



# Health Care Consumer Support Helpline and Disability Hub MN Reports

## Health Care Administration

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Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 3.197, requires the disclosure of the cost to prepare this report. The estimated cost of preparing this report is \$700.

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# I. Executive Summary

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) created this report in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, Section 256.01, Subdivision 31, to report on the consumer experience in the use of DHS' helplines. The report include information on the following:

- **Health Care Consumer Support line (formerly the MinnesotaCare program helpline)**, including background on methods used to evaluate, recently implemented initiatives to improve customer service and plans for future initiatives to enhance the effectiveness of the helpline.
- **Disability Hub MN™**, including evaluation of services, recent initiatives to improve customer service and plans to enhance the helpline.

## II. Legislation

Minnesota Statutes 2020, section 256.01, subdivision 31:

Subd. 31. **Consumer satisfaction; human services.** (a) The commissioner of human services shall submit a memorandum each year to the governor and the chairs of the house of representatives and senate standing committees with jurisdiction over the department's programs that provides the following information:

(1) the number of calls made to each of the department's help lines by consumers and citizens regarding the services provided by the department;

(2) the program area related to the call;

(3) the number of calls resolved at the department;

(4) the number of calls that were referred to a county agency for resolution;

(5) the number of calls that were referred elsewhere for resolution;

(6) the number of calls that remain open; and

(7) the number of calls that were without merit.

(b) The initial memorandum shall be submitted no later than February 15, 2012, with subsequent memoranda submitted no later than February 15 each following year.

(c) The commissioner shall publish the annual memorandum on the department's website each year no later than March 1.

### III. Health Care Consumer Support Line

The Health Care Consumer Support (HCCS) helpline (651) 297-3862 or (800) 657-3672 uses various phone measurements to evaluate efficiencies of incoming calls and to improve customer service. Callers are routed to the HCCS Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) line where agents are available to assist them from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday. Consumers can call any time of day and use the self-service options to make a payment or obtain automated information regarding their case.

#### Health Care Consumer Support Line: Data and Evaluation

The table below shows HCCS helpline data for 2020 and 2021:

Calendar Year	Average monthly calls routed to the ACD line	Calls connected to an agent	Average time a consumer waits to speak with an agent
2020	33,508	81%	3 minutes, 45 seconds
2021	24,381	90%	3 minutes, 14 seconds

To ensure optimum services for consumers calling into the MinnesotaCare program helpline, staff consider and monitor a few factors daily:

- **Anticipating consumer calls.** This provides agents with the ability to plan and ensures that calls are promptly handled within the predetermined performance standard.
- **Providing phone coverage for hours of operation.** In order to provide nine hours of phone coverage, agents are assigned to different shifts to allow for coverage at all times.

#### Future Improvements

DHS is planning the following initiatives to better serve consumers through enhanced efficiencies and effectiveness of the HCCS helpline:

- **Expanding automated case information:** In order to provide consumers with the most complete up to date information regarding their application and case status, we will offer additional information on our 24/7/365 automated phone system.
- **Offering automated information in different languages:** The automated case status information will be offered in other languages commonly requested.

- **Customer satisfaction survey:** In an effort to continue to improve our service, we plan to offer a customer service survey at the end of each call.

## IV. Disability Hub MN™

Minnesota's Disability Hub MN™ (1-866-333-2466 and [disabilityhubmn.org](http://disabilityhubmn.org)) makes it easier for people with disabilities to understand their options, connect to solutions, and engage in possibilities. They do this through a network of experts, tools, and partnerships that bridge systems, and focus on helping people create their best life. The service is a collaborative partner in the MinnesotaHelp Network®, which includes the Disability Hub MN™, Senior LinkAge Line®, and LinkVet. The Hub is a contracted service through two community providers who hire the staff and provide the direct service to Minnesotans with disabilities and those that support them.

The Disability Hub MN™ operates during regular business hours, Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Disability Hub MN's Options Counselors are certified by DHS prior to providing service. All Options Counselors are expected to become certified by the Alliance of Information & Referral Systems (AIRS). In addition, staff who provide work and benefits planning services complete certification in work and benefits counseling.

The Hub service consists of:

- Information, Referral and Assistance (IR&A)
- Options Counseling – helping people connect to services in their community
- Follow Along – a deeper dive options counseling focusing on goals driven by the person to live their best life, their way. This service also offers the opportunity to build a 1:1 relationship, identify needs through an ongoing discovery process and support in strengthening a person's self-direction and advocacy to meet their needs and goals.
- Capacity building – offering online tools, training and support for people to plan and advocate for their best life.

### Disability Hub MN™: Data and Evaluation

Disability Hub MN™ uses an integrated automated contact distribution and messaging system for all calls and chats. Calls and chats are automatically routed to available Options Counselors located at regional sites throughout the state. If an Options Counselor is not available, callers and chatters can choose to wait or they can leave a voicemail message or send an email at [disabilityhubmn.org](http://disabilityhubmn.org). Messages are responded to within one business day. Staff respond to chats through the following sites:

- [Disabilityhubmn.org](http://Disabilityhubmn.org)
- DB101.org
- HB101.org
- MinnesotaHelp.info

The table below shows Disability Hub MN™ data for 2021:

Calendar Year	Total Contacts	People Served	Average time a consumer waits to speak with an agent
2020	63,876	23,979	1 minute, 56 seconds
2021	67,937	23,841	1 minute, 8 seconds

In calendar year 2021, the Disability Hub MN™ staff handled 67,937 contacts, serving 23,841 people, which is a 7% increase from the previous year. The average hold time was 1:08 minutes, which was a 41% decrease from the previous year.

### Incoming Hub Contacts

Calendar Year	Phone Calls	Emails	Chats	In-Person Meetings
2020	56.7%	12.7%	8.7%	0.0%
2021	60.5%	11.1%	7%	0%

The most common topics Disability Hub MN™ staff helped callers with were:

- Health Benefits
  - 2020: 36%
  - 2021: 28.4%
- Cash Benefits
  - 2020: 15%
  - 2021: 14.6%
- Housing/Shelter
  - 2020: 9%
  - 2021: 8.4%
- Health and Wellness
  - 2020: 9%
  - 2021: 10.2%

In 2021, staff also helped callers with questions about Disability Hub MN/DB101/HB101 (9.3%) and MA Programs and Services (8.5%).

Options counselors assisted callers most often in the following ways:

- Education/Navigation

- 2020: 43.2%
- 2021: 32%
- Referrals
  - 2020: 22.1%
  - 2021: 31%
- Coaching/Support/Advocacy
  - 2020: 25%
  - 2021: 9%

## Quality Improvements

DHS undertook the following improvements to better serve consumers through enhanced efficiencies and effectiveness of the Disability Hub MN™.

### 2020 Improvements

- **Simplified our Customer Relations Management (CRM) contact tracking system:** Eliminated duplicate entry to make it easier for staff to enter and review information, and help them focus on the conversation with the people they are supporting. Included key workflows that help guide staff through pathways that help them serve the people who contact the Hub.
- **Improved staff onboarding and development opportunities:** Created pre-service training modules that will be uploaded into a new learning management system, to become more efficient at having trained, competent staff to support the Hub’s service and offer staff development and advancement opportunities. Having these modules in one place will ensure consistent training across providers, and allow supervisors to focus on coaching staff and supporting their daily operations needs.
- **Expanded Customer Feedback channels:** Implemented a phone and chat based customer satisfaction survey to capture feedback on the Hub service, ensuring the decision to participate is the customers.
  - **Updated and expanded online tools to help people explore and plan for their best life:** Redesigned the Disability Hub MN ([disabilityhubmn.org](http://disabilityhubmn.org)) website with a new For Families portal, updated the “For Professionals” portal, and updated content across the site. Updated the Disability Benefits ([db101.org](http://db101.org)) website to make it more user friendly and ensured it is mobile-friendly.
- **Launched Charting the Life Course:** A collection of planning materials to help people with disabilities and their families think about what they need to know at any age or stage of life. The materials are available on the Hub website as fillable PDFs and for download.

- **Launched [Hub Benefits Planning Toolkit](#):** Benefits planning helps people see how work is possible, work to their full potential, save money and get ahead financially. This toolkit gives people the information, resources and tools they need to support benefits planning.
- **Launched the [Benefits Planning Learning Community](#):** The benefits planning learning community is a network of benefits planning professionals. By joining the community, people stay up-to-date on benefits planning information and changes and connect with colleagues doing similar work.

## 2021 Improvements

- **Launched a new Learning Management System (LMS):** The new LMS allows all Hub staff to get consistent, up-to-date training on relevant topics for their daily work. It includes all pre-service training for new hires, and allows supervisors to monitor training progress. It also allows supervisors to assign trainings to staff if there is a need for more training on a topic. And, finally, it allows monthly trainings to be added so that staff who are unable to attend the scheduled training, to watch and verify learning.
- **Completed usability testing of [disabilityhubmn.org](#), including My Vault:** Usability testing is an important step in ensuring that the sites are able to be used by everyone, including accessibility features for those using assistive devices to navigate the sites. Testing was completed by people with disabilities and family members of people with disabilities, and included users of assistive devices.
- **Expanded communications channels:** The Hub continues to use Facebook as a strategy to reach people, and Facebook Live was introduced as a way to connect with other organizations to discuss important topics, such as Waiver Reimagine and Mental Health. Additionally, The Hub began sending a quarterly newsletter to people who have signed up through the ‘Stay Connected’ option on the Hub website, and created the Benefits Planning Learning Community monthly newsletter to keep people interested in benefits planning updated on changes and information.
- **Updated and expanded online tools to help people explore and plan for their best life:** Worked with Waiver Reimagine policy team to expand information on waivers on the Hub website. Expanded our customers’ access to their information and activities that they can complete and share with people who support them, which ensures more choice and control – including our work with Waiver Reimagine information and person portal. Vault activities such as employment planning paths that help people explore and plan for competitive integrated employment.
- **Charting the LifeCourse expansion:** Launched the Work path within My Vault on the Hub website, which incorporates Charting the LifeCourse tools. Expanded our work with families – providing outreach and training on leveraging Charting the LifeCourse tools to help plan for their child’s future, as well as other tools on DB101, HB101 and the Hub sites.

## Consumer Satisfaction Surveys

Automated customer satisfaction surveys were implemented on July 1, 2020 and are offered to callers and chatters at the beginning of a call or chat, to be completed at the end of the call or chat. The data collected is

slightly different with the new tool for chats and calls, but gets at the same essence as the previous paper surveys. The main difference is that people choose to engage in the survey before the call or chat begins, rather than being offered a survey at the end of the call. This allows for more genuine responses based on the call or chat someone just had rather than filling out a paper survey days or weeks after the call/chat. There has been a significant increase in survey participation since introducing the automated survey.

## 2020 Consumer Satisfaction Survey

Of the customer satisfaction surveys completed in 2020:

- 90% indicated the Disability Hub MN was helpful.
- 94% said they would recommend Disability Hub MN to someone else.

Customer quotes from surveys in 2020:

- “[Staff] is incredible. She's a wealth of knowledge, professionalism, and is very thorough. She also keeps me "on task", to focus on the particular issue at hand. I tend to be all over the map, [staff] is very effective in bringing me back in. She's firm, (she has to be with me), but she does this effectively, always with kindness, empathy, compassion, and understanding.”
- “I want to thank Disability Hub for such excellent help and excellent service. I want to especially thank [staff] who was the person who helped me today. She was very knowledgeable, very caring and thorough. I had questions about multiple issues and she was able to answer them all, so thank you Disability Hub and I wanted to especially thank [staff].”
- “I would say that the woman I work with today was very thorough and thinking outside the box she had a lot of suggestions for me cuz I'm looking for a job and she was really helpful so I would say no, there is there isn't anything else that she could have.”
- “I am very grateful for her expertise and her excellent demeanor in helping someone. She's so kind and so generous with her time and, like I said, very effective and quite an expert. When I ask her a question, she's looking it up and making sure she's giving the right information.”
- “I have always appreciated the service and representatives at the Hub. They are far and away the best resource for anyone in MN looking for answers to questions regarding disability issues. I always say that if they don't have the answer themselves, then they sure know someone who does! Thank you for all you do. Best wishes.”

## 2021 Consumer Satisfaction Survey

In calendar year 2021, a total of 554 surveys were completed.

Of the customer satisfaction surveys completed in 2021:

- 90% indicated the Disability Hub MN was helpful.
- 97% said they would recommend Disability Hub MN to someone else.

Customer quotes from surveys in 2021:

- You know what? I cannot thank you guys enough and I had my first call to Disability Hub yesterday and, you know, it asks you before the call if you want to complete the survey and I was kinda busy so I said no and I really regretted that after I hung up because the woman that helped me out yesterday was sooo helpful and then I had a few more questions that occurred to me last night so I called back again today and I got someone else and she was every bit as helpful and pleasant and kind and caring and just really wonderful human beings working at your department so thank you for what you doing for all of us, especially with the way things are right now. It's such a crazy time and, yeah, very informative, helpful, patient. I mean, I'm new to this so I don't know anything about it and so patient and just so kind of helpful thank you again and bless you all!
- Yes, I'd like to say that the person who waited on me was very intuitive, was very smart, was able to pick up on what I needed, anticipated my needs, had very positive and good ideas and definitely gave me some resources. I called the line and I didn't have much hope of getting some ideas and, I thought I was basically stuck and the person who waited on me gave me hope and I feel much better after having the call. I want to thank you so much for your service. I will definitely be recommending this to more and more people and thank you very much and have a great day.
- Nothing else, I just discovered this chat service today and have used it twice. VERY HELPFUL! I'm so grateful to have discovered this as I work as an HSS advocate and am in need of a service like this to improve my services with my clients! Thank you all so much for what you do!
- I want to thank you for having someone to help us in finding the resources for my niece, [client name]. I just called today without much understanding of the things we can do to help my niece in becoming more independent the staff who attended my call was very, very helpful. He explained services that are available to her, explained how to reach to them and he's going to provide me with the email information and contact information via email which is very helpful and basically listened to what we are trying to achieve and he was very supportive along the way. So I feel supported.
- I just spoke with [staff] at Disability Hub, your agency and I can't tell you how much time to spent with me, walking me through the process of getting help for somebody. I'm a school social worker and I was trying to get help for disability services for a family who has a learning disability so this was wonderful and I just want to applaud her and your agency for doing this. Thank you.
- The person I have worked with, is super helpful, fantastic and knowledgeable. I had no idea that I had options in dealing with a disability. It has always been seen as a hardship that can not be fixed. She showed me that might not be that way.

## Future Improvements

DHS is planning the following initiatives to better serve consumers through enhanced efficiencies and effectiveness of the Disability Hub MN™:

- Launch our Learning Management System, for external benefit coach training.

- Build out content to support Youth in Transition, their families and the professionals that support them.
- Build a path in My Vault called 'My Best Life' – to include planning tools around multiple areas of a person's life.
- Continue building activities and content to support changes happening with Waiver Reimagine [and other Home and Community Based Services].
- Address usability testing feedback received, as appropriate.