

Madame Chair, members of the Senate Health Care Committee, my name is David King and I serve as the Chief Executive Officer of the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on Senate Bill 700 and the positive impact it will have on all Oregonians affected by brain injury. When I use the phrase "all Oregonians affected by brain injury," I want you to picture a pebble being dropped into water and for you to imagine the concentric circles that emanate from the impact of that pebble hitting the water. The first circle you imagine is the individual experiencing the brain injury. The circles moving away from the point of impact represent the family, friends, school, work and other vital aspects of an individual's life. Life following a brain injury is often overwhelming not only for the person with the disability but also for the people supporting them. With your support, this bill will establish some incredible outcomes for all Oregonians affected by brain injury.

Senate Bill 700 seeks to replicate a program often referred to as Brain Injury Resource Facilitation that all but eleven states have already adopted. Simply put, Brain Injury Resource Facilitation is a confidential service that connects individuals and those caring for them with the services, resources and answers they need to navigate life after a brain injury. Most individuals leaving the hospital are not aware of the deficits and limitations caused by their injury.

Typical consequences of brain injury fall into three categories: cognitive, emotional/behavioral and physical. Cognitive consequences refer to things like memory loss, trouble concentrating, and difficulty with problem solving, learning new information, planning, reasoning or judgement. Emotional or behavioral consequences of brain injury refer to depression, anxiety, impulsivity, aggression and thoughts of suicide. The physical consequences of brain injury are typically what we hear the most about. These include chronic fatigue, chronic headaches and migraines, dizziness and ringing of the ears, problems with balance or motor skills, sensitivity to light and noise, sensory losses like taste or smell and seizures.

The consequences listed are all very difficult to identify simply by seeing or interacting with someone. This invisibility is one of the greatest challenges and frustrations that individuals living with brain injury face. Imagine having to deal with many of those symptoms and yet being told by family members, loved ones, friends, teachers or your employer that you look fine. Of course, what goes hand in hand with a statement like "you look fine," is also the expectation that you continue to behave, respond and perform just as you always have.

This scenario is very typical for individuals that have a brain injury. It is easy to imagine just how frustrating this experience must be. Especially when you consider that these individuals are experiencing this frustration over and over again. Unfortunately, all of this typically results in marital stress, the breakdown of other close family relationships and friendships and a loss of employment/income which further adds to the downward spiral.

The proactive approach of Brain Injury Resource Facilitation through regularly scheduled phone calls allows time for trust and rapport to be built with each individual when they are most vulnerable. Regular contact with a Brain Injury Resource Facilitator helps to minimize the amount of frustration and

disruption experienced by individuals with a brain injury by acknowledging and normalizing what they are feeling and connecting them to the supports and resources they need exactly when they need them.

Getting individuals to the right service at the right time has produced some pretty impressive results in Minnesota. Typical outcomes for Brain Injury Resource Facilitation participants during that first year of service include:

- Individuals self-identifying a successful resolution of physical barriers increased from 2% to 14.5%.
- Individuals self-identifying a successful resolution of vocational barriers increased from .5% to 4.5%.
- Individuals self-identifying a successful resolution of educational barriers increased from .5% to 2%.
- Individuals self-identifying a successful resolution of communication barriers increased from 1.5% to 6.5%.
- Individuals self-identifying a successful resolution of financial barriers increased from 2.5% to 9%.
- Individuals self-identifying a successful resolution of transportation barriers increased from 5% to 7.5%.

A variety of short success stories have been added to the end of this document to give a better idea of just how these results were achieved.

When Dave Kracke and his team first began talking to Minnesota about their interest in starting this model in Oregon, I was honestly surprised. I know Oregon as a state so well-known and respected for its research and policies pertaining to brain injury. It never occurred to me that Oregon would not already have something like Brain Injury Resource Facilitation in place. Please understand that I say this not to chastise but rather to encourage you to further strengthen the reputation Oregon currently holds in the national brain injury community.

Dave Kracke and his colleagues at the University of Oregon turned to the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance for assistance in developing this concept because Brain Injury Resource Facilitation was started in Minnesota and Minnesota has become the gold standard for this service. If this bill is passed, you have my commitment that as Oregon is developing this program, my organization and I stand ready to assist with our time, talent and resources to ensure the launch and success of this program in Oregon.

In closing, I ask for your wholehearted consideration of the passing of Senate Bill 700 and the creation of a robust Brain Injury Resource Facilitation program in Oregon. Thank you for your time.

Brain Injury Resource Facilitation Success Stories

1- A Brain Injury Resource Facilitator has been working with a client and his wife. As a result of his brain injury, the client had lost his driving privileges. When the client's rehabilitation was completed the rehabilitation team provided a referral to one driving program to be evaluated to regain his license. This particular program was too expensive. The Brain Injury Resource Facilitator provided 3 options of other programs and the couple chose one that was more affordable and he is back to driving now.

2- A Brain Injury Resource Facilitator spoke to a mom whose son had a brain injury due to assault and struggling with behaviors in school. The Brain Injury Resource Facilitator explained how a neuropsychological assessment worked and made a referral for the young man. A year later, the mom shared that the son finally completed the neuropsychological evaluation and the results were very detailed in what part of the brain was affected from the assault and recommendations for help. He was currently getting a 504 plan in place until his IEP kicks in. He was getting tested at school for services. He will be following up with a nurse practitioner at Gillette Hospital. The neuropsychological evaluation also helped the family understand his deficits and behaviors and the family relationship has improved immensely due to this knowledge.

3- A Brain Injury Resource Facilitator called and spoke with the wife of a young man that had a brain injury at work. He was hurt at work and was also attending graduate studies. He had persistent brain injury symptoms and the couple did not know where to turn. Brain Injury Resource Facilitation referred them to vocational rehabilitation and the young man given accommodations at work and in graduate school. He successfully started therapies at a brain injury clinic and was beginning to receive therapies that were helping tremendously, they were both relieved from the support and feeling much better about their future.

4- A Brain Injury Resource Facilitator received a frantic call from a mother who needed Emergency Guardianship for her daughter who was hospitalized with a severe TBI. The Resource Facilitator referred the caller to online legal forms to complete on her own. The mother called back needing legal assistance to complete the forms, the Resource Facilitator referred her to a local law clinic and she was able to submit the paperwork successfully and receive Emergency Guardianship of her daughter as a result of assistance.

5- A Brain Injury Resource Facilitator spoke with a mom whose son continued to experience lingering effects of his brain injury including increased anxiety, depression and headaches. The current doctor had said his continuing symptoms were impossible and he should be recovered. The Brain Injury Resource Facilitator was able to refer this mom to a neuropsychologist and brain injury clinic for further diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation. The Brain Injury Resource Facilitator also referred her to a counselor to support her son in having emotional support through his rehabilitation process.

6- A Brain Injury Resource Facilitator helped an elderly parent who was providing housing to her adult son after he was being evicted due to behaviors and arguments with his landlord. The Brain Injury Resource Facilitator supported the parent through the process of a waiver application for her son and now the adult son has been approved for a waiver, has housing and is living with supports on his own.

7- A Brain Injury Resource Facilitator was called by a medical clinic and alerted to an individual in an unsafe living situation. She is caring for her husband who has dementia, she has a significant brain injury and her children were taking advantage of her financially. The Brain Injury Resource Facilitator made a call to the Disability HUB and because of the individual's status as someone that was certified disabled, this individual was fast tracked to a waiver program in her county and supports and services were put into place quickly.

8- A Brain Injury Resource Facilitator supported a client who is physically disabled and whose first language is Somali. The client could not understand why she could not get her diabetes medications because she had completed her MA paperwork. Her Brain Injury Resource Facilitator called the county and the county said they didn't have the paperwork. Through persistence and countless conference calls with the client they were able to discover that the county MA and county MNSure did not have access to each other's databases and all of the client's information was being put in the MNSure database. Brain Injury Resource Facilitation helped navigate this problem so the client could get their testing strips and insulin.

9- An individual and his mother called frustrated that the neuropsychological assessment indicated he couldn't work and his insurances had ended. The Brain Injury Resource Facilitator gave recommendations at this initial call in regards to insurance as well as other resources. At the next scheduled call with Brain Injury Resource Facilitation, the mother said they were excited and appreciated the great resources and people we connected them with. They applied for medical assistance and have an appointment at a brain injury clinic. The individual and parent were relieved and very optimistic about future opportunities to work.

10- A Brain Injury Resource Facilitator was able to refer a father to Knights of Columbus for his son's wheelchair which wasn't covered by health insurance and was unaffordable. Knights of Columbus provided a wheelchair to this young man and the father reports he is getting around very well now thanks to this resource provided by Brain Injury Resource Facilitation.

11- Brain Injury Resource Facilitation received a call from an individual that was feeling overwhelmed after his brain injury and unable to keep up with maintaining his home. He indicated that he had piles all over his living room and it was difficult to navigate. The Brain Injury Resource Facilitator convened a conference with the county to refer him for services but discovered his income exceeded the eligibility for services. However, the Brain Injury Resource Facilitator was able to successfully refer him to DARTS and he is now receiving homemaking services which has helped tremendously.