



# Increase Access to Supported Decision Making

## Supported Decision Making

Supported decision making assists an individual to understand the nature and consequences of potential personal and financial decisions. It enables the individual to make decisions with the support of others and is a less-restrictive alternative to guardianship and conservatorship.

## Background

In 2023, the legislature authorized a one-time appropriation of \$4.55 million to DHS to award grants to provide and promote supported decision-making services as an alternative to guardianship. In July and August of 2024, five organizations were awarded grants. Grant activities include education to prevent unnecessary guardianship, a statewide guardianship consultation line, restoration of rights of individuals currently under guardianship, and preventing and reducing the use of guardianship and conservatorship in hospital discharges and with individuals exiting incarceration.

## 2025 Proposal

The grant expires June 30, 2025 and unspent money would return to the general fund. We recommend:

1. Extending the existing grant program and appropriation through June 30, 2026.
2. Appropriating an additional \$2 million to extend the grant program through June 30, 2027.

## Why Invest in Supported Decision Making?

- Supported decision making respects the autonomy of the individuals living with intellectual disabilities or cognitive impairment.
- It assures decision making is intentionally supported while individuals build their confidence and competence in decision making, preserves their civil rights, and avoids unnecessary court involvement.
- Sustainable funding creates growth – both in the service and access to the service – and measurable impact. It also reduces spending in human services ranging from reduced court expenses, delayed use of rehabilitation services and waiver utilization, and decreased emergency room visits. A recent study indicates a savings of \$2.75 for every dollar invested in supported decision making.
- It facilitates a culture shift toward supported decision making service options as a first, more person-centered practice, reserving expensive guardianships to use as true last resort.

## Enhancing Quality of Life.

ONE PERSON, ONE FAMILY,  
ONE COMMUNITY AT A TIME

Establish sustained state resources to build a stronger foundation and network of supported decision-making practice.

### For questions, contact:

Minnesota Elder Justice  
Center/O'Connell Consulting:

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March 24, 2025

To: Members of the House Human Services Finance and Policy Committee  
RE: HF2060 (Nadeau)

Dear Chair Noor and Chair Schomacker and Members of the Committee:

My name is Javier Santoy, and I live in Duluth, Minnesota. I am a self-advocate and writing in support of HF2060 which will extend the availability of funding to support Minnesota's network of supported decision-making practice.

I would like to voice why this program should continue:

I have been making decisions under guardianship and have built a life for myself, I've achieved so many things and learned so many things through my SDM facilitator and without him, I wouldn't know how to start the process of taking more control of my finances, legal representation, benefits, and contracts. My SDM facilitator has helped me navigate these new areas of independence and I am petitioning for partial restoration in April.

I would like to have the time and opportunity to grow my skills and petition for restoration of the rest of my guardianship powers later this year. Please extend this program so I can continue to have help navigating these new areas of life with my SDM facilitator, partner, friends, and providers all working as a team to support me. This means the world to me to have this support to grow even better as an adult in today's society.

I ask you to please support HF2060. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Javier Santoy



Minnesota Board on Aging  
PO Box 64976  
St. Paul, MN 55164-0976

March 25, 2025

Dear Chair Noor, Chair Schomacker, and Members of the Human Services Committee,

On behalf of the MN Board on Aging (MBA), I am writing in support of HF 2060 to extend and expand the existing funding for Supported Decision-Making (SDM). SDM is a key component of the FFY 2024-2027 State Plan on Aging developed and implemented by the MBA, which states the following:

“The MBA, Live Well at Home<sup>®</sup> grantees, and legal services providers all work to advance Supported Decision Making (SDM). SDM provides an alternative to guardianship, a court process that takes away a person’s legal ability to make decisions about their life. Instead, SDM works by empowering individuals— such as those with intellectual disabilities and some older adults—to make decisions about their lives with the help of their supporters, who often include family and friends along with professionals such as health care agents and attorneys. SDM is increasingly recognized as a best practice to support adults who are not able to be fully independent.

SDM has broad application and benefits. It helps older people remain at home longer because they are working with social workers or care teams comprised of a social worker, attorney, caregiver, or others who can help identify suitable alternatives to guardianship through individual assessment, development of power of attorney forms, health care directives, and SDM agreements.”

We appreciate your support of HF 2060 and the issues facing older adults and their families in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Maureen Schneider'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

Maureen Schneider  
Chair, Minnesota Board on Aging



**Minnesota Hospital Association**

**161 Rondo Ave., Ste. 1010  
Saint Paul, MN 55103**

**[www.mnhospitals.org](http://www.mnhospitals.org)**

March 26, 2025

*Submitted Electronically*

Chair Noor, Chair Schomacker and members of the House Human Services Committee,

We are writing to you today on behalf of the Minnesota Hospital Association (MHA) in support of HF 2060 (Nadeau) and its provisions that will extend the availability of funding for Minnesota's network of supported decision-making practice.

In 2023, patients across the state spent roughly 195,000 avoidable days in hospitals, waiting for the right level of care to become available. Too often patients, their families, and their care teams are prematurely informed that guardianship is required to facilitate a successful discharge and admission to the next care location. If guardianship is not needed, understanding that it often is, its requirement effectively halts discharge, applies the most restrictive and burdensome processes, strips patients of their civil rights and decision-making authority, and delays patients from getting the appropriate care when and where they need it. These, along with many other reasons, are why supported decision-making is needed as an available alternative to guardianship, especially when guardianship is not actually needed.

Despite the program rolling out later than anticipated, our members, including North Memorial, Hennepin Healthcare, and CentraCare, have effectively engaged with the program and all report positive experiences for their patients and care teams. As such, HF 2060 would not only allow grantees access to funding through the end of FY 2026, but it would also allow our member hospitals and health systems to increase their engagement with the program. This will maximize the opportunities to successfully deploy supported decision-making to benefit hospital patients, reduce the number of hospital avoidable days, and better reserve the scarce guardianship resources for Minnesotan's who need them.

Hospitals and health systems across Minnesota know firsthand that patients and their families are the first to bear the consequences of unnecessary guardianship. Therefore, we urge this Committee and legislature to support HF 2060 (Nadeau) and the extended availability of funding for Minnesota's network of supported decision-making practice.

Sincerely,

Mary Krinkie  
Vice President of Government Relations  
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Danny Ackert  
Director of State Government Relations  
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Chair Joe Schomacker  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Centennial Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 26, 2025

RE: HF2060 (Nadeau)

Dear Chair Noor, Chair Schomacker and Members of the Committee:

We are writing in support of HF2060, which will extend the availability of funding to support Minnesota's network of supported decision-making practice. We also encourage the committee to consider additional funding to extend the grant program through June 30, 2027.

Our organizations believe all people have the right to make decisions, have control in their lives, advocate for themselves, and get support from trusted allies as they make decisions. Yet for too long, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, older adults, and those with mental health support needs have been subjected to restrictive guardianships that strip them of their civil rights and decision-making authority. Supported decision-making is an alternative to guardianship that helps an individual to understand the nature and consequences of potential personal and financial decisions.

In 2023, the legislature authorized a one-time appropriation of \$4.55 million to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to award grants to provide and promote supported decision-making services as an alternative to guardianship. In July and August of 2024, five organizations were awarded grants. Grant activities include offering education to prevent unnecessary guardianship, establishing a statewide guardianship consultation line, restoring rights of individuals currently under guardianship, preventing and reducing the use of guardianship and conservatorship, including as a tool for hospital discharge, and supporting individuals exiting incarceration who are at risk of guardianship.

With the program rolling out later than anticipated, HF2060 would allow grant recipients to access funding through the end of FY 2026, rather than returning unspent money to the general fund. These dollars represented the first sustainable funding pool to invest in supported decision-making and have had a measurable, positive impact for Minnesotans. This program

also reduces human services spending due to reduced court expenses, delayed use of rehabilitation services and waiver utilization, and decreased emergency room visits. Extending the timeline of the grant program would ensure all available dollars can be spent and help realize the full intent of the original legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration in hearing this bill.

Sincerely,

Amanda Vickstrom  
Executive Director  
Minnesota Elder Justice Center

Tina Rucci  
Public Policy Director  
The Arc Minnesota

Anita Raymond  
Program Director  
CESDM at VOA-MN

Nate Danielson  
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