

MICROFILM DIVIDER

OMB/RECORDS MANAGEMENT DIVISION

SFN 2053 (2/85) 5M



ROLL NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

2211

2007 SENATE HUMAN SERVICES

SB 2211

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. SB 2211

Senate Human Services Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: 1-24-07

Recorder Job Number: 1786

Committee Clerk Signature

Mary K Monson

Minutes:

Senator J. Lee, Chairman, opened the hearing on SB 2211 to provide an appropriation to the department of human services for assistive technology services.

Vice Chairman Senator Erbele recognized Senator J. Lee.

Senator J. Lee (District 13) introduced SB 2211 and said it was an appropriation for assisted technology services.

Senator Heckaman (District 23) stood in support of SB 2211.

Judie Lee (Executive Director, Interagency Program for Assistive Technology – IPAT) testified in support of SB 2211. (Attachment #1 includes two packets)

Senator J. Lee asked her to put a face on this to make it easier to understand.

Ms. Lee (Meter 19:15) gave examples.

Senator J. Lee followed up with an example where someone is able to live at home even though they might have a lot of physical challenges as a result of disability.

They discussed different ways people are helped with customized items for particular needs.

Senator J. Lee asked how they interact with HERO.

Ms. Lee said the HERO has a number of medically necessary kinds of equipment and, when people call, IPAT has knowledge of all those entities that are helping people and they can refer

them. IPAT tries not to duplicate any service already provided so they refer people to the existing services and put their energies and resources into those projects that somebody isn't doing.

Senator J. Lee asked what they do with the schools since they have an obligation to meet pretty much all of the needs of kids.

Ms. Lee said probably their biggest demand from schools comes within their equipment loan library. (Meter 24:10)

Senator Heckaman addressed voice activated computer systems and said that is probably a service that can be provided to the schools.

Ms. Lee said they can do that through their demonstration sites. It has been very valuable because they can compare features.

Bob Puyear (Bismarck) testified in support of SB 2211. (Attachment #2)

Senator J. Lee said it was valuable to have users of IPAT technology be a part of this discussion.

(Meter 32.30) There was a short discussion on the consumer advisory committee and their duties.

Jillian Schaible (Bismarck) presented testimony in support of SB 2211. (Attachment #3)

Senator Heckaman asked what her position was.

Ms. Schaible said she works directly with the volunteer director to help learn computer stuff and cardiac.

Pam Weng (Housing Assistant of Affordable Housing Developers, Inc.) testified on SB 2211 in support of funding for IPAT.

James Moench (Executive Director, ND Disabilities Advocacy Consortium) (Meter 45:15) He added an example of a farmer who had an accident and was helped through IPAT.

Bob Vandal (Bismarck) testified in support of SB 2211. (Attachment #6)

Senator Dever asked him how he became aware of the technology that is helping him.

Mr. Vandal replied that he served on the advisory committee.

Senator J. Lee asked how he found them.

Mr. Vandal said through Bob Puyear.

Senator J. Lee said she was intrigued with his vision technology. It is so portable.

Mr. Vandal explained what it can do and how it helps him. (Meter 51:00) He teaches part time at BSC and it has been beneficial in helping him with that.

Senator J. Lee asked about the cost.

Mr. Vandal replied it was approximately \$2800.

Senator Heckaman asked if he uses any other kind of assistive technology in his daily life.

Mr. Vandal said currently he does not.

Senator Dever gave an example of his mother who was legally blind and who had frustrations that people are not aware of the devices available to help them. He asked if there is a greater awareness of the things that are available now than there used to be.

Mr. Vandal answered that the consumer advisory committee tries to help IPAT staff get the word out. They try to identify agencies and partners and assisted technology in getting brochures out to try to inform the public what is available. There is a lot of information and awareness to get through yet.

Mary Wahl, representing her 96 year old mother, her friends and neighbors, testified in support of SB 2211. (Meter 57:00) She addressed the problem her mother had with macular degeneration which resulted in serious problems with using basic equipment in her home. She also spoke to the problem and frustrations of finding devices that would work for her.

She said an important point to make is that IPAT is the only program in ND specifically funded to insure people with disabilities and those experiencing the effects of aging have access to the technology devices and services they need to be active participants in society or to remain in their home like her mother.

Karen Cossette provided testimony in support of SB 2211. (Attachment #7)

Al Kloster spoke in favor of SB 2211. (Meter 75:25) He gave examples of how IPAT has helped him and others he knows.

Craig Sinclair (ND Protection and Advocacy Project – P&A) testified regarding the need for funding for the services provided by IPAT. (Attachment #8)

There was no opposing or neutral testimony on SB 2211.

Senator J. Lee asked Judie Lee about the budget.

Ms. Lee replied that the current operating budget is around \$505,000. That is reflective of a reduction in staff because they have been preparing for this cut back in federal funding. (Meter 82:50) The way they came up with the extra \$500,000—with the \$316,000 they currently get from the federal government, the additional \$250,000 per year would put their income at \$566,000. That would allow them to reinstate another coordinator and would pay for basic operating costs.

Senator J. Lee asked if they were looking at maintaining a service level that they have had before they had to cut back but not enhancing.

Ms. Lee said that was right.

Senator Erbele asked how long they had been short the staff person.

Ms. Lee said they had been short this staff person for 1 ½ years. (Meter 84:25) This has resulted in waiting lists for up to 5-6 months.

Senator Warner asked how they interface with vocational rehabilitation.

Ms. Lee said their vocational rehabilitation is very specific to the client. They have a number of V R counselors that refer their clients for assessment, for demonstration of equipment, to borrow equipment. Those are probably the ways they interface with them the most.

Senator Warner asked if they have resources IPAT can borrow from them.

Mr. Lee said there is an exchange of resources.

Senator J. Lee asked if IPAT is in the governor's budget.

(Meter 86:57) The answer was that the governor's budget does include funding of \$681,000 of federal funds which would only cover one year, essentially, of operations.

Senator Dever moved a Do Pass and rerefer to Appropriations.

The motion was seconded by Senator Erbele.

Roll call vote 6-0-0. Motion carried. Carrier is Senator Dever.

Date: 1-24-07

Roll Call Vote #: 1

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB 2211

Senate HUMAN SERVICES Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken Do Pass - Refer to Appropriations

Motion Made By Sen. Dever Seconded By Sen. Erbele

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Senator Judy Lee, Chairman	✓		Senator Joan Heckaman	✓	
Senator Robert Erbele, V. Chair	✓		Senator Jim Pomeroy	✓	
Senator Dick Dever	✓		Senator John M. Warner	✓	

Total (Yes) 6 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Senator Dever

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2211: Human Services Committee (Sen. J. Lee, Chairman) recommends DO PASS and BE REREFERRED to the Appropriations Committee (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2211 was rereferred to the Appropriations Committee.

2007 SENATE APPROPRIATIONS

SB 2211

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. 2211

Senate Appropriations Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: February 2, 2007

Recorder Job Number: 2680

Committee Clerk Signature

Minutes:

Chairman Holmberg opened the hearing on SB 2211 which would provide an appropriation to the department of human services for assistive technology services.

Senator Judy Lee from District 13 (Fargo) introduced SB 2211.

Senator Mathern asked if this portion was left out of the governor's request for 2012 or if it is in addition?

Senator J. Lee answered that it is an OAR and yet it is something that we have been funding. Have also received some federal funding. It is run extremely efficiently.

Senator Dick Dever from District 32 (Bismarck) spoke in support of the bill. Spoke of personal experience with this issue. His mother had trouble with eyesight and received helpful technology services to assist her with daily living. There is an OAR in the budget and also a bill to do the same thing and—whatever way—one will hopefully pass.

Senator Krauter asked about past funding from '03-'05 and '05-'07? [08:11]

Chairman Holmberg responded that OMB was looking for info and that this bill will also go to subcommittee.

Brenda Weisz from the Department of Human Services gave explanation and quoted figures regarding to past appropriations [08:20].

Senator Krauter asked if the requested funding would be general funds?

Brenda Weisz said yes, the additional funds would be general funds due to the reduction of the federal granting for this program.

Judie Lee, Executive Director of the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT), spoke in support of SB 2211 and provided written testimony (Attachment 1). Explained assistive technology and the infrastructure of assistive technology in North Dakota (p. 2-6, Attachment 1). Also referred to personal letters (Attachment 1) of how assistive technology has affected people all over the state.

Senator Mathern asked the name of the non-profit that supervises the money and who pays for the salaries of the IPAT employees?

Judie Lee answered that the non-profit is the ND Association for the Disabled and the salaries come through them, but they contract with the Department of Human Services so that federal dollars can flow.

Senator Mathern asked who signs the check?

Judie Lee answered ND Association for the Disabled.

Senator Lindaas asked if this involves people in nursing homes or if it is strictly in-home?

Judie Lee answered that they can get involved with anybody that calls. Some calls from nursing homes.

Senator Lindaas asked if the target figure of people over the age of sixty included the people in nursing homes?

Judie Lee did not have that answer.

Senator Bowman asked if this program was started by a federal grant?

Judie Lee said yes.

Senator Bowman commented that this happens often. The federal government provides funding to start a program and then turns it over to the state. It's a good program, but the state ends up having to pick up the bill.

Judie Lee said that this program started in 1988 under a federal act [26:15]. North Dakota applied and received funding in late 1993 and started the program in 1994.

Bob Puyear, member of the IPAT Consumer Advisory Committee, spoke in support of SB 2211 and provided written testimony (Attachment 2). Spoke of personal experience with assistive technology devices.

Peggy Shireley read written testimony (Attachment 3) for **Jillian Schaible** in support of SB 2211. Jillian earned her BS with the help of services provided by IPAT.

Mary Wahl gave oral testimony in support of SB 2211. She spoke of her 96-year old mother who lives in her own home and has macular degeneration. The disease progressed rapidly and Mary began looking for household devices that would assist her mother. Mary's sister-in-law heard an IPAT presentation and they visited the office to see what IPAT had to offer. IPAT provided helpful advice, hands-on demonstrations, and equipment to try at home. IPAT also has a loan program to help you purchase the equipment if you cannot afford it. They also provide a "buy, sell, swap, or donate" program. This program is important for elderly people now, but it is also going to become more and more important as the rest of the population ages. As people age, they should be able to continue to be productive, independent members of society. Staying at home at her [Mary's mom] home has been priceless and IPAT has helped her to do that.

Barb Owens, Housing Director of Affordable Housing Developers, Inc., provided written testimony (Attachment 4) in support of SB 2211.

Gennie Kilzer, a speech language pathologist in the Bismarck-Mandan area, gave oral testimony in support of SB 2211. Has used IPAT as a resource and provider of loaner communication devices since they began operating. The cost of renting directly from the manufacturing company is great. Many companies will not lease devices and make trials nearly impossible. Clients often need trial periods for more than one device to meet their needs. Video conferencing are available at the new IPAT location in Bismarck. Clients will be able to come to this IPAT location and confer directly with IPAT therapists in Fargo.

Craig Sinclair, Assistive Technology Attorney for the North Dakota Protection Advocacy Project, noted his appearance in support of SB 2211 and gave written testimony (Attachment 5).

Chairman Holmberg stated that the subcommittee would be looking at the bill and making recommendations.

The hearing on SB 2211 was closed.

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. **SB 2211**

Senate Appropriations Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: **February 12, 2007**

Recorder Job Number: **3419**

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes:

Chairman Holmberg opened the hearing on HB 2211 indicating technology is in the amendments and there's been a motion:

Senator Grindberg moved a DO NOT PASS on HB 2211, Senator Bowman seconded.

Discussion followed. A roll call vote was taken resulting in 13 yes, 1 no, 0 absent. The motion passed and Senator Robinson will carry the bill.

Chairman Holmberg indicated this should be carried after the budget.

Chairman Holmberg closed the hearing on HB 2211.

Date: 2/12/07
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 2211

Senate Appropriations Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken D N P

Motion Made By Grindberg Seconded By Bowman

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Senator Ray Holmberg, Chrm	✓		Senator Aaron Krauter	✓	
Senator Bill Bowman, V Chrm	✓		Senator Elroy N. Lindaas	✓	
Senator Tony Grindberg, V Chrm	✓		Senator Tim Mathem	✓	
Senator Randel Christmann	✓		Senator Larry J. Robinson	✓	
Senator Tom Fischer	✓		Senator Tom Seymour	✓	
Senator Ralph L. Kilzer	✓		Senator Harvey Tallackson		✓
Senator Karen K. Krebsbach	✓				
Senator Rich Wardner	✓				

Total (Yes) 13 No 1

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Robinson

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
February 12, 2007 8:17 p.m.

Module No: SR-29-2971
Carrier: Robinson
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2211: Appropriations Committee (Sen. Holmberg, Chairman) recommends DO NOT PASS (13 YEAS, 1 NAY, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2211 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2007 TESTIMONY

SB 2211



INTERAGENCY PROGRAM FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Judie Lee, Director

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Senate Human Services Committee

Senate Bill 2211

January 24, 2007

Chairman Lee, members of the Senate Human Services Committee, I am Judie Lee, Executive Director of the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT). I am here today to ask you to support SB 2211 requesting \$500,000 for the upcoming biennium for the purpose of supporting and maintaining assistive technology services for the elderly and people with disabilities provided through IPAT.

The Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT) was established in 1994 to ensure people with disabilities of all ages and those experiencing the effects of aging, have access to the assistive technology devices and services they need for work, school, and home. IPAT operates and maintains eight essential service components, which make-up an unduplicated statewide AT infrastructure.

What is Assistive Technology (AT)

Assistive technology devices are items, pieces of equipment, or product systems that are used to increase or maintain functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities; computer adaptations, communication devices, specialized phones, and environmental control systems. Assistive technology services are any services that directly assist an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.

Who Needs Assistive Technology (AT)

People who have been injured in accidents.

People who are impacted by disease both sudden and chronic.

People who are experiencing the effects of aging.

People who were born with disabilities.

Provided for you is a map of North Dakota depicting by county the targeted populations for assistive technology services. Two groups are identified on this map, those who self identified as having a disability and those who are 60 years of age or older. These populations are, or at some future time, will be in need of assistive technology.

North Dakota's AT Infrastructure

IPAT has built an assistive technology (AT) infrastructure in ND over the past 13 years which provides AT services to people of all ages and with all types of disabilities. This comprehensive AT program is used by individuals, families, businesses, employers, schools, community organizations, health care providers, and numerous state agencies. This AT infrastructure is made up of 8 essential service components:

1) Direct Consumer Assistance

Staff is available to answer AT questions via phone, on-line, mail, videoconference, or person-to-person. IPAT provided direct consumer assistance to 2,758 individuals in the 2005-06 program year.

2) Equipment Loan Library

A large inventory of equipment is available for residents to borrow to try in their own environment for a period of 6 weeks. This helps people make the right decision and reduces the number of expensive purchasing mistakes. IPAT asks individuals to pay a rental fee ranging from \$10 to \$40 and shipping costs which helps to pay for maintenance and repairs. In the program year 2005-06, IPAT made 376 equipment loans.

3) Equipment Demonstration Sites

IPAT supports 2 AT demonstration sites, one in Fargo and the other in Bismarck. These sites provide an opportunity for people to have hands-on exploration of AT devices. It is important to note that much of this equipment is not available at a local store and this is one of the only opportunities people have to see it and try it out. In the program year 2005-06, IPAT demonstrated AT equipment to 375 individuals.

4) Alternative Financial Loan Program

IPAT applied for and was awarded federal dollars to establish an alternative financial loan program. These dollars can only be used for making loans to individuals to purchase assistive technology. Financial loans are available to eligible ND residents for the purchase of AT devices or services. The rates are approximately 1% below prime and terms can be extended for longer periods making payments affordable. Loans range from \$500-\$50,000. The development of this program started in 2003 and to date has made 11 loans for a total of \$165,625.

5) Assistive Technology Swap 'n Shop

There is a great deal of used equipment that can be reused. IPAT established a used equipment bulletin board for individuals and entities to buy, sell, swap, or donate used AT. It is housed on the IPAT website or can be accessed through a toll free number. This past program year, 88 devices were exchanged for a saving of \$161,577. We are in the process of establishing a partnership with a statewide trucking company who has agreed to pick-up and deliver items for consumers at no charge. This service will eliminate the transport barrier of someone in Williston wanting to buy a lift chair from someone in Drayton.

6) Training and Public Awareness

IPAT staff delivers training on a wide range of AT topics. This past program year IPAT trained 773 people. Public awareness is an ongoing challenge and an integral part of the IPAT program. Last program year, IPAT set up displays and showcased equipment at 27 exhibits and fairs attended by 3,593 people. IPAT also produces a bi-monthly newsletter, provides toll free numbers for information and assistance, and maintains an accessible website www.ndipat.org

7) Coordination and Collaboration

IPAT serves the state as a no-cost resource by collaborating with and providing AT expertise to agencies such as: the Department of Human Services, Secretary of State, Department of Public Instruction, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Aging Services, Information Technology Department, Protection and Advocacy, Veteran's

Administration, and numerous private sector businesses and organizations.

8) Additional Services

The final component of this AT infrastructure is categorized under Additional Services. Because the seven critical components just described are in place, IPAT is poised to partner with other organizations for special projects. For example, IPAT participated in the Real Choice Project, funded by the Department of Human Services, to explore and deliver assistive technology devices and services for state residents who were at risk of moving to an institution. The outcome report of this special project is titled *Remaining at Home...Priceless* and is included in your handouts. This project showed that when the assistive technology provision is part of the service delivery plan, it can delay or eliminate institutional or other high-cost placements. The average cost for a device was \$681 per participant and the average AT service cost was \$552. Compare this to the annual average cost of a nursing care or assisted living care facility. A breakdown of the costs for the AT devices and services, the types of devices purchased, and a profile of the participants can be found within the report.

IPAT is also able to provide AT assessments and consultations for individuals who otherwise may have to leave the state for this service or go without. IPAT provided 44 such assessments this past program year.

This infrastructure, which is in place and ready to carry-out special projects and/or services, is a significant resource to entities within ND.

IPAT Funding Sources

IPAT's main funding source is federal dollars awarded through The Assistive Technology Act of 2004: Public Law 108-364. Congress recognized the importance of maintaining the State AT programs and they changed from discretionary grants to formula programs. This means IPAT will continue to receive federal funding, however, the amount has been reduced. IPAT has had a 50% reduction in federal funding and all carry-over dollars have been expended. The current operational costs, which reflect a reduction in staff, are approximately \$500,000/year and the federal award is \$316,000/year. The requested \$500,000 would make it possible for IPAT to reinstate one of the lost positions and maintain the services described. Without the \$500,000, additional positions will be lost resulting in a decrease of services available. We are already experiencing waiting lists for equipment loans and assessments, have to decline presentation requests, and can't man the demo centers the number of hours needed to meet the needs.

IPAT's move to supplement with fees for service and specific grant dollars help with some program expenses such as equipment maintenance, but do not cover the operational costs. The demand for AT services provided by IPAT to ND residents continues to build while funding declines.

IPAT is requesting the sum of \$500,000 for the purpose of maintaining the assistive technology services established. These funds will be used towards

salaries and basic operating costs of the essential components of the AT infrastructure.

Why Should the State Invest in IPAT

North Dakota's assistive technology infrastructure is in jeopardy without some state funding. IPAT has carefully and wisely managed the federal dollars. A fee schedule for individuals who can afford to pay has been put in place, grants to support equipment for the loan library and demonstration centers have been actively pursued and with some success, vendors are persuaded to loan equipment to the centers or give reduced rates, and practices that encourage efficiency and save staff time are implemented, (such as video conferencing for training, demonstrations, and assessments). Under the AT Act, the Governor is allowed to appoint an entity to implement the program outside of state government. In 2004, IPAT requested to be moved into the private sector under the umbrella of a non-profit. Governor Hoeven honored this request. The money flows through DHS to a non-profit who provides fiscal oversight to IPAT at no cost. IPAT has implemented cost effective measures while providing quality AT services to many segments of North Dakota's population.

Momentum for technology has been started and will not be stopped. The need for assistive technology can only be expected to increase as our population ages and demands to be productive and independent. IPAT is responsive to consumers and has a proven track record of collaboration with state agencies, private entities and organizations. It is cheaper and more cost effective to maintain the infrastructure IPAT has established and continue to tailor it for the

state's use than to let it decline and then try to rebuild it later. An investment now will help to ensure the rapid advances in technology are not leaving hundreds of North Dakotan's with disabilities and those experiencing the effects of aging behind at work, school, home, and in their community.

What Difference Did AT Make in People's Lives in ND

AT has:

Delayed or prevented entering nursing homes

Made success in school possible

Made employment possible

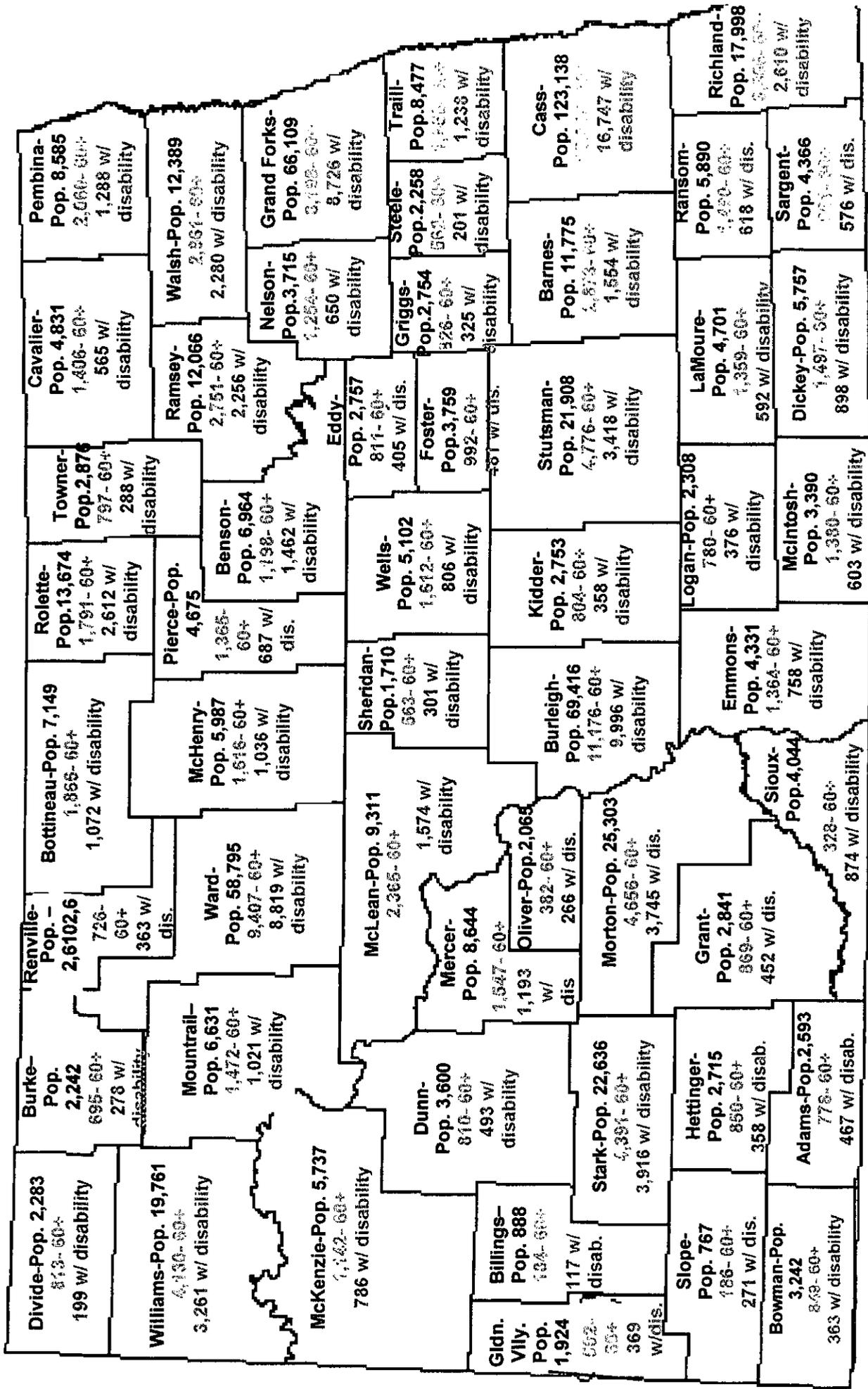
Made continued employment after injury possible

Increased independence and safety at home

The letters provided in your packet are from individuals and service providers telling their real life stories of how IPAT and assistive technology has impacted their lives and work. Chairman Lee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee today. If you have any questions, I will be happy to respond.

Judie Lee
IPAT Executive Director
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Targeted Populations for Assistive Technology Services



IPAT staff delivering assistive technology services -

Assistive Technology Services...

Federal Law defines assistive technology devices and services as . . .

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Assistive Technology Devices

"...any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities."

A sampling of AT devices includes: adapted toys, computer access, seating systems, powered mobility, augmentative communication devices, special switches, magnification systems, and environmental control systems.

Assistive Technology Services

"...any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device."

A sampling of AT services includes, but is not limited to: evaluation, purchasing, designing, leasing, coordinating therapies, and training for individuals, family members, and professionals.

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IPAT

Interagency Program for Assistive Technology

A program of NDAD

**www.ndipat.org
1-800-265-4728**

**IPAT delivers services so people
with disabilities can get the
assistive technology they need
for work, school, and home.**

IPAT's . . .

The Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT) is North Dakota's Statewide AT Program and was established in 1993. IPAT's purpose is to provide opportunities for people of all ages to learn about, try-out, and get assistive technology. IPAT receives federal dollars to conduct required activities, engages in additional services on a fee-for-service basis, and seeks other funding through contract or grant opportunities. IPAT is a program of the North Dakota Association for the Disabled, Inc. (NDAD). IPAT has a Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC), which is comprised of individuals representing all ages, disabilities, and geographic regions of the state, to provide guidance in activity development.

IPAT delivers . . .

Alternative Financial Loan Program

- ▶ Loans are available to any eligible North Dakota resident for the purchase of AT devices or services
- ▶ Rates approximately 1% below prime
- ▶ Loans range from \$500 - \$50,000

Assistive Technology Swap 'n Shop

- ▶ Used equipment bulletin board to buy, sell, swap, or donate used AT items

Equipment Loan Library

- ▶ AT devices available for loan to all state residents
- ▶ Minimal fees
- ▶ Six-week rental periods
- ▶ Call 1-800-895-4728 or go to www.ndipat.org

Equipment Demonstration Sites

- ▶ AT devices for hands-on exploration
- ▶ Drop-in or call for an appointment
- ▶ Visit in Fargo, Bismarck, or via videoconference

Training

- ▶ Staff available to train on a wide range of AT topics

Technical Assistance

- ▶ Staff available to answer AT questions via phone, on-line, mail, videoconference, or person-to-person

Public Awareness

- ▶ Information and referral line
- ▶ Free, bi-monthly newsletter
- ▶ Accessible website
- ▶ Informational talks on AT statewide

Coordination & Collaboration

- ▶ Staff available to serve on taskforces addressing AT issues statewide

Additional Services

- ▶ AT assessments and consultations
- ▶ Equipment set-up and use
- ▶ Special contracts

**For AT service delivery,
call 1-800-265-4728 or go to www.ndipat.org**



Remaining at Home... *Priceless*

AN OUTCOME REPORT SPECIFIC TO THE ASSISTIVE
TECHNOLOGY COMPONENT OF THE REAL CHOICE PROJECT,
NO PLACE LIKE HOME

I PAT

Real Choice Project - No Place Like Home

In August of 2003, the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT) was a partner in the Real Choice Project, *No Place Like Home*, funded by the Department of Human Services. One component of this project was to ensure a systematic exploration and delivery of assistive technology (AT) devices and services for state residents who were at risk of moving to an institution and/or those living in institutions. This outcome report addresses the particulars of the AT component delivered by IPAT.

It is widely recognized that individuals with disabilities and/or long term illnesses who are interested in remaining in their home or moving out of an institution need various types of support. Assistive technology is one of the essential support services for this population, and yet it is NOT widely recognized or acknowledged. Thus, the potential impact of AT devices and services goes unrealized. IPAT's role in this project was to make the AT option available to these individuals by providing the necessary AT services and purchasing the AT devices. The premise being that if AT devices and services are made available, the probability of remaining at home or returning to a less restrictive environment increases.

Delivering AT Services

IPAT developed the Assistive Technology Client Profile Form as a tool to help identify potential AT needs of an individual. The form was designed as a checklist to be completed by individuals independently or with their family members and/or service providers. It required no prior knowledge of assistive technology and served as the referral tool for the project. The form identified potential AT needs in the areas of home safety, daily living, mobility, dexterity, communication, hearing, seeing, and problem solving tasks. Once completed, the forms were submitted to IPAT for review and follow-up.

IPAT selected applicants who wanted to delay or eliminate having to enter an institutional setting or had a desire to move to a less-restrictive environment. IPAT also sought to represent diversity in age, location, disability, and AT device needs in project participants. Upon receiving a referral which met project criteria, IPAT contacted the individual and/or family member to schedule an AT assessment. This typically involved meeting the individual in need of AT services at their residence, with family members and/or service providers present. The initial meeting started the AT assessment process where AT needs were identified and prioritized, based upon the individual's input. Subsequent onsite visits were scheduled to discuss, demonstrate, or try-out selected AT devices and/or home modification options to determine feature match and individual preference. When final AT device choices were made, IPAT used *No Place Like Home* project dollars to purchase them.

Once the devices were purchased, IPAT provided the necessary AT follow-up services. These included delivery and set-up of the equipment, as well as specific training on the assistive technology devices, so that the individual recipients, family members and direct care providers would know how to use them.



Profile of the Participants

The AT component of the *No Place Like Home* project met the AT device and service needs of 20 North Dakota residents with disabilities or long-term illnesses. The individuals represented 10 communities: Fargo, West Fargo, Bismarck, Mandan, Minot, Williston, Park River, Grafton, Wilton and Center. There were 12 women and 8 men, who ranged in age from mid-thirties to mid-eighties. One person resided in a group home, three were in apartments, and 16 lived in single family dwellings. The people served exhibited disabilities in the areas of hearing, mobility, blindness, quadriplegia, cognitive limitations as a result of traumatic brain injury, deafness, or had been diagnosed with long-term illnesses resulting in continued loss of abilities (multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease and rheumatoid arthritis).

IPAT's initial goal was to serve 15 people with the funds made available through the *No Place Like Home* project but was actually able to serve 20 people. A sampling of their stories follows.

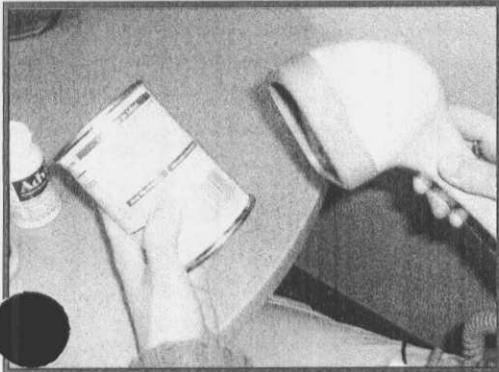


- Cost of AT device: \$1,358⁷⁵
- Cost of AT service: \$694⁷⁹
- Average cost of assisted living care: \$19,726/year
- Average cost of nursing facility care: \$43,815/year
- Having the choice to remain at home: **PRICELESS**

A retired rancher living with his wife took part in the project. He had lost the full use of his legs and arms due to a muscle-wasting disease, but could speak and had good head and breath control. His wife worked outside the home, leaving him alone for a good portion of the day. They both had concerns about how he could get help if something happened while she was at work, and his wife also wondered how he could turn on a light once it got dark. She forgot to leave a light on once when leaving for work and came home later that evening to find him sitting alone in the dark. To ease the concerns of both parties, a hands-free, infrared environmental control system, the Relax II, was purchased with project funds. This system, with the addition of a chin switch mounted to his wheelchair, allowed him to answer his phone, place a phone call, turn the TV on and off, change channels and adjust the volume, as well as, control the room lights independently.

"... don't get me wrong, nursing homes are needed and are fine places for some people. I just want to stay home and do as much as I can for myself for as long as I can, keep my wife company and be part of my family. The technology you found for me lets me do that, thank you."

Participant with quadriplegia – Bismarck, North Dakota

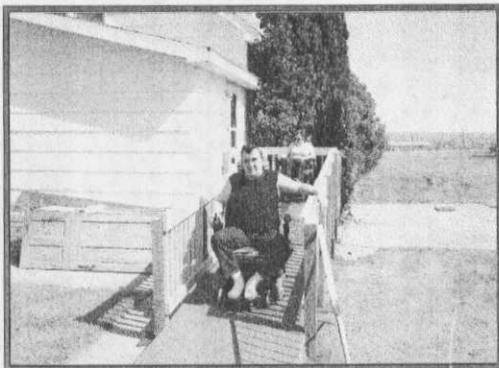


- Cost of AT device: \$1,624
- Cost of AT service: \$356²⁵
- Average cost of assisted living care: \$19,726/year
- Average cost of nursing facility care: \$43,815/year
- Having the choice to remain at home: **PRICELESS**

A middle-aged woman who has been blind since birth and lives alone with her cats was referred to the project. There was assistance available to help her do her shopping (food, medicine, clothing) when out in the community, but when it came time to cook, take medication, do laundry, or get dressed, she was on her own. This led to frequent frustration and safety concerns when wrong choices were made. Without vision, she found it difficult to determine which pill bottle was blood pressure medicine, which soup can was tomato, or which laundry items needed to be washed in cold water. To help make living alone with blindness less frustrating and safer, the i.d.-mate II Bar Code Scanner was purchased for her with project dollars. This device reads the item label and other item specific information (contents, weight, dosage) aloud as she moves the infrared scanner over the product barcode. She can then distinguish between medicine bottles, food products, clothing care instructions, and other coded information independently.

"... I take the i.d. mate II to the grocery store to identify the contents of canned goods, bottles, boxes, and bags before purchase. Once home, I can prepare meals independently and without waste by using the scanner to identify the container contents, and 'read' the directions for preparation on the package. No more opening a can of peaches when I wanted kidney beans for chili, or adding too much water to a rice dish and ending up with an icky rice soup."

Participant with blindness – Minot, North Dakota



- Cost of AT device? \$1,204¹⁵
- Cost of AT service? \$658⁶⁸
- Average cost of assisted living care: \$19,726/year
- Average cost of nursing facility care: \$43,815/year
- Having the choice to remain at home: **PRICELESS**

A married couple, who both use wheelchairs for mobility, were selected to be project participants. They were living in a house without a ramp, which rendered them prisoners in their own home – once inside, there was no safe way to get outside. A ramp was purchased for their home, making it possible for them to go in and out as they chose.

"... thank you for all the work and assistance you gave us in getting a wheelchair ramp built. We feel so much more safe and independent since we have had it – we can even get out to empty our own garbage again."

Participants with mobility issues – Williston, North Dakota

Comments from other Participants:

- Purchased: EZ Step, jar opener, and bathtub rail
- Total cost of AT services and devices: \$570⁸³
- Having the choice to remain at home: **PRICELESS**

"... I thought I needed a contractor to redo my shower and laundry room space because of the step, now I found out I can use an EZ Step instead for less than \$100 – this is great, and my kids will be so much less worried about me falling." "... it is nice to know my options, but for now I will just go with the tub-rail and bath bench – if I ever need the hydraulic bath lift, I know where to go."

Participant – Mandan, North Dakota



- Purchased: Swivel seat and emergency phone dialer
- Total cost of AT services and devices: \$1,111⁶⁰
- Having the choice to remain at home: **PRICELESS**

"... figuring out what my wife needed was really so simple, but I couldn't do it myself – I didn't know where to start... it seemed so big."

"... now, having my wife wear the Emergency Dialer Telephone pendant gives me peace of mind, and allows me to drive into town to run needed errands when it works out for me rather than making it work with a friend or family member's schedule."

Spouse – Wilton, North Dakota

- Purchased: Remote control deadbolt, Up-easy Chairlift, & an x-10 module
- Total cost of AT services and devices: \$708²³
- Having the choice to remain at home: **PRICELESS**

"... with my arthritis, using a key to unlock my door was difficult and painful, so many times I just left the door unlocked when I went out. When my kids found out I did that, they were not happy! So, what I want to say is that for me and them, this remote controlled deadbolt is a godsend."

Participant – Bismarck, North Dakota

- Purchased: Wireless keyboard and mouse, Palm ZIRE 72 with keyboard, 2 threshold ramps, and a wheelchair tray.
- Total cost of AT services and devices: \$2,215²³
- Having the choice to remain at home: **PRICELESS**

"...My husband and I would like to sincerely thank you and IPAT for the assistive devices he has received. Each and every one is truly an item that was so needed and we are so appreciative. We are most anxious to be able to use the threshold ramp so he can get in and out of the patio door to the back yard. With spring around the corner, it is such an uplifting thought for him to be able to make the transition from indoors to outdoors on his own. The wireless keyboard and mouse are so neat...no more wires getting caught in his feet under the desktop either."

Participant – Fargo, North Dakota



Types of Assistive Technology Services Delivered

IPAT provided the services necessary for the participants to select, obtain, and use the assistive technology needed to accomplish the activities they identified as priority. These services included: developing and administering a screening tool; completion of the assessment process; ordering and purchasing the equipment; set-up of the equipment in the individual's home; and necessary training specific to the devices purchased.

Types of Assistive Technology Devices Purchased

A total of 45 assistive technology devices were purchased to help the participants remain living where they chose. These devices fell into six equipment categories: Home or Building Access; Vehicle/Vehicle Access; Seating, Positioning and Personal Mobility; Vision Equipment; Health, Safety and Daily Living Equipment; and Computer and Related Computer Access Equipment.

Costs of the Assistive Technology Components

The total amount awarded to IPAT to complete the assistive technology activities identified in the *No Place Like Home* project was \$33,518.34. The following is a breakdown of expenditures.

Total Cost of AT Devices: \$13,625.⁸⁴

Range of device cost per participant: \$153.¹³ to \$1,624.⁰⁰

Average AT device cost per participant: \$681.²⁹

Total Cost of AT Services to participants: \$11,042.⁵¹

Range of AT service cost per participant: \$190.⁶⁰ to \$1447.⁸⁴

Average AT service cost per participant: \$552.¹²

Total Cost of General Training & Awareness: \$1,182.⁷³

Total Cost of Other IPAT Services: \$7,463.⁰⁶

Other services included: product development; review of all applications; management of service process; coordinate/research purchases of equipment; budget management; and costs related to project administration.

The average cost per participant for AT devices and services was lower than projected; consequently, funds were available to meet the assistive technology device and service needs of 5 additional people.

Average cost for nursing home care in North Dakota is \$43,815 per year and the average cost for assisted living care in North Dakota is \$19,726 per year. The average cost of the AT devices and services for an individual participating in this project is \$1,233.41.

When calling
911
follow the instructions
on the display.



Related Assistive Technology Programs, Senior AT Safety Program and Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program

At the same time that IPAT implemented the *No Place Like Home* project, they also administered the Senior Assistive Technology Safety Program (SATS) and North Dakota Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP). Some of the participants of the *No Place Like Home* project were also in need of specialized telephone equipment, medication dispensers, and AT safety equipment. IPAT was able to coordinate and extend resources by accessing funding from SATS and TEDP to provide those devices. This freed up money to buy other equipment for the participants and allowed 5 additional people to participate in the *No Place Like Home* project.

It is worth noting that in addition to the 45 devices provided through the *No Place Like Home* project that 588 medication devices (32 different types) were distributed through the SATS program from 2003-2005. Many notes and comments were received by IPAT regarding the differences they made. A typical comment "... our biggest concern for our mother living alone was that she mixes up her medicines and forgets to take them or takes them at the wrong time. After getting the MedReady, she now takes her medicine like she is supposed to and I now feel much more comfortable with her staying in her own home."

The SATS program distributed a total of 5130 pieces of AT safety equipment to 3508 people living in their homes. The TEDP program distributed a total of 510 telephones and 61 telephone accessories to 537 North Dakota residents. Although these folks have not been followed like the *No Place Like Home* participants, it is a fact the AT devices are assisting them to live 'safely' and remain in their own homes. A note from a Milton resident, "Thank you for all of the items... It's a wonderful program and will help many of us to stay at home."

Outcomes

The people served through the AT component of the *No Place Like Home* project had a number of services in place, but were still struggling to remain at home. The provision of AT devices and services had not been considered as part of their service plan prior to this project, and yet it was one of the decisive factors in making remaining home possible for them. The average cost of a participant to receive the assistive technology devices and services necessary to help them remain living at home was \$1,233. The average yearly cost for an individual to reside in a nursing home in North Dakota is \$43,815 and \$19,726 for assisted living care.

One year later, 17 of the 20 people are still in their own homes. They have delayed, and will possibly avoid, entering an institutional setting. They continue to live with their families, are more independent and safer as a result of the AT devices and services received through this project.

One individual moved away from North Dakota. She received services but no equipment, and her whereabouts are unknown.

Two of the individuals who participated in this project passed away approximately one year after receiving their AT devices and services. After their passing, IPAT received calls from family members stating what a huge difference the assistive technology made, especially in helping their family member to stay home the last months of their life. Recognizing the importance of AT, one family has donated the devices back to IPAT so someone else can benefit from their use.

Conclusion

This project showed that when the assistive technology provision is part of the service delivery plan, it can delay institutional or other high-cost placements. This in turn, enables people of all ages with disabilities or long term illnesses to have a choice as to where they live, which everyone can agree is PRICELESS.

"... We are still looked at as neighbors, husband and wife, parents and grandparents, rather than a woman alone with a husband living off in a separate facility as a member of the disabled community. Making changes to our living space and using assistive technology was more cost-effective for us and it allows us to be together. We stay active together. The quality of our lives is so much richer."

Spouse of a *No Place Like Home* Committee Member
Bismarck, North Dakota

Funded by the North Dakota Department of Human Services and
the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT)
September 1, 2003 – August 31, 2005

IPAT

Submitted by:
Judie Lee, Program Director
1-800-265-4728

January 4, 2007

To the North Dakota Legislature,

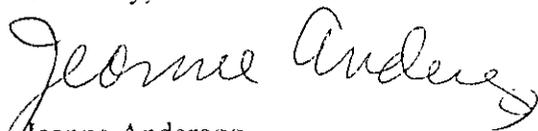
As the parent of a child with severe disabilities, I am writing to urge you to fund IPAT to as great an extent as is possible. Without IPAT, my son Niles would simply not be able to succeed in college or in life. As a student in the Grand Forks Public School system, Niles was well served by classroom and special education teachers, but he was not provided with any of the tools that would allow him to function independently. That's where IPAT stepped in. Without their guidance and expertise, Niles would be unable to cope with the demands of either college or the workplace.

Niles' disabilities affect his writing and reading, as well as his fine motor skills in general. Due to his fine motor problems, Niles will never be able to hold a job that requires normal manual dexterity, but without assistive technology, he would also be unable to function in an office or classroom setting. For years, we worried about how Niles would possibly support himself as an adult, but in his senior year at Grand Forks Central High School, his vocational rehabilitation counselor referred us to IPAT. At IPAT, Niles was shown and allowed to test out a number of different types of software and hardware that compensate at least partially for his disabilities. After an afternoon-long session with Jeannie Krull and with her recommendations in hand and her continued advice and support over the past two years, Niles has used assistive technology to earn a 3.2 gpa in college. To handle his coursework, Niles uses a voice recognition program, a reading and writing software program, books on tape, and several other tools. He would not have had the knowledge or resources to identify and master these tools without IPAT.

IPAT, then, made the difference in Niles' ability to transition to a productive adulthood. He still faces challenges, especially when he enters the workforce, but without IPAT, I think the odds of his ever successfully earning a living would be far less. In considering funding for IPAT, then, I would urge the North Dakota Legislature to consider this question: isn't it worth a modest investment in IPAT to ensure that disabled people can be productive members of society? We have a choice. Spend money through IPAT to equip people to meet the demands of the workplace, or spend money to provide food and shelter for people who cannot hold a job. I'd much rather see all disabled people given the tools they need to contribute to society and achieve as much independence as possible.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,


Jeannie Andereg

INNOVIS

H E A L T H

where innovation, vision and caring connect
1-5-07

Administrative Offices
1702 S. University Drive
Fargo, ND 58103
Phone: 701-364-8000
Fax: 701-364-8078
www.innovis.org

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing in support of the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT). As Occupational Therapists, we serve the greater Fargo-Moorhead area providing rehabilitative services for individuals birth to geriatrics. Patients and families are concerned with rising medical costs, including adaptive equipment, and maintaining maximal independence.

IPAT provides tangible resources that can be used by patients to assess the most reasonable and appropriate equipment to increase patient safety and independence. When patients and families ask questions such as: 1)"How can I call my daughter next door if I need her? I don't want to wear a Life Call button and I have trouble managing the phone." 2)"My mom is *physically* independent, but she is not able to safely remember how to take her medications. Will she have to go to a nursing home just because she can't take her medications?" 3)"Since my stroke I cannot open cans of food. I have seen different types of can openers, but don't know which one is best for me." 4)"I keep a cordless phone in my walker bag so I can always have it near me, but I am hard of hearing and can't hear using this phone. Is there a cordless phone available for those that are hard of hearing?" There are many more questions like this that IPAT allows us to help answer.

Through IPAT we are able to provide several options for trial. IPAT assists patients and families to save money by affording them the opportunity to see what sort of technology is available and what will best suit their needs before they purchase. In addition, the resources IPAT provides range from more expensive, specialized rehab equipment to inexpensive items that can be purchased at local discount department stores. This allows the patient to look beyond a price tag and marketing slogans to determine what products best facilitate their independence.

IPAT also provides a venue via the Swap 'n Shop for patients to buy, sell, swap, or donate equipment. This bulletin board facilitates networking as well as making good use of available resources in an economical way. Staff at IPAT have also been helpful in facilitating patients in accessing resources available for patients that we as therapists are not always aware of.

IPAT is important to helping us do our job better as it affords us and our patients to have equipment to trial, so patient's individual needs can be met. IPAT also is able to provide accurate and helpful information regarding appropriate funding and resources available to meet patient needs.

IPAT is one of the most practical resources available in rural North Dakota. Without IPAT's services many of our disabled community would needlessly waste valuable dollars on inappropriate adaptive equipment and/or excessive caregiving that could be avoided with technology that facilitates independence.

Thank you for your consideration for continued service to our community.

Sincerely,


Michelle Enockson, OTR/L


Jennifer Birst, OTR/L

313 27th St. NW
Minot, ND 58703
January 17, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

My husband is disabled with a fifteen year course of Parkinson Disease. We have received very useful recommendations from the IPAT program corordinator, Peggy Shireley, including resources concerning devices to aid him with his complicated medication schedule.

The IPAT program was first introduced to our Parkinson Support Group members at our monthly meeting. Peggy did a thorough and enthusiastic presentation of all the services available and responded to questions concerning individual disabilities and situations.

We look forward to utilizing this service again, knowing that my husband will be experiencing increasing difficulties and challenging problems. The services IPAT offers are invaluable in preventing accidents, enhancing life experiences and improving quality of life for not only my husband but the disabled statewide.

Our support group has become aware that there are limited resources available to members with Young Onset Parkinsons. These people, ages 40-60 and in the middle income range, have found very limited help. They do not qualify for poverty programs but are financially strapped keeping up with normal expenses. Often they are from a household of families or couples with single incomes in which the disabled member may not have the work history to qualify for Disability. The additional expenses posed by medical problems, even if covered or partially covered by insurance leave these people finding fees for much needed services prohibitive.

IPAT's Swap 'n Shop, the Equipment Loan and the Alternative Financial Loan Programs are very helpful in these situations. Continued federal funding is a valuable use of our tax dollars and state funding for IPAT services would be invaluable to the disabled in North Dakota, especially those in the middle age/middle income group..

Sincerely,
Dianne Kery

Connie Rawls

From: Barbara Nutter [barbara.nutter@gmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, December 21, 2006 8:15 PM

To: Connie Rawls

Subject: Hi from Bobbie Nutter

Hi Connie!! I received the most wonderful Christmas gift this afternoon! The CapTel arrived from UPS delivery and I am so delighted!!! I cannot thank you enough. It is boxed and I am not going to set it up until my grandson gets home from college this weekend. He is so much more knowledgeable about all of this than I ever could be. I wanted you to know how pleased I am before the long Christmas weekend, and I will write you again after I get the phone working. I cannot thank you enough for your prompt response to my request. It is like a miracle! Please have a Happy Holiday and a very Merry Christmas and I will write you again next week. Thanks so much! Bobbie Nutter

Barbara Nutter

Connie -

What a wonderful Christmas Gift for me to receive! The CapTel will give me a new lease on life! The independence of making my own phone calls will be remarkable for me! Thank you so very much - And a very Merry Christmas - and special Holiday Season to you!

With Gratitude!!

Bobbie Nutter

DEC 23 2006

Altru Clinic – Cavalier

P. O. Box 40
201 East 3rd Avenue South
Cavalier, ND 58220

Stacie Metelmann, RN, CDE
smetelmann@altru.org

Telephone: 701-265-8338
Fax: 701-265-4077
Voice Mail: 701-265-3358

December 21, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: PROPOSAL FOR STATE FUNDING OF IPAT

It is with excitement as both a professional and a parent of an individual with special needs that I write this letter of support for IPAT.

As a professional I refer many individuals to IPAT for individualized support services to keep them independent and in their homes. Many of my clients have physical limitations that would prevent them from staying independently in their homes without very simple and innovative help devices, that are many times inexpensive. With a mere telephone call the staff can recommend, "the latest and greatest" items that meet each person's needs and/or provide an individualized assessment to meet those needs. They also have been an invaluable service as a clearing house for grant monies to assist these individuals in purchasing the items that they need and house the medication reminder systems that so many utilize in maintaining their independence.

As a parent of a 19 year old daughter with special needs I have called on IPAT in numerous instances to assist me and the school district in special evaluations of her needs and required services, particularly in the areas of augmentive communication. They have given our daughter the gift of being able to communicate her basic needs to us and strangers. Additionally, the Lending Library program allowed us and the school to utilize equipment and soft ware before making a costly mistake in purchasing inappropriate items.

It is with sincere enthusiasm that I recommend funding for the services offered by IPAT.

Sincerely yours,

Stacie Metelmann, RN
Certified Diabetes Educator
Coordinator of The Diabetes Center of Altru Clinic-Cavalier



600 S 2nd St., Suite 8
Bismarck, ND 58504
701-221-3232

Christmas in April®

Greater Bismarck/Mandan Area, Inc.
an affiliate of **Rebuilding Together™**

January 10, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

As President of the board of directors for Rebuilding Together, formerly Christmas in April, I would like to commend the work that is done by the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT). IPAT's coordinator, Peggy Shireley, is a member of Rebuilding Together's board of directors and has provided our organization with invaluable guidance in regards to safety and accessibility issues for the elderly and disabled we work with. Each year we choose a number of homes to rehabilitate in a way that will help the elderly and disabled to stay in their home in a warm and safe environment; an integral part of our rehabilitation is the installation of safety equipment. IPAT, with Peggy Shireley's guidance has visited each of the homes we rehabilitated, assessed the homeowner's needs, and installed the appropriate equipment. This service has made a marked difference in several homeowners' lives. The installation of grab bars alone has helped several people feel more secure and lowered the risk of falls for those clients; thus improving their quality of life.

I have personally seen the difference the IPAT program can make in a person's well-being, safety and independence and strongly recommend your support of this organization. IPAT fills a need for many elderly and disabled persons that otherwise would be left unfulfilled. Please support this organization in any way possible.

Sincerely,

Wendy Pank
President of the Board of Directors
Rebuilding Together

Flasher, ND
December 29, 2006

IPAT
107 West Main-Suite 225
Bismarck ND 58535

Dear Peggy,

On behalf of the family of Elizabeth Frederick, we would like to take this opportunity to say "thank you" to the staff at IPAT for the helpful assistance you offered us.

Our mother was well on the way to a nursing home when John and I attended a workshop for Senior/Caregivers. After hearing Peggy Shirely's presentation we visited the office in Bismarck to rent the up-lift seat, which proved to be invaluable. As a result of having been allowed to rent the seat on a trial basis, we were able to determine this is the thing Mom needed.

We have shared the value of renting equipment we now know is available with other caregivers in our area.

We have certainly appreciate the services we have received from IPAT and urge others to take advantage of their services.

Sincerely,

John & Eunice Tomson

3603 13th St. SW
Minot, ND 58701
January 05, 2007

Peggy Shireley
IPAT
107 West Main – Suite 225
Bismarck, ND 58501

To Whom This May Concern:

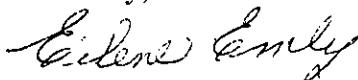
I am one of the leaders in our Parkinson's Support Group of Minot. I am, also, on the staff of our AARP group. Peggy Shireley spoke at both of our groups. She did a wonderful speech on the help the elderly may obtain if they are handicapped and for others in special needs.

Many of the people were amazed at what technology is available for those in need. Example: One of our people can't speak, she got a phone in which she can type out a message on a vocal machine and then send it to her family so she can communicate to her family and others. Another person having difficulty dialing numbers on a phone is getting a phone with pictures, which can be pushed, which will then dial the numbers. IPAT goes out of their way to suggest things the people can make or purchase to meet their need. They also are willing to go in homes and help people with needed skills.

Our state has always had strong work ethics. I don't feel we should let these people sit back and feel no one cares now in their time of age or need. They still have much to offer our state. IPAT is doing a wonderful job but in order for them to help meet the needs of these people they need to get help financially from our state. The coordinators of this group go out of their way in a friendly and caring way to do what they can do.

IPAT is trying to help people get out of their "box". It is exciting to watch the excitement when these people can get any help and hope.

Sincerely,



Eilene Emly



1-3-2007

To Whom It May Concern:

We have been fortunate to be at the receiving end of services and products from the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology, IPAT.

The Medication machines that the agency has been able to distribute have been invaluable to our clients. These are machines that our nurses fill and then they are locked and dispense meds at the appropriate time for the client. So many times poor medication compliance is the reason people need to move out of their homes to places with more assistance. Our agency has received machines to assist at least 40-50 clients.

As we visit clients in Burleigh County we often have requests for safety and assistive equipment. Many times the client does not have the resources or the ability to just go and buy the product. IPAT has been able to help these clients.

We feel the IPAT is a valuable community asset.

Thank you for all of your considerations for this program.

Sincerely,

Connie Griffin, RN
Bismarck Burleigh Public Health
500 East Front
Bismarck, ND



MeritCare Health System
801 Broadway N.
PO Box MC
Fargo, ND 58122
(701) 234-2000

Roger L. Gilbertson, M.D., President/C.E.O.

January 9, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

Please consider this letter in support of additional funding for the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT). I am a Speech-Language Pathologist at MeritCare Hospital in Fargo, ND. We receive numerous referrals for patients with communication needs requiring alternative and augmentative communication. I have utilized IPAT for resources, education, feedback, and loaner devices on numerous occasions. Without the tools provided to me through IPAT, I would not have been able to adequately meet the needs of these patients. The knowledgeable staff has been superb in providing guidance, as well as supportive in allowing my patients to trial various devices to determine which device would best meet their needs. In addition, I have patients who have relied on IPAT to meet their Assistive Technology needs to enhance safety and independence, for example with medication management. Through the services and equipment offered by IPAT, my patients have been able to increase independence, enhance their communication, and improve their overall quality of life.

Please consider additional funding for this invaluable program. The services provided by IPAT are necessary to meet the most basic needs of numerous individuals in our area. Without IPAT, many of these needs would go unmet, as there are not agencies within our region that provide comparable services. IPAT is extremely beneficial to myself, as a local provider, but is significant to the individuals who receive the direct assistance of the agency. I urge you to advocate for the necessary funding to not only maintain, but promote, this outstanding service.

Sincerely,


Jena Gorden, MS CCC-SLP

Our Mission

*To improve the health and quality
of life of the people we serve.*

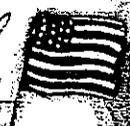


Dec 26, 2006

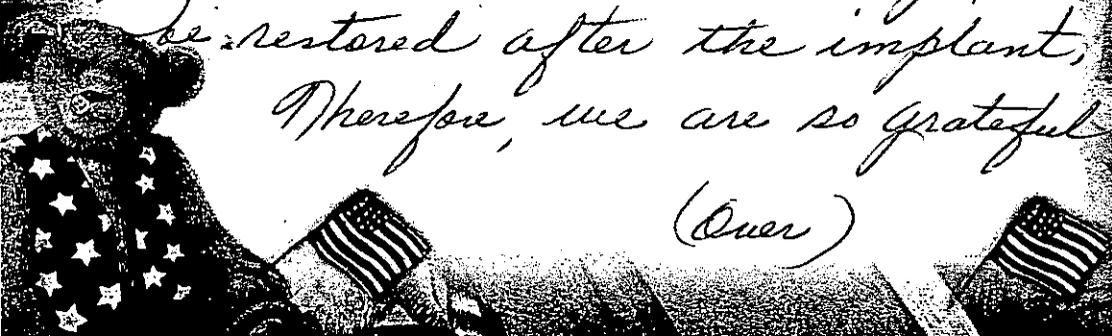
To Whom It May Concern:



My Mother lost her hearing in June - she is a candidate for a cochlear implant which will be in Jan. In the meantime one of the audiologists suggested I talk to someone at S.P.A. + to see if I could rent an amplified phone for Mom during the time she is awaiting the implant. We did not want to purchase a phone because her hearing will be restored after the implant. Therefore, we are so grateful



(Over)



to be able to borrow the phone
from the lending library.

The staff has been so helpful
and patient as I asked many
questions.

We are very thankful to have
the lending library available to
those of us that need to borrow
equipment for a brief time.

We are so pleased with DPA+
services.

Sincerely
Karen Enge
409 - 3rd St. NE
Valley City, ND
58072

My mother is Erna
Wagner who lives in Grand

January 2, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Paula Weiler and I am the Assistive Technology Specialist for the Fargo Public Schools. I am writing this letter on behalf of the North Dakota Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT) which provides access to assistive technology throughout the state of ND. IPAT is a valuable resource for students with disabilities because it provides access to equipment and various technologies to support student's academic success. Through IPAT, students are able to access equipment or software for a trial period of time for a nominal rental fee. Instead of the school district or parents of the student purchasing expensive software or assistive equipment without having the opportunity to evaluate before purchasing, IPAT is used as a resource to "test" the equipment. This allows the student and school personnel to find a solution for those students who are struggling to be academically successful. A large number of staff and student's throughout schools in Fargo use IPAT and have found this service agency to be a valuable resource.

Sincerely,

Paula Weiler, M.S. CCC-SLP
Assistive Technology Specialist
Fargo Public Schools

Paula Weiler, MS CCC-SLP



Department of Occupational Therapy
Division of Human Performance Sciences
7500 University Drive
Bismarck, ND 58504-9652
(701) 255-7500

January, 12, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to request the North Dakota Legislature to continue its support of the Interagency Project for assistive Technology (IPAT). This project is North Dakota's implementation of the Assistive Technology Act, most recently reauthorized in 2004 (PL 108-364). This project is a means to provide information and access to assistive technology to individuals in the state who have disabilities.

I am a professor at the University of Mary in Bismarck, ND and I use the services of IPAT in various ways. I teach an assistive technology (AT) course to occupational therapy and education students who will be some of the future practitioners providing services for people across the lifespan (infants through geriatrics) who have disabilities. These students receive information from IPAT, and also learn how the services provided through this project can be utilized in their future areas of practice.

I see the benefits of services provided by IPAT in several areas. First, as a professor teaching students, I am able to have someone from IPAT explain their services to my students. The students are also able to see demonstrations of several devices used by people with different disabilities when they visit the IPAT center in Bismarck or attend the statewide AT Expo held in Fargo.

As my students are working with people with disabilities, both now and in the future, they can use the IPAT programs to help their clients access the needed AT to attain, maintain, or regain independence in many life areas. IPAT provides a means to try different equipment prior to purchase for a very minimal fee, so various governmental and private funding sources are not asked to buy devices that may not work for the client. Through the IPAT loan program, clients are able to try devices. This can save other agencies thousands of dollars in wasted funds if devices are purchased, then abandoned due to inefficient or ineffective trials.

Another service provided by IPAT is a financial loan program for individuals to purchase needed AT devices. The loan program offers lower interest rates and flexible payment options so people with a need may be more able to purchase needed devices.

Millions of people across the US and thousands of people in North Dakota use AT for increased independence and improved quality of life. Please continue funding IPAT so this agency can do its part in allowing access to AT to persons with disabilities in our state. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Carol H. Olson, PhD, OTR/L
Department of Occupational Therapy

Peggy Shireley

From: Geneal Roth [GROTH@ndqio.sdps.org]
Sent: Thursday, July 13, 2006 1:58 PM
To: peggy.ipat@midconetwork.com
Subject: Telephone

Hi Peggy,

I just wanted to let you know of a success story from here in Minot. When you were at Salute to Seniors this spring in Minot, I had a booth next to yours and we discussed a telephone for an individual I knew with MS. I obtained an application from you and passed it along to the family. The individual has received his phone and a friend set it up for him. To say he loves it is an understatement. It is working out so well for him and has made communication so much more accessible. It's hard for someone like me to imagine that something as simple as a phone could make someone's life so much more enjoyable. Anyway, I just want you to know that a family in Minot really appreciates the assistance IPAT has provided!

Have a great week!

Geneal L. Roth
Communications Specialist
North Dakota Health Care Review, Inc
800 31st Avenue SW
Minot, ND 58701
701-852-4231 (Voice)
701-838-6009 (Fax)
groth@ndqio.sdps.org

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January 4, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of funding for the IPAT program in North Dakota. I am a speech-language pathologist at a long term care facility. I have had the pleasure of working with Peggy Shireley at the IPAT center in Bismarck over the last few months. One of the residents on my caseload had been diagnosed with advanced Parkinson's disease and was referred to me for increased difficulties in communicating. After evaluating this patient, it was evident the greatest breakdown of communication was during telephone conversations. In need of an assistive device, I was referred to IPAT by a colleague of mine who is employed at one of the local hospitals.

I contacted Peggy at IPAT and within a few weeks my patient, myself, and her family were invited to the IPAT office to try different devices that would best meet my patient's needs. Less than two weeks from that appointment my patient was successfully using her new telephone and reported a decrease in communication breakdowns. My patient and I were both very happy with the services we received at IPAT.

I have talked with other disciplines in the rehab department at my facility and they are anxious to learn more about the IPAT program. We are planning an in-service for the staff to educate them on the services available at IPAT. I am looking forward to working with Peggy again, and would definitely recommend the program to those in need of assistive devices. I am very thankful we have a program like IPAT in our community.

Thank you,

Amanda Miller MS, CF-SLP
Health Dimensions Rehab

DEC 27 2006

To whom it may concern:

We were very pleased after traveling to Fargo to learn about the assistive technology. Dillon was very excited about the information he received. We are hoping

the school will get involved in the wide variety of the educational technology that has been available and is available to the students, which will help develop the young minds of the many students with

(disabilities). The technology

will help Dillon with his comprehensive reading and writing.

Our son at the moment struggles on a daily bases with his reading and test taking. We feel with the help of the assistive technology he will struggle less and will become more independent without the help of tutors and special ed teachers.

Sincerely
Dillon, Pam, + Jess

South Central Adult Services

Central Office at:

139 2nd Avenue Southeast~P.O. Box 298~Valley City, North Dakota 58072~845-4300~Pat Hansen
Project Director

January 3, 2007

Regarding Funding for equipment that IPAT supplies to the elderly & disabled:

IPAT
P.O. Box 743
Cavalier, ND 58220

To Whom It May Concern:

We would like to inform you of the benefits that we have seen individuals gain by having this program available to them. As our population ages there are many issues that face them if they develop disabilities. The bath benches, tub rails, elevated toilet seats etc. enable individuals to take care of their own bathing and toileting needs so that they can stay independent longer. They can function in their own homes and stay where they have been living without having to move somewhere else.

When the ice gets so thick and slippery that the average person has problems standing on their feet, IPAT has supplied rubber grips that attach to the shoes or boots. Medication dispensers are available to remind people to take their medication. This enables a person to take their medications on time and as often as the doctor has prescribed them to do so. Many persons with a hearing impairment are benefiting from having a telephone that they can use to communicate with family and friends.

Please do whatever you can to provide this program with funding so that they are able to serve our elderly and disabled people.

Yours truly,



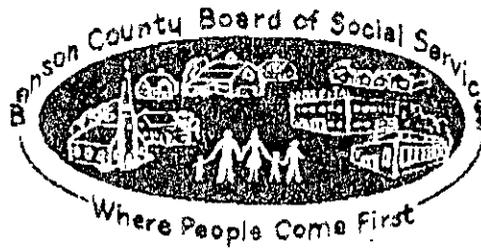
Dolly Hoelmer
Outreach Staff

Phone: (701) 845-4300 or 1-800-472-0031

Fax: (701) 845-4073

Serving the Counties of:
Barnes, LaMoure, Foster, Logan, McIntosh, Griggs

Administrative Office
PO Box 186
108 Fourth St. East
Minnewaukan, ND 58351-0186
Phone 701-473-5302
Fax 701-473-5330



Economic Assistance Office
PO Box 186
210 Seventh St. East
Minnewaukan, ND 58351-0186
Phone 701-473-5302
Fax 701-473-2511
Outreach Office
416 Second Ave. North
Fort Totten, ND 58335
Phone 701-766-4622

DECEMBER 28, 2006

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

THE EQUIPMENT I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACCESS THROUGH THE IPAT PROGRAM FOR RESIDENTS OF BENSON COUNTY, CAN AND DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR GOAL OF MAINTAINING AND SERVING PEOPLE IN THEIR OWN HOMES.

SERVICE DELIVERY IN BENSON COUNTY, A MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED, RURAL AREA, IS, AND CONTINUES TO BE, A NEVER ENDING CHALLENGE. THE AVAILABILITY OF DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT, AT NO CHARGE TO THE INDIVIDUAL, ASSISTS IN ALLEVIATING ONE OF OUR MANY CHALLENGES.

AS ALWAYS, COST IS A FACTOR. THE EQUIPMENT AN INDIVIDUAL RECEIVES COSTS MONEY AND GRANT MONEY IS LIMITED. AS USUAL, NEED EXCEEDS FUNDING. FOR ME, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLACE A "DOLLAR VALUE" RELATED TO THE SAFETY THE EQUIPMENT ALLOWS TO THE INDIVIDUAL AS WELL AS THEIR CAREGIVER.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE IPAT STAFF FOR A JOB WELL DONE! THE COOPERATION AND CONTINUED SUPPORT OF IPAT STAFF EACH TIME I MAKE A REFERRAL, MAKES MY JOB SO MUCH EASIER!

SINCERELY YOURS,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Carole Lysne".

CAROLE LYSNE, HSPA III

12/22/06

To whom it may concern,

I am an Occupational Therapist at Medcenter One for the past 23 yrs. The Services of IPAT have been extremely helpful to my patients, clients and residents to allow greater safety and Independence. The program has helped those of all ages.

It is important that the ongoing Services of IPAT be continued to ensure that the special needs, handicaps, elderly are provided with the programming, services and equipment IPAT has offered. Please consider future advancement of IPAT services and programming.

Sincerely

Monica K. McCleary OTR/L
Occupational Therapist

JAMES RIVER SENIOR CITIZEN'S CENTER, INC.

502 10th Ave. Southeast · P.O. Box 1092
Jamestown, North Dakota 58402-1092
Phone 701-252-2882

December 19, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Anne Kainz. I am the Outreach worker in Jamestown North Dakota. IPAT has helped my clients in so many ways, from grabbers from the safety grant to phones for the hard of hearing, medicine dispensers and smoke detectors. Connie has been very helpful in so many ways. In my opinion IPAT is a very resourceful and needed program in our area.

Thank You,

Anne Kainz

Anne Kainz

STARK COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICE BOARD

664 12th Street West
Dickinson, ND 58601

Telephone: (701) 456-7675
FAX: (701) 456-7777
Emergency: (701) 456-7762
TDD: (701) 456-7675

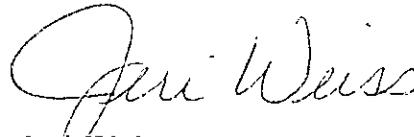
Mr. L. J. Bernhardt,
Agency Director

December 28, 2006

To whom it may concern:

I would like to take this opportunity to express my support for the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology(IPAT). Their programs, staff training and technical assistance have been a valuable tool to me in my work with the elderly and disabled population in North Dakota. Please consider funding at the appropriate level for this important program.

Sincerely,



Jeri Weiss
Home and Community Based
Services Casemanager
Licensed Social Worker



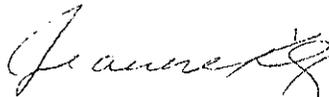
Mr. L.J. Bernhardt
Agency Director
JRW
Enclosures

December 22, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a speech language pathologist who has provided services to clients who present with various communication impairments for the past 20 years. I have used IPAT as a resource and provider of loaner communication devices since they began operating. The ability to loan a communication device is of utmost importance in the treatment of individuals with communication impairments. The cost saving of renting a device directly from the manufacturing company is great. Many companies will not lend/lease devices and make trials close to impossible. Each client has unique needs and many times requires trial periods of more than one device to meet these needs. I look forward to working with IPAT in their new Bismarck location. Web cam services are available at this site where I will be able to bring clients to the IPAT office and confer directly with IPAT therapists in completing of augmentative communication evaluations. I fully support IPAT and have found their services very valuable in providing quality services to the clients we serve.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Kilzer, M.S., C.C.C./SLP

12-23-06

To whom it may concern,

I have been using services provided by IPAT for about 15 years now. IPAT is very important to me because it helps me stay on top of the latest assistive technology devices that can only better my life. I had been using a communication device called a Canon Communicator for approximately 17 years and when the paper to run the machine became obsolete, I was introduced to the newest communication devices. Although the change was difficult, the new device (The Lightwriter) has made a world of difference. I can't even begin to explain how great it is. All thanks to the IPAT staff Jeannie Krull, for working with me to help me find a device that would work well for me and my needs.

I use IPAT for their assistance in the best devices for me and my life.

I support this bill and hope you do as well. It's a much needed service.

Thank you,

Joanna Tehle

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joanna Tehle". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the printed name.

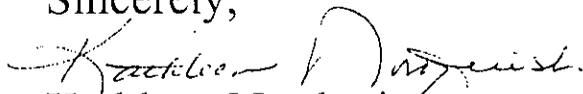
Trinity Lutheran Church
502 North 3rd Street
Bismarck, ND 58501
January 9, 2007

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter in support of Peggy Shireley and the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology. I, as the Medcenter One Parish Nurse Coordinator, have used Peggy's expertise in assistive devices and the IPAT agency many times in procuring help and advice in dealing with the aging population I serve. At times, because of limited or lack of funding I have not been able to place assistive devices and help in the hands of the individuals that needed it the most. With funding through ND state dollars this problem would be rectified. I would support state funding of IPAT wholeheartedly.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Kathleen Nordquist

Medcenter One Parish Nurse Coordinator

12-22-06

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Amy Lindquist and I am an outreach worker in Mountain Co for Minut Commission on Aging and also for Kenmore Wheels and Meals in the Burke, Renville & Goose Lake of Ward Counties. I have many seniors who are unable to purchase the items that we were getting from IPAT and Connie Rawls.

I would like my vote last November to mean something for these elderly people. Please restore funding and more for those out here in the rural N.D. who can not afford these items or are unable to go shop for these items.

Thank you.

Amy Lindquist

7750 68th Ave NW
Donnybrook, ND 58734-9526

Connie Rawls

From: Jeannie [jwonder@utma.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 20, 2006 2:09 PM
To: Connie Rawls
Subject: IPAT

regarding funding for this service:

I worked with this program for a number of years when i was an outreach worker for seniors. I found it to be a great service, not only for the AT items but for informing folks that there are items "out there" that would benefit them. Most important, as some may know there are items but not know how to go about getting them; there, IPAT comes in as this program is wonderful at helping folks find what they want.

I surely hope this program continues to be funded to enable folks to stay in their homes longer.

jeannie steinwand
former outreach worker for seniors

12/20/2006

Judie Lee

From: wsagingcouncil@srt.com
Sent: Monday, January 08, 2007 1:03 PM
To: jlee@polarcomm.com
Subject: Funding

To Whom It My Concern: My name is Deanna Bjorgen and I am an Outreach/Patient Advocate for the Aging. I have utilized IPAT numerous times in the 4 years I have been in this position. They are a much needed organization for not only the aging, but for all who need assistive devices. I strongly believe this a a very worthwhile and needed service. Sincerely, Deanna Bjorgen/
WSCAC Outreach

Good Morning, Chairman Lee and Members of
The Senate Human Services Committee

My name is Bob Puyear, and I live in District Number 47, Bismarck.

I am here to testify in support of **SB 2211**

I have been a member of the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology's (IPAT) Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) for over 10 years. I have been interested in serving on this committee for all of this time because I am a strong believer in and a user of Assistive Technology (AT).

As you can see, I have a very severe disability called MS. I have had it for over 50 years. Various types of AT have allowed me to remain fairly independent while living at home with much assistance from my wife and daughter. Some of this AT that I use it is quite expensive, but most of it is not. A brief summary of the AT I use is listed below:

1. The voice recognition program that I'm using to write this testimony is used because I basically cannot physically use a keyboard;
2. This three wheel cart and another one like it that I have used for over 20 years have become my legs;
3. I have used environmental control in my home for over 10 years. This allows me to control lights, fans, air conditioners and much more simply by pressing a button. The amazing thing is, it is not overly expensive and allows me a great deal of independence, as it does my wife and daughter;
4. My bathroom is accessible. It has a wide door, elevated toilet, and wheel-in shower;
5. The end of the duplex where my wife and I live has an elevator. This allows me access to three levels in our home.

If this program does not receive state funding there will be a number of individuals who will not receive assistance. IPAT assists people so that they do not need to move into nursing homes, if that is their choice. This saves the state money. IPAT provides assistance to students in the educational system in North Dakota. In most cases this assistance is not available from anyone else in the state. They have an equipment loan library where people can borrow a piece of equipment to determine if it works for them before they purchase it. This saves them and sometimes the state money. They also offer an equipment recycling program. If the state were to buy into this concept of purchasing and recycling previously owned equipment it would save them money.

I encourage members to support funding for IPAT and thank you for allowing me time to share my thoughts about the importance of **SB 2211** and AT to those of us who are experiencing the effects of aging and those who have disabilities.

Senate Human Services Committee Senate Bill 2211 January 24, 2007

Chairman Lee, and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, my name is Jillian Schaible and I live in Bismarck, ND; I have asked Peggy Shireley to read my testimony as I do not enjoy public speaking. I am here today to support Senate Bill 2211 to appropriate funds to the Department of Human Services for the support of assistive technology services.

Without the services of the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT), I would not have the information about or be using the assistive technology I do today. I have worked with the IPAT program for over 10 years. They first helped me when I was in junior high school, by loaning me a software program that had word prediction. After using the software I found out it did not work for me, and avoided having the school system spend \$200 on the program. Since the first program did not work, IPAT introduced me to Dragon Dictate, software that allows me to dictate what I want to type instead of using a keyboard. I am still using it today.

During my search for a job after college, I discovered that I can't manually pass the standard typing test. I found this discouraging because I didn't know how I was going to get around this requirement.

I realized I was going to have to find jobs that will allow me to use Dragon software, so I found an agency to help me purchase it. Since the software would need to be specifically for me, most businesses would have issues putting it on a company-owned computer. It was then I figured out I was going to need my own laptop. This way, I could use the voice recognition software where and when I need it. Accordingly, I needed to find funding for a laptop I couldn't personally afford.

Knowing the software and the laptop were necessary, I asked for help from some agencies, but was refused. That's when I contacted Peggy again, who suggested I rent a laptop from IPAT's Equipment Loan Library to make sure my idea would work before continuing to pursue it.

After finding that the laptop and Dragon software greatly improved my work performance level, I asked Peggy to write a letter verifying this, which she did. I took my request and her letter to a non-profit organization. My request was then granted, because I was able to prove the laptop is a necessity for me, both personally, as well as professionally. I am now putting it to use at my volunteer position at St. Alexius Medical Center.

I am here today in support of IPAT because without it, I can honestly say I probably wouldn't be where I am today. Without Peggy's recommendation of voice recognition software, it is likely I wouldn't have worked so hard to pursue school and a good job, because I didn't think I could keep up with my peers. I feel that IPAT is a critical program for people who need assistive technology like me. I think it could do even more with state appropriated funds, and I hope you will grant their request for state appropriated funds.

Thank you for your time, and will answer any questions at this time.



Affordable Housing Developers, Inc.

PROVIDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR WESTERN NORTH DAKOTA

State Human Services Committee
Senate Bill 2211
January 24, 2007

*Same
given to
Senate
approps*

Chairman Lee, members of the Senate Human Services Committee, I am Pam Weng, Housing Assistant of Affordable Housing Developers, Inc., I wish to testify on SB 2211, in support of funding for IPAT.

AHDI is a partnership dedicated to the creation and preservation of affordable housing in WND. As a part of our single family housing development in Mandan, we decided to build two homes with special features to meet the identified need in the Bismarck/Mandan area for affordable, accessible housing. The potential buyers were to be either elderly persons experiencing the effects of aging and/or existing families having a member with a disability. We formed an ad-hoc committee and over a 10 month period hammered out a sensitive and flexible design. IPAT proved to have a wealth of information on affordable and innovative design features and provided us with connections to families who have adapted their homes so that we could see the "real thing" in action and get practical advice on the many options under consideration.

According to the Statewide Housing Needs Assessment, completed in November of 2004, the numbers of elderly homebuyers are expected to increase by 42 percent over the next 10 years. The Assessment recommended that "top priority" be given to exploring ways to address future elderly housing issues. It also directed that "special attention" be given to developing housing for special needs populations. IPAT has a history of providing information specific to these top priorities, thereby making it possible for people to stay out of restrictive environments and allowing them to age in place.

I urge you to pass this legislation so that IPAT can continue and expand its great work.

1221 Airport Road • Bismarck, ND 58504
Phone (701) 530-1940 • Fax (701) 355-4285 • email: ahdi@qwest.net



This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Testimony
North Dakota Disabilities Advocacy Consortium

SB 2211
Assistive Technology Services

Senate Human Services Committee
January 24, 2007

Same testimony given to Senate Approx

Chairperson Lee, members of the Senate Human Services Committee, I am James M. Moench, Executive Director of the North Dakota Disabilities Advocacy Consortium (NDDAC). The Consortium is made up of 22 organizations concerned with addressing the issues that affect people with disabilities. We are very interested in improving the ability of people with disabilities to fully participate in all aspects of life in North Dakota.

The Consortium fully supports SB 2211, funding for the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT). The potential for technology to greatly improve the quality of life for a person with a disability can not be overstated. A small sample of the impact that technology can have can be found in the project report that IPAT made on a project "No Place like Home" that was conducted with funding from the ND Olmstead Commission. The impacts of assistive technology in helping people remain in their home, priceless.

The IPAT program is designed to get the right tool into the hands of a person with a disability or a long term illness. The ability to try before you buy has saved a great deal of money and lessened the level of frustration for persons with disabilities and their families as they try to deal with very stressful adjustment to a disability or illness. The right tool for the right job at an affordable cost is the goal.

I appreciate this opportunity to testify on behalf of the NDDAC in support of SB 2211 and look forward to working with you during the course of this legislative session.

Thank you.

Testimony
Senate Bill 2211 -- Department of Human Services
Human Services Committee
Senator Judy Lee, Chairwoman
January 24, 2007

*Summe given to
Senate
Clippings -*

Senator Lee and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, good morning.

My name is Bob Vandal. I reside in Bismarck in District 30. I am in full support of Senate Bill 2211.

I am legally blind and found it difficult to operate a conventional telephone. I contacted the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT) to see what may be available to assist me in the operation of my phone. I was shown a phone with extra large keys and also an audio that repeats, back to you, the key that you just pressed. It works fabulous.

This is a simple example of how IPAT has helped me. For others, there are examples of solutions that are much more technical than mine. From the simplest to the most difficult, they have either made life easier or helped someone stay employed.

Should my vision deteriorate further, I know I will be able to call IPAT once more to get technical help. Or will I? Without these appropriations, I am concerned with the level of services that IPAT will be able to continue to provide.

I want to thank you for your time and I respectfully ask for your full support in the passage of this bill. If there are any questions for me I would be happy to try to answer them.

**Senate Human Services Committee
Senate Bill 2211
January 24, 2007**

Chairman Lee, members of the Senate Human Services Committee, I am Karen Cossette. I am here today to provide testimony about the assistive technology services my family received through the IPAT program.

I'd like to begin by telling you about my dad, Gib Kreitel, who died of a muscle wasting disease on January 6th last year. I must confess, I'm a "Daddy's Girl" thru and thru, so I may have a bit of difficulty telling you our story, please bear with me. Dad was a strong, independent, hard working cattle rancher. Mom often says, "There was the easy way to do things and Gib's way." If it was how his father did it in the '20s, that was how we did it. He could toss a 75 pound hay bale with ease, and work from sunup to sundown when necessary. He was frugal, loyal, and occasionally stubborn. He was almost always of good humor and disliked having anyone fuss over or about him. These characteristics did not change when his body began to change, and to fail him.

As Dad's body did begin to fail him, we had to watch for it and offer assistance. His stubborn streak came out, and he all but refused to ask for help. The Progressive Muscular Atrophy started as a weakness in his left arm, then his right. Over time, he lost the ability to move both arms; imagine being able to walk to the dinner table but being unable to raise your arms to feed yourself. This is such a basic, simple act, yet he could no longer manage it. With agonizing slowness, yet frightening speed, following the loss of upper body movement came the loss of first his left leg, then his right. We progressed

from occasional stumbles to a really bad fall that left him on the floor and in the dark for hours. After that fall, he decided he could no longer move about safely on his own. In true stubborn form, he refused to get a wheelchair that he could operate, so for several weeks Dad's world consisted of bed, toilet, shower and the lift chair in the living room. Meanwhile, Mom worked with various agencies to get him loaned a power wheelchair to "try". Once we got him to try the chair, he nearly immediately ordered a chair of his own and Mom started her search for a reliable van with a lift. After looking at several older, high mileage vans with lifts which had doubtful reliability, we purchased a van and had a lift installed so he could stay connected to the world outside our home. He was able tag along on a trip to the mall, and "people watch". And we were able to take him to his only grandchild's school activities.

Thankfully, my parents had the foresight to build a home that was accessible in 2000. It has wide doorways, an open floor plan, and an accessible bathroom with a roll-in shower with a drop down bench. My dad's one wish was to stay at home with my mom. Dad thought nursing homes were needed and were fine for some people, but it was NOT for him. With their accessible home, various mobility devices, and the help of family members and friends to dress, feed, bathe, and move Dad from one place to another we were able to make Dad's wish a reality; but there were still concerns.

Mom and I constantly worried about Dad's inability to call for help if something should happen to him while she was at work and he was alone. We worried about him sitting alone all day without the ability to turn anything on or off; a radio, a light, a television for

company. We were receiving services from many agencies, but it was not until Don Olson from the Developmental Center came down to re-configure how my dad could drive his power chair that we heard about IPAT. Don told us he would connect with Peggy Shireley, and she would call us. Don did call Peggy and she in turn called Mom and Dad. Suddenly, Peggy had all the gadgets to do exactly the things we fretted about. Mom and I breathed a sigh of relief and finally got some peace of mind.

IPAT figured out a way for my dad to both place and receive phone calls. They installed a remote control phone that he answered by voice; and he called out by using a switch mounted on a gooseneck that he could make work with his breath to select pre-programmed numbers. The peace of mind this device offered my family is one that cannot be described, it was like having a very heavy weight lifted. Now if Mom or I had our plans change, or simply wanted to check on Dad, we could call! Dad was satisfied with the phone IPAT had set-up; he did not see a need for any more fussing. My mother and I, however, saw how other devices Peggy mentioned could really make a difference in my dad's day, and persuaded him to at least try a few things out. It was then that IPAT brought out a hands-free infrared environmental control system. Using this device my dad could now control his surroundings from his wheelchair; turn the TV on, change channels, adjust the volume, turn on lights, fans whatever we programmed in. Dad's quality of life changed. He no longer had to sing to himself or count white cars vs other colors on Highway 83 to amuse himself!

The assistive devices IPAT had access to and information about, gave my dad choices at a time in his life that he had very few choices. I think having these devices were important to his mental health, and to the quality of his life, all the way up to the end of his life. If my dad were here, he would tell you that IPAT not only made his life easier, and impossible things possible, he would say it also brought him peace of mind, because it made day-to-day life easier for his family.

I am so glad that IPAT exists and that it was here to help our family, especially my daddy. I encourage you to fund this program so that it flourishes and will be there for others that need it. All of us in this room have the potential to need the services IPAT provides. My dad was healthy, ate home-grown beef, drank water and milk, worked hard and had absolutely nothing wrong with him until his muscles just started atrophying. Aging and disability do not discriminate.

Chairman Lee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee today. If you have any questions, I will be happy to respond.

TESTIMONY – PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY PROJECT
SENATE BILL 2211 (2007)

SENATE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Honorable Judy Lee, Chairman

January 24, 2007

Chairman Lee, and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, I am Craig Sinclair, an assistive technology lawyer with the North Dakota Protection and Advocacy Project (P&A).

I would like to comment briefly regarding the need for funding for the unique and cost effective services provided by the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT).

In my capacity as an AT lawyer, I have seen first hand the benefits that my clients have received by having access to IPAT's loan library. The try before you buy concept behind the loan library has not only saved my clients money but school districts and North Dakota Medicaid as well.

The AT evaluations and assessments provided by IPAT have helped my school age clients compensate for reading, organization, memory, or math deficits. It has been exciting to see my client's gain greater self autonomy by using assistive technology to replace dependence on others.

IPAT has helped our older client's avoid out of home placements. The unique in-home AT assessments provided by IPAT has proven invaluable for many of our clients. Their expertise in environmental controls and medication management devices has been particularly helpful.

IPAT has provided visionary leadership in their collaborative efforts with other organizations. One such example is the Assistive

Technology (AT) Expo that is held every April in Fargo. It is open to the public and typically combines a variety of AT presentations in the morning with an AT Exhibit Hall in the afternoon and early evening. In April of 2006, the AT Expo had 460 attendees and over 50 vendors.

The focus of the AT Expo is to bring assistive technology (AT) devices and services to people of any age and ability to help them live, learn, work and play. People interested in attending may need AT for themselves, a friend, a family member, a student, an employee or a client.

The AT Expo continues to be a collaborative effort of many agencies including: Job Service North Dakota-Fargo; Protection & Advocacy; Freedom Resource Center for Independent Living, Inc.; Easter Seals Goodwill ND, Inc; Fraser, Ltd.; Catholic Charities ND-AASK Program; Regional Aging Services, Fargo; Regional Assistive Technology Center (RATC); MSUM Regional Assistive Technology Department; West Fargo Public Schools FEET; Fargo Public Schools FEET; and Rural Cass Public Schools FEET.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of this legislation. I would be happy to answer any questions that you might have.

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INTERAGENCY PROGRAM FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Judie Lee, Director

IPAT

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Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Bill 2211
February 2, 2007

Chairman Holmberg, members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I am Judie Lee, Executive Director of the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT). I am here today to ask you to support SB 2211 requesting \$500,000 for the upcoming biennium for the purpose of supporting and maintaining assistive technology services for the elderly and people with disabilities provided through IPAT.

The Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT) was established in 1994 to ensure people with disabilities of all ages and those experiencing the effects of aging, have access to the assistive technology devices and services they need for work, school, and home. IPAT operates and maintains eight essential service components, which make-up an unduplicated statewide AT infrastructure.

What is Assistive Technology (AT)

Assistive technology devices are items, pieces of equipment, or product systems that are used to increase or maintain functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities; computer adaptations, communication devices, specialized phones, and environmental control systems. Assistive technology

services are any services that directly assist an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.

Who Needs Assistive Technology (AT)

People who have been injured in accidents.

People who are impacted by disease both sudden and chronic.

People who are experiencing the effects of aging.

People who were born with disabilities.

Provided for you is a map of North Dakota depicting by county the targeted populations for assistive technology services. Two groups are identified on this map, those who self identified as having a disability and those who are 60 years of age or older. These populations are, or at some future time, will be in need of assistive technology.

North Dakota's AT Infrastructure

IPAT has built an assistive technology (AT) infrastructure in ND over the past 13 years which provides AT services to people of all ages and with all types of disabilities. This comprehensive AT program is used by individuals, families, businesses, employers, schools, community organizations, health care providers, and numerous state agencies. This AT infrastructure is made up of 8 essential service components:

1) Direct Consumer Assistance

Staff is available to answer AT questions via phone, on-line, mail, videoconference, or person-to-person. IPAT provided direct consumer assistance to 2,758 individuals in the 2005-06 program year.

2) Equipment Loan Library

A large inventory of equipment is available for residents to borrow to try in their own environment for a period of 6 weeks. This helps people make the right decision and reduces the number of expensive purchasing mistakes. IPAT asks individuals to pay a rental fee ranging from \$10 to \$40 and shipping costs which helps to pay for maintenance and repairs. In the program year 2005-06, IPAT made 376 equipment loans.

3) Equipment Demonstration Sites

IPAT supports 2 AT demonstration sites, one in Fargo and the other in Bismarck. These sites provide an opportunity for people to have hands-on exploration of AT devices. It is important to note that much of this equipment is not available at a local store and this is one of the only opportunities people have to see it and try it out. In the program year 2005-06, IPAT demonstrated AT equipment to 375 individuals.

4) Alternative Financial Loan Program

IPAT applied for and was awarded federal dollars to establish an alternative financial loan program. These dollars can only be used for making loans to individuals to purchase assistive technology. Financial loans are available to eligible ND residents for the purchase of AT devices or services. The rates are approximately 1% below prime and terms can be extended for longer periods making payments affordable. Loans range from \$500-\$50,000. The development of this program started in 2003 and to date has made 11 loans for a total of \$165,625.

5) Assistive Technology Swap 'n Shop

There is a great deal of used equipment that can be reused. IPAT established a used equipment bulletin board for individuals and entities to buy, sell, swap, or donate used AT. It is housed on the IPAT website or can be accessed through a toll free number. This past program year, 88 devices were exchanged for a saving of \$161,577. We are in the process of establishing a partnership with a statewide trucking company who has agreed to pick-up and deliver items for consumers at no charge. This service will eliminate the transport barrier of someone in Williston wanting to buy a lift chair from someone in Drayton.

6) Training and Public Awareness

IPAT staff delivers training on a wide range of AT topics. This past program year IPAT trained 773 people. Public awareness is an ongoing challenge and an integral part of the IPAT program. Last program year, IPAT set up displays and showcased equipment at 27 exhibits and fairs attended by 3,593 people. IPAT also produces a bi-monthly newsletter, provides toll free numbers for information and assistance, and maintains an accessible website www.ndipat.org

7) Coordination and Collaboration

IPAT serves the state as a no-cost resource by collaborating with and providing AT expertise to agencies such as: the Department of Human Services, Secretary of State, Department of Public Instruction, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Aging Services,

Information Technology Department, Protection and Advocacy, Veteran's Administration, and numerous private sector businesses and organizations.

8) Additional Services

The final component of this AT infrastructure is categorized under Additional Services. Because the seven critical components just described are in place, IPAT is poised to partner with other organizations for special projects. For example, IPAT participated in the Real Choice Project, funded by the Department of Human Services, to explore and deliver assistive technology devices and services for state residents who were at risk of moving to an institution. The outcome report of this special project is titled *Remaining at Home...Priceless* and is included in your handouts. This project showed that when the assistive technology provision is part of the service delivery plan, it can delay or eliminate institutional or other high-cost placements. The average cost for a device was \$681 per participant and the average AT service cost was \$552. Compare this to the annual average cost of a nursing care or assisted living care facility. A breakdown of the costs for the AT devices and services, the types of devices purchased, and a profile of the participants can be found within the report.

IPAT is also able to provide AT assessments and consultations for individuals who otherwise may have to leave the state for this service or go without. IPAT provided 44 such assessments this past program year.

This infrastructure, which is in place and ready to carry-out special projects and/or services, is a significant resource to entities within ND.

IPAT Funding History

IPAT's funding source is federal dollars awarded through the Assistive Technology Act of 2004: Public Law 108-364. Congress recognized the importance of maintaining the State AT programs and they changed from discretionary grants to formula programs. This means IPAT will continue to receive federal funding, however, the amount has been reduced. IPAT has had a 50% reduction in federal funding, going from \$633,103 to \$316,000. The major portion of this reduction has taken place over the last three years. However, with carryover dollars, we were able to maintain an operating budget of \$502,000/year until October 1, 2006, at which time all carry-over dollars were expended. This budget reflects 5.5 staff positions.

When operating at full funding, IPAT had 7 full time positions, and subcontracted out services such as the administration of the equipment loan library, information/referral and public awareness activities, and the coordination of conferences. These activities have been brought in house, placing additional demands on an already stretched staff.

The requested \$500,000 would give IPAT an operating budget of \$566,000/year, making it possible to reinstate one of the lost positions and maintain the services described. Without state funding, at least 2 positions will be lost resulting in a further decrease in services. It will be difficult to maintain an

updated equipment inventory for the loan library and demonstration centers. Participation on task forces and special projects will be limited.

IPAT's move to supplement with fees for service and specific grant dollars help with some program expenses, but do not cover the operational costs. The demand for AT services provided by IPAT to ND residents continues to build while funding declines. We are experiencing waiting lists for equipment loans and assessments, have to decline presentation requests, have reduced public awareness activities, and can't man the demo centers enough hours to meet the demand.

IPAT is requesting the sum of \$500,000 for the purpose of maintaining the assistive technology services established. These funds will be used towards salaries and basic operating costs of the essential components of the AT infrastructure.

Why Should the State Invest in IPAT

North Dakota's assistive technology infrastructure is in jeopardy without some state funding. IPAT has carefully and wisely managed the federal dollars. A fee schedule for individuals who can afford to pay has been put in place, grants to support equipment for the loan library and demonstration centers have been actively pursued and with some success, vendors are persuaded to loan equipment to the centers or give reduced rates, and practices that encourage efficiency and save staff time are implemented, (such as video conferencing for training, demonstrations, and assessments). Under the AT Act, the Governor is allowed to appoint an entity to implement the program outside of state

government. In 2004, IPAT requested to be moved into the private sector under the umbrella of a non-profit. Governor Hoeven honored this request. The money flows through DHS to a non-profit who provides fiscal oversight to IPAT at no cost. IPAT has implemented cost effective measures while providing quality AT services to many segments of North Dakota's population.

Momentum for technology has been started and will not be stopped. The need for assistive technology can only be expected to increase as our population ages and demands to be productive and independent. IPAT is responsive to consumers, supports many different professionals, and has a proven track record of collaboration with state agencies, private entities and organizations. IPAT is an unduplicated statewide program; we serve people of all ages with all types of disabilities. There are no eligibility criteria and services are not time limited, making them extremely easy to access.

It is cheaper and more cost effective to maintain the infrastructure IPAT has established and continue to tailor it for the state's use than to let it decline and then try to rebuild it later. An investment now will help to ensure the rapid advances in technology are not leaving hundreds of North Dakotan's with disabilities and those experiencing the effects of aging behind at work, school, home, and in their community.

What Difference Did AT Make in People's Lives in ND

AT has:

Delayed or prevented entering nursing homes

Made success in school possible

Made employment possible

Made continued employment after injury possible

Increased independence and safety at home

The letters provided in your packet are from individuals and service providers telling their real life stories of how IPAT and assistive technology has impacted their lives and work. As you read them, you will note they come from many areas of the state, from people with very different needs and in lots of different circumstances. Chairman Holmberg, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee today. If you have any questions, I will be happy to respond.

Judie Lee
IPAT Executive Director
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Senate Appropriations Committee Senate Bill 2211 February 2, 2007
Chairman Ray Holmberg

Chairman Holmberg, and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, my name is Jillian Schaible and I live in Bismarck, ND; I have asked Peggy Shireley to read my testimony as I do not enjoy public speaking. I am here today in support of Senate Bill 2211 to appropriate funds to the Department of Human Services for the support of assistive technology services.

Without the services of the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT), I would not have had the information about, or be using the assistive technology I do today. I have received services from the IPAT program for over 10 years; one of the many things they did for me was introduce me to Dragon Dictate, a voice recognition program. I used this program to complete written assignments to obtain my high school diploma and continued to use it to earn my Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Mary. I am still using it.

Without IPAT's recommendation of voice recognition software, it is likely I wouldn't have worked so hard finish college and pursue a good job, because I didn't think I could keep up with my peers. IPAT showed me a way I could. I am here today in support of IPAT, because without it, I can honestly say I probably wouldn't be where I am. I feel that IPAT is a critical program for people who need assistive technology like me. I think it could do even more with state appropriated funds, and I hope you will seriously consider SB 2211 to appropriate those funds.

Thank you for your time, and I will answer any questions at this time.

TESTIMONY - PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY PROJECT
SENATE BILL 2211 (2007)
SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
Honorable Ray Holmberg, Chairman
February 2, 2007

Chairman Holmberg, and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I am Craig Sinclair, an assistive technology (AT) lawyer with the North Dakota Protection and Advocacy Project (P&A).

I would like to comment regarding the need for funding for the unique and cost effective services provided by the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT).

In my capacity as an AT lawyer, I have seen first hand the benefits that my clients have received by having access to IPAT's loan library. The "try before you buy" concept behind the loan library has not only saved my clients money, but has also saved money for school districts and North Dakota Medicaid.

The AT evaluations and assessments provided by IPAT have helped to identify a variety of AT interventions which has helped students to compensate for reading, organization, memory, or math deficits. It has been exciting to see students gain greater self autonomy by using assistive technology to replace dependence on others.

The unique in home AT assessments provided by IPAT has helped people with disabilities avoid out-of-home placements. IPAT's expertise in environmental controls and medication management devices has been particularly helpful.

IPAT also works with farmers and veterans, who have disabilities, to obtain AT devices to assist them on the job, at home, and at school.

IPAT's expertise has proven invaluable for staffing cases. A recent example would be a contact that I made with IPAT regarding an individual who would be moving from a treatment facility to their home community. IPAT was able to identify AT devices that would help the individual be more independent with their medication administration which would hopefully prevent future in patient hospital stays.

IPAT has been a leader in addressing systems issues. They have provided education and training opportunities for teachers, parents, students, employers, employees, social workers, and medical professionals.

IPAT was instrumental in the creation of the Assistive Technology (AT) Expo that is held every April in Fargo. The focus of the AT Expo is to create an awareness of the variety of AT services and devices and how they might benefit a person with a disability in their daily lives. The AT Expo is open to the public and combines a variety of AT presentations with an AT Exhibit Hall with vendors from across the nation. In April of 2006, the AT Expo had 460 attendees and over 50 vendors. It is a collaborative effort of many agencies. We are especially excited about this year's April 5th AT expo as it will feature a free Shriner's Orthopedic Care Clinic.

Another systems issue that IPAT tackled was their creation of a low interest financial loan program for North Dakotans with disabilities to obtain needed AT when other funding sources are not available. The Alternative Financial Loan Program (AFLP) is a partnership between the N.D. Association for the Disabled, Inc., Protection and Advocacy Project, Alerus Financial, and IPAT. Individuals can borrow up to \$50,000 which may be used for a broad range of AT including

the modification of homes and vehicles in order to make them accessible.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of this legislation. I would be happy to answer any questions that you might have.