorizations for each of the 7,000+ customers in Oregon, we are hand-keying information from a separate document that was already created and approved by the customer (repetitive), hand entering timecards, keying in thousands of data points for existing providers, etc.
- When something does go wrong, generic error messages do not provide sufficient information as to where the problem lies. Personal Agent/Case Managers encounter a problem and then have to back out of the system and make a series of phone calls or emails in order to identify and then fix the problem, before re-entering.
- Under a variety of circumstances, such as when a customer's support needs change or they move from one county to another, the system requires service providers or Personal Agent/Case Managers to void out hundreds of authorized payments, only to re-enter them once the service is adjusted(all by hand). Services and payment to providers are suspended until this administrative work is completed.
- Though services are authorized for up to a year at a time, the system is currently designed to stop all services at the biennial break, requiring hundreds of thousands of data points to be re-entered system-wide (CDDPs enter their service authorizations, then Brokerages enter theirs, then Plan Of Care must be re-created, then provider

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qualification extended, etc.) EXAMPLE: A customer's plan is authorized from 2/1/15 - 1/31/16; what must be keyed into eXPRS is one plan for 2/1/15 - 6/30/15, and then later another plan running from 7/1/15 - 1/31/16.

- eXPRS will require near-daily action from case managers, Brokerage staff, CDDP staff, and providers to extend authorizations, see if problems have been fixed, check to see if information has been updated further up the line, etc. It's not designed to notify you that action is needed, we are having to develop data management systems outside of eXPRS in order to track and cue our staff to do all of the things that need to be done to maintain eXPRS.
- You're hearing today from professional agency staff who are unable to get paid through eXPRS. There are also over 8,000 Personal Support Workers (PSWs) statewide that will need to seek payment through the system. PSWs are mostly family members (parents, grandparents, siblings) of people receiving services. These workers were hired because of their skill in caring for an individual, not because they have the ability to enter hours in a complex database. Many do not have access to a computer or internet, or the ability to successfully enter dozens of lines of time-in/time-out data with accuracy. Because of this, they will always required a paid support to go into eXPRS and hand-key their time information on their behalf.

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