Focus on Long COVID resource

Gary is a retired university professor, with a distinguished career teaching English. He was admired by students. An academic award is given in his name at a school where he taught for many years. He recently downsized and moved to be closer to family and friends in the Upper Midwest.

Gary’s retirement plans include travel, gardening and work at colleges and universities near his new home. He had looked forward to filling in for staff sabbaticals and as a part-time adjunct professor of English.

Gary lives with several disabilities, including a compromised immune system. He has been diligent about keeping up with vaccines for COVID-19 and other conditions that affect people in their 70s and older. He masks up in public and takes other steps to not become ill.

But Gary has not been able to ward off COVID-19, and has had a few bouts of the disease. More than once he has struggled with Long COVID. Those struggles have caused setbacks in his ongoing efforts to stay healthy.

A bout of COVID-19 in early autumn has led to another round of weeks of fatigue, brain fog, flu-like symptoms and a couple of falls for Gary. He is using a walker again, rather than a cane.

“I just get so tired,” he said. He has enjoyed walking around the condo complex where he lives, and visiting a nearby park. “Novel habits have been nice,” he said. “But I can barely get from one end of my condo to another. Making dinner can wear me out.”

Gary’s greatest fear is that despite his taking precautions, he could wind up with Long COVID issues for the rest of his life. “I realize not everyone who has Long COVID recovers and that really is scary for me. It’s not how I planned to spend my retirement.”

Gary’s story is one of the COVID-19 stories Access Press will start starting on our web page in November.

Symptoms of Long COVID can include shortness of breath, extreme fatigue, headaches, dizziness, brain fog and memory issues. Symptoms may last for months or years, affecting mental health, quality of life and financial stability.

Long COVID and post-COVID conditions can be considered a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) if the symptoms substantially limit one or more life activities. This determine has been in place since July 2021.

Some people with Long COVID have mild to moderate symptoms that gradually get better after several months. Others may have more severe symptoms and face challenges returning to work, school, family life, exercise, and other activities that help them to thrive. A subset of people will have very severe symptoms that leave them newly disabled by Long COVID. It isn’t yet known yet know if these effects will be permanent.

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Assisted living buildings, sales, changes a sign of worrisome trend

Assisted living facilities have long been a viable housing option for disabled people who don’t need the level of care offered at a nursing home. They provide a place for people who do not wish to live in group homes.

Residents have been able to tailor assistance to meet specific needs. Yet they can have a place that feels as if it is truly their home and not a shared space.

Assisted living is for some a ‘bridge’ housing option between independent living and more structured care. For others, especially younger disabled people, it becomes a way of life. Either way it allows people who need assistance to stay in the community longer and to retain some level of independence. Assisted living also can keep people out of nursing homes and out of hospitals.

Assisted living facilities have long had their pitfalls. One is that the regulations can vary widely by state, and seem to give the upper hand to facility operators in some states.

Changes in service providers and level of services provided can become issues. Residents are sometimes evicted when they are deemed to be too old and frail, or with too many care needs, often with little notice.

Everyone who needs support services, or has a loved one receiving support services in a form of assisted living, needs to pay attention to current trends. While much focus is rightfully on elders, we also must consider younger people with disabilities who need assistance.

The concern we’re seeing is that in many assisted living facilities are sold to new owners, the assisted living component is sometimes go away. People who lose their services must seek other housing and care options, sometimes with limited time to do so.

The trend is seen around the state, most recently in the Highland Park neighborhood of St. Paul. That is where the 58-unit Wellington senior living complex was sold to Presbyterian Homes and Services.

The good news for many residents there is that their rents will be decreased. Another positive development is that the high-rise building will provide rental housing for Presbyterian Homes and Services workers. The nonprofit has indicated that its workers stay longer and are able to afford to live in their workplaces. Presbyterian Homes and Services has four housing complexes in the Highland area alone.

Up to 20 units at the Wellington will be offered to those workers. The bad news is that about three dozen Wellington residents who receive assisted living services will have to move. The senior units will be offered only as independent living spaces.

About 20 other assisted living residents can stay because they have contracted for their own services outside of what their previous landlord offered.

Longtime building owner StuartCo held the assisted living license for the Wellington.

When there is this kind of property sale and transition in services, state law requires at least 60 days’ notice. We appreciate that this has been followed here.

The Wellington is not the only assisted living facility making this kind of change. That is what is worrisome.

Minnesota has more than 2,000 assisted living facilities, ranging from high-rise buildings to much smaller structures with a few dozen residents. Licenses, regulations and other issues are overseen by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

As we read the rules there are safeguards in place for facilities and their residents whose situation changes occur. For example, a building owner cannot simply transfer an assisted living license to a new building owner; the new owner wanting to retain assisted living must apply for a license of their own.

A report on nursing homes and assisted living facilities that was provided to state lawmakers late last year indicated that in 2021, 131 assisted-living facilities shut their doors. Another 39 chose to not renew their licenses. In the same period, 71 new assisted living facilities opened. That is still a loss in spaces and living options.

But like so many places that provide care for disabled people, assisted living facilities cannot easily attract and retain staff. And those trends are frightening. As our population ages and more people are approved for disability waivers, it create more pressure on existing facilities.

And all of the rules and regulations in the universe won’t make up for our dire staffing shortage in Minnesota. We have a strong and likely increasing demand for more health care workers.

Kalamazoo, Michigan in 1945. Credit is given to this as the birth of curb cuts.

A history of the curb cuts and ramps is in the Stanford Social Innovation Review. The Curb Cut Effect is used to described innovations meant to help one group that end up helping many. Learn more at the Carleton College website https://www.carleton.edu/accessibility-accessories/resources/newsletter/curb-cut-a-bridge-to-broad-access.

Encore Magazine also has this history. Learn more at https://www.ensoum.org/encore-magazine.

Another website for those interested in curb cuts and ramps is in the Stanford Social Innovation Review. The Curb Cut Effect is used to described innovations meant to help one group that end up helping many. Learn more at https://socar.org/articles/entry/the_curb-cut_effect

The History Note is a monthly column produced in cooperation with the Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities. Past History Notes and other disability history may be found at www.mnddc.org

Curb cuts and ramps cleared the way for better accessibility

This issue of Access Press includes a guide to winter safety, with one focus on snow removal and shoveling. People often have to call out for her friend and hope that she will come to help them. Many of them have to call out for her friend and hope that she will come to help them.

Veterans around the United States waged a new fight to get curb cuts and ramps placed. But many communities still lack curb cuts and ramps. In her memoir the late disability activist Judith Heumann described the great difficulty people in wheelchairs had with curb cuts in her youth. Born in 1947, Heumann had polio when she was a toddler. She used a wheelchair for the rest of her life.

In her book Being Heumann: An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist, she describes what life was like on her Brooklyn block. While she was lucky to have a couple of young friends on her block, Heumann had a street curb could be an obstacle. Heumann would be left out.

More efforts to gain curb cuts and ramps came in the 1960s and 1970s as college students studied change. One of those students was prominent disability rights activist Ed Roberts, who protested Berkeley’s inaccessible sidewalks and streets corners. University of California Berkeley students worked at night to demolish curbs and lay in curb cuts and ramps with asphalt. The Architectural Barriers Act was passed by Congress in 1968, setting the stage for the broader access requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Curb cuts and ramps should never be taken for granted, as the fight for them cleared the way for broader access.

Learn more at the Carleton College website https://www.carleton.edu/accessibility-accessories/resources/newsletter/curb-cut-a-bridge-to-broad-access.

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COVID

From page 1

- Generating informational resources and raising awareness about long COVID.
- Convening a Guiding Council of Minnesota clinicians who care for long COVID patients in primary and specialty care settings across the state. This group was launched in spring 2023.
- Partnering with community organizations to assess and address gaps in health equity.
- Engaging people with long COVID and their caregivers, local public health, employers, school nurses, and others to share information about long COVID, shape sector-specific resources, gauge unmet needs, and inform our efforts and priorities.

The long COVID program at MDH is supported in part by the CDC and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a two-year annual financial assistance award totaling $600,000. Learn more about Long COVID, find links to research and clinical trials underway by others and find other resources at https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/longcovid/index.html.

COVID

From page 1

out hings in large part of how much money the state has. A mid-October report from Minnesota Management and Budget indicated that the state’s previous two-year budget cycle ended with a balance that is about $840 million higher than previous estimates.

Add to that a state surplus which was estimated at $1.3 billion in May, and the surplus increases around $4.4 billion. A new economic forecast is expected in February and that will give a better picture of what can be spent on state needs. In February 2023 the state surplus was a record $7.5 billion. That was used for a wide range of one-time projects and programs, new programs, tax cuts and other measures.

Preliminary 2024 bonding requests were due at Management and Budget in May, with a list of requests developed over the summer. Requests statewide total almost $4.4 billion. Of those, $4.4 billion is requested from state agencies. Local units of government have requested $5 billion.

State officials must develop additional project information and refine cost estimates before submitting the Governor’s Strategic Capital Budget to state lawmakers on or before January 16, 2024. Access needs are scattered throughout the bonding requests. Some are disability specific. Others include access improvements as part of facility renovation or construction projects.

The hundreds of requests statewide put a spotlight on how infrastructure is aging and in many cases, is still not accessible. One example is at the University of Minnesota-Morris, where there is a $4 million ask for upgrades to the Native American building original to the Native American boarding school there more than a century ago.

Since 1972, the Morris building has been home to the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Intercultural Programs, which includes the Multi-Ethnic Student Program, LGBTQIA2S+ Programs and the International Student Programs office. The building lacks an elevator and other basic accessibility infrastructure, as well as modern lighting and building systems. In the year 2000, a ramp was added to an entrance at the basement level of the building. But the other two floors of the building remain inaccessible to disabled visitors. Nor are restrooms in the building accessible.

Other requests may be more familiar. An $8.5 million request is for ADA-focused upgrades to the tunnel at the state capitol, from the Department of Administration. The tunnel has steep spots and can be tricky to navigate. The project would create a new 5-foot-wide, 85-foot-long adjacently at the east end of the tunnel connecting the capitol and state buildings. The improvement will meet the slope requirements of a 3.5% run on every ramp of vertical rise (8.5 percent), as required by the ADA.

Work will also include the installation of an elevator that will convey wheelchairs and pedestrians with disabilities between the new ADA tunnel and the basement levels of the Capitol Building. The current tunnel will remain in place to serve those who can use it and to maintain the current usage volume capacity of the tunnel section.

The Department of Administration seeks an additional $3 million per year in 2024, 2026 and 2028 for the ADA building accommodation fund.

The Minnesota State Academies for the Deaf (MSAD) and Blind (MSAB) in Faribault have several requests, including $100,000 to update Stairways in older campus buildings can be barriers.
Dear Readers,

As we approached November 3 and the Access Press dinner, I thought (and continue to think) about our past. Anyone who has been around long enough might remember what the world was like prior to the enactment of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and before the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). I certainly do. Being born in the 1950s with a condition affecting language development, I lived in a place where most “special” schools, separated and not having the same opportunities as others. People with disabilities had obstacles with school segregation and different pay scales for men vs. women workers. These civil rights development, I lived in a place where most

Access Press keeps civil rights in the forefront as it provides important information, resources, and various points of view. I can’t imagine not having it. That is why I volunteer on the Board of Directors. I now serve as treasurer, so it is only appropriate that I write about the economics of publishing.

First, I want to thank our supporters. A special thanks to U Cave for the support that kept us aloft by supplying a great venue and transition to new management as well as monies to provide news as a service to all who need it. Also, thanks to our partner for this event, Institute on Community Integration, for their mentorship and making it possible to hold our event at McNamara Center. The Disability Resource Center, also at the University of Minnesota, has provided access for our event, along with their expertise in universal design. Getting through the pandemic was quite a feat. We saw many businesses fold or shrink. Our funding has always been a three-legged must-have. So are a flashlight plus extra

batteries (or a hand-crank flashlight), road flares or reflective triangles, a red flag, a rope or piece of cloth, windshield cleaner and jumper cables. It’s also helpful to have a multi-tool, such as a Swiss Army knife. Pack a snow shovel, tire chains and tow strap. Include a bag of sand to help with traction. Cat litter works if it is clay, non-clumping litter. Traction devices that can be put under tires also work. Vehicle floor mats can be used in an emergency. It’s a good idea to have a vehicle first aid kit year round, with hand saws, adhesive tape, antiseptic wipes, gauze pads, antiseptic cream, medical wrap and anything needed for a specific medical condition. Bottled water and nonperishable high-energy foods such as unsalted and canned nuts, granola bars, raisins and dried fruit, peanut butter or hard candy are good to have. Seal the food items in a tin. Use a smaller, smaller, smaller food-proof container for a lighter and box of matches, if snow must be melted for water. Bring proper food and enough water for service animals. Anchored stranded is a possibility. Make sure gas tanks are full and cell phones are charged before leaving on a trip. Make sure tires are properly inflated. Let others know the route and times of arrival and departure. If stranded, don’t leave the vehicle. Don’t try to push the vehicle out of the snow. Light flares, put out safety triangles and tie a red cloth or bandana to a vehicle where it can be seen. Stay warm but only run the engine long enough to warm the vehicle. Make sure the engine/hose is not blocked by snow, mud or anything else.

Don’t be left out! Next Access Press Directory is January 2024

In print four times annually and online 24/7, the Directory offers quick information for people seeking an array of resources. From housing to health care, recreation to recovery, clubs to consumer-directed community supports, we offer the information you need for your best life!

Be part of our Access Press Directory!

Call or email us today

651-644-2133
access@accesspress.org

Several websites have great safety tips. Learn more at https://www.nhtsa.gov/winter-driving-tips

Changing our customers’s lives, one ramp at a time.

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In addition, we seek donations to fund initiatives for 2024 and beyond:

- Increase outreach to greater Minnesota – including communities that do not have local services to provide information that can be found in Access Press.
- Increase internship opportunities – including opportunities for freelance writers and also experiences for students seeking job-related experience. Access Press worked with two interns to manage our database and work on the November 3 event. This year, our interns had the opportunity to learn about our business and we certainly benefited from their work and dedication to the paper.
- Seek new partnerships – working with other nonprofits to find ways we can help each other and leverage resources.

If you can do so, please help keep this unique news source available to all who need it.

Regards,
Jane Larson, Treasurer
On behalf of the Access Press Board of Directors

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The onset of winter weather brings changes and challenges for Minnesotans with disabilities. Be prepared and stay safe, whether at home or out and about.

Staying indoors? Heating bills can be an eye-opener, as costs have risen. It’s always worth checking a household’s eligibility for Minnesota’s Energy Assistance Program.

The program is free and provides benefits of up to $3,400. There is also additional support to respond to heating emergencies. Both home owners and renters may qualify. Eligibility is based on income and household size. An example is that a family of four could earn up to $62,822 and qualify for help.

Payments for energy bills are sent directly to the household’s energy company or to a provider of fuel like propane, fuel oil or wood. Initial benefits average $300 per household and can be up to $3,400.

The state’s Energy Assistance Program is federally funded and administered by the Department of Commerce, which works with local services providers throughout the state. The state website lists providers by county.

The deadline to apply for energy assistance during the winter of 2023/2024 is May 31, 2024. Want to know more? Go to https://mn.gov/commerce/energy/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance-program/

Minnesota has a Cold Energy Rule, which has been in place since the 1980s. It is a state law that protects residential utility customers from being without electric or natural gas service shut off between October 1 and April 30. To protect service from disconnection, people must make and keep a payment plan that is agreed upon with a home or apartment’s utility provider.

Under state law, a utility must offer a payment plan that is reasonable for your situation. It is in the best interest of all parties. A payment plan may be set up any time during the Cold Weather Rule season.

Renters are eligible if the utility company or gas is the primary heat source, and if they pay utilities.

All natural gas and electric utilities must offer protection under the Cold Weather Rule. The rule does not apply to oil, propane or wood. Anyone who uses delivered fuels and has a furnace powered with electricity can seek Cold Weather Rule assistance with the electricity provider.

Anyone interested should contact their natural gas, electric, municipal utility or electric cooperative for more information, or contact the Public Utilities Commission’s Consumer Affairs Office at consumer.puc@state.mn.us or 651-296-0406, 1-800-657-3782.

Learn more at https://mn.gov/puc/consumers/shut-off-protection/

Take other steps to hold down energy bills. Through federal funding, Minnesota also offers the Weatherization Assistance Program. Known as WAP, the program is provided by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). WAP provides income-qualified households to permanently reduce their energy bills by helping to make their homes more energy efficient while protecting the health and safety of family members. In Minnesota, WAP services are delivered by 23 service providers across the state. The program is worth looking into. Learn more at https://mn.gov/commerce/energy/industry/government/service-providers/weatherization/

A heating system should be checked annually. Heating systems should be tuned up every year and replaced with newer, more efficient models at the end of their lifespan. Check with community action programs to see if help is available for tune-ups or repairs. Many websites provide information on how to keep one’s home warm without burning an energy budget. Manually set the thermostat at 68°F during the day and lower it at bedtime or when everyone is away at work or school. A ‘smart’ thermostat is a good investment, and an easy way to automatically adjust temperatures.

Weatherize windows and doors. Plastic over windows can keep the cold out. So heavy drapes or even a blanket over windows at bedtime. Seal any leaks in doors and windows using weatherization techniques such as draft strikers. Draft snakes are long fabric tubes filled with batting that are put at the base of a door to keep drafts out. Make a draft snake with old, long socks or legging.

Avoid using space heaters and open vents to heat. Space heaters are inefficient and don’t distribute warmth around your home as well as your heating system does. Space heaters and ovens can also cause danger.

Use the power of the sun. Open the drapes and blinds during the day to harness the power of the sun to warm up a home.

Keep extra blankets, flashlights and candles on hand in the event of a power loss due to equipment failures. Close off unused rooms to conserve heat.

A great resource is on the Hennepin County website. You can learn more at https://www.hennepin.egovclimate-action-what-we-can-do/home-water-efficiency/

Another resource is University of Minnesota Extension, which has a wide range of information and resources. There’s a section on extreme weather that has some great tips. Learn more at https://extension.umn.edu/home-and-financial-management/

Stay safe, warm at home

It may be cozy to be at home during a winter storm, watching snowflakes hit the roof. But don’t be fooled, winter weather can be a difficult experience.


Minnesotans with disabilities know all too well that they may struggle if they get snowed in, especially if the power goes out. That can be especially true in rural areas. It’s always a good idea to have heating systems running efficiently and check on them before they go into regular use. Check smoke detectors. A working system in the home is worth checking a household’s eligibility for Minnesota’s Energy Assistance Program.

The University of Minnesota Extension Service has information keeping food cold during power outages, and food preparation during power outages. Learn more at https://extension.umn.edu/news/extreme-weather/

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TRELLIS MANAGEMENT MAY BE ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR our accessible waiting lists at the following affordable communities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Community</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Heath’s Plan</td>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>612-906-8300</td>
<td>theheathsplanmn.org</td>
<td><a href="https://www.theheathsplanmn.org">https://www.theheathsplanmn.org</a></td>
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Robin Harkonen, executive director of the East Range DAC, is the new president of the Minnesota Organization for Habilitation and Rehabilitation (MOHR). She takes office just as the organization is preparing for the 2024 session of the Minnesota Legislature. In her new role, Harkonen is responsible for supporting the almost 100 non-profit day and employment-service providers that make up MOHR’s membership. She will be with disability advocates throughout the state and supporting MOHR’s legislative agenda. Harkonen previously served as a regional representative and as vice president of MOHR, advocating for disability services in meetings with state agencies including the Minnesota Department of Human Services and Minnesota Department of Health. She met extensively with legislators and legislative committees.

“I’m honored to serve as president of MOHR,” Harkonen said. “I firmly believe MOHR provides a great connection for advocacy, education, and collaboration,” said Johnson. “Together, we ensure people with disabilities can thrive, find employment, and be deeply engaged in their communities. Our communities are stronger when everyone is included. I look forward to my new role in MOHR, allowing me the opportunity to continue to work with such a strong group of service providers. Thousands of Minnesotans with disabilities have a better, more meaningful quality of life through access to employment and enrichment opportunities offered by hundreds of local non-profits. These mission-driven, independently operated organizations offer distinct approaches and resources in their local communities. MOHR supports members with training, awareness building and legislative advocacy. Learn more at https://mohr.org/”

In Memoriam

Deborah “Debbie” Lentz led a life of service to deaf and deafblind Minnesotans. Lentz died earlier in July after a short battle with cancer. She was 75 and lived in St. Louis Park, MN. She worked for 35 years at US Bank before being laid off. She worked with State Services for the Blind and learned Braille and how to use new technologies.

Lentz dedicated to community

Robin Harkonen

Harkonen succeeds Julie Johnson of MSS, who has wrapped up a five-year term. During Johnson’s tenure, she guided the organization through COVID, several legislative sessions, and a severe workforce shortage. She will now become co-chair of MOHR’s Government Relations Committee. “I firmly believe MOHR provides a great connection for advocacy, education, and collaboration,” said Johnson. “Together, we ensure people with disabilities can thrive, find employment, and be deeply engaged in their communities. Our communities are stronger when everyone is included. I look forward to my new role in MOHR, allowing me the opportunity to continue to work with such a strong group of service providers.”

East Range DAC leader Harkonen to take the helm for MOHR

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Harkonen succeeds Julie Johnson of MSS, who has wrapped up a five-year term. During Johnson’s tenure, she guided the organization through COVID, several legislative sessions, and a severe workforce shortage. She will now become co-chair of MOHR’s Government Relations Committee.

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Red Wing resident Bale celebrates 50-year anniversary with ProAct

Red Wing resident Larry Bale was honored in October by ProAct, Inc., a nonprofit providing in-center, virtual and community-based services for individuals with disabilities. Bale and ProAct celebrated Bale’s 50 years of service. Bale was recognized as part of ProAct’s annual service awards tradition, which celebrates the achievements of participants. Gloria Solsaa, director of programming at ProAct’s Red Wing site, said, “Throughout his five decades with ProAct, Larry has demonstrated a strong work ethic, a positive attitude, and a genuine passion for helping others. He is an inspiration to all who meet him and lights up every room he walks into. We are incredibly fortunate that Larry is part of our Red Wing ProAct community.”

Bale was pleased and excited to be honored. “ProAct has offered me the opportunity to work, fun jobs and meet new people over the years. I have seen so many positive changes during my time at ProAct,” he said. “I have loved all of the classes and outings that I have been a part of.”

Outside of his involvement with ProAct, Bale is well-known in the Red Wing community, most notably for his participation in the Red Wing Community Men’s Chorus. He is also an active member of St. John’s Lutheran Church and the Red Wing Lions Club.

Bale’s 50 years with ProAct is a testament to the power of determination and the importance of inclusion. He is also a reflection of ProAct’s mission, which is to enhance the lives of individuals with disabilities through enrichment programming and activities, employment and support services. For more information about ProAct, Inc. and its services, go to www.proactinc.org.
Minneapolis City Council President Andrea Jenkins is publicly speaking about her diagnosis of multiple sclerosis. Jenkins, who is in the midst of a closely watched election that could tip the balance of power on the council, said her difficulty with walking and physical fatigue is the result of multiple sclerosis, which was diagnosed in 2017.

She has recently begun using an electric scooter ‘to be able to conserve some of the energy that I expend doing the most basic human task of walking,’ Jenkins said in a recent email to constituents, adding that ‘I am otherwise very healthy and... my cognitive abilities are as strong and capable as they ever were.’

Jenkins is in a four-way race to retain her seat. She has used a cane for some time. But her increased difficulties have become more apparent in recent months. It’s become common for her to be given a chair during news conferences that require long periods of standing. Colleagues are frequently seen keeping a watchful eye on her, or offering her a helping hand when she makes her way around the tight quarters of the City Council chamber.

Andrea Jenkins

Jenkins said she first ‘came out to my colleagues and to the community’ in 2018.

‘At that time, my disability was somewhat invisible, and the symptoms, though intense, were only known to myself,’ she wrote in her regular constituent email message. ‘Since that time, my mobility challenges have become much more noticeable.’

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Jenkins discussed multiple sclerosis

DHS changes underway

Four different state agencies currently oversee programs for young children in Minnesota: the Department of Human Services, Department of Education, Department of Public Safety and the Department of Employment and Economic Development.

In May CMS let DHS know of a policy change that allowed the state to apply for a six-month extension of this temporary allowance created during the COVID-19 public health emergency. That time period has come to an end.

As part of the response to the COVID-19 federal public health emergency, DHS could temporarily allow specific family members to serve as PCA workers for services provided by spousal and legal guardians before installing them. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) temporarily allowed family members to serve as PCA workers for services provided by spousal and legal guardians before installing them.

DHS has now extended the exemption within federal legal constraints.

PCA extension ends November 12

Effective Nov. 12, the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will end the exception that has allowed the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to pay personal care assistance (PCA) providers for services provided by spouses and parents (including stepparents and legal guardians) of minors.

Several days after Ellison offered his opinion to allay concerns about the new law, Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman wrote Moriarty an email asking about the new state law passed last May as only school resource officers or SROs back in school. Freeman wrote the email asking about the new state law passed last May as only school resource officers or SROs back in school.

‘They’re able to use reasonable force,’ Freeman responded, “It was not helpful.”

Schillinger supports the change and tested SROs in legislation. ‘We’d hope to have law enforcement agencies put the new department will mean better spending and accountability.

‘These are very fragmented programs.’ Pinto said. ‘And they are poorly funded, all – not pretty much they are all deeply underfunded and it’s not nearly serving the families and kids that they’re supposed to serve.’

Confusion over SROs continues

Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison has publicly spoken about the new law.

‘They are poorly funded, all – not pretty much they are all deeply underfunded and it’s not nearly serving the families and kids that they’re supposed to serve.’

EldercareIQ.org.

Consumers concerned about maltreatment in Minnesota’s licensed facilities can search their licensure histories on EldercareIQ.org. (Source: Minnesota DHS)

People Incorporated opens new facility

People Incorporated, the largest nonprofit mental health provider in the state, in October welcomed clients to a new hybrid facility at 3750 Chicago Avenue in Minneapolis.

People Incorporated is opening up another hybrid facility in Minneapolis to increase the odds of patients getting all the help they need.

‘You lose people in the system when you have those transition points,’ said Gabe Becker-Flinn, the People Incorporated director of operations. ‘They go somewhere else or they find some sort of alternative, maybe less healthy behavior that they fall into.’

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Banner

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REGIONAL NEWS

EldercareIQ.org.

Consumers concerned about maltreatment in Minnesota’s licensed facilities can search their licensure histories on EldercareIQ.org. (Source: Minnesota DHS)
Social Security increase eyed

Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for more than 71 million Americans will increase 3.2% in 2024. The 3.2% percent out-of-living adjustment (COLA) will begin with benefits payable to more than 66 million Social Security beneficiaries in January 2024. Increased payments to approximately 75 million SSI recipients will begin on December 29, 2023. (Note that some people receive both Social Security and SSI benefits.)

The maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to $106,800.

The earnings limit for workers who are younger than full retirement age will increase to $12,940. (Social Security will deduct $1 from benefits for each $2 earned over $12,940.)

The earnings limit for people reaching their full retirement age in 2024 will increase to $39,420. (Social Security deducts $1 from benefits for each $2 earned over $39,420 until the month the worker turns full retirement age.)

There is no limit on earnings for workers who are full retirement age or older for the entire year.

Information about Medicare changes for 2024 will be available at www.medicare.gov. For Social Security beneficiaries receiving Medicare, their new 2024 benefit amount will be available in December through the mailed COLA notice and my Social Security Message Center.

In December 2023, Social Security COLA notices will be available online to most beneficiaries in the Message Center of their My Social Security account. This is a secure, convenient way to receive COLA notice online and save the message for later. Be sure to choose the preferred way to receive courtesy notifications so that secure, convenient online COLA notice aren’t missed.

(Source: Social Security Administration)

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Access Press is a 501(C)3 nonprofit organization.
To us Access Press means giving a voice to the largest minority group in the U.S.—people with disabilities. We promote the social inclusion and rights of people with disabilities by providing a forum for news, features, opinion and conversation to benefit people who are often invisible and marginalized in mainstream society and the people who care for them.

Access Press is Minnesota’s Disability Community News source. We have a lived knowledge of disability through our incredibly committed board and staff.
The Minnesota State Plan for Independent Living is completed every five years by the Minnesota State Plan Council, a group of people with disabilities and advocates for people with disabilities. The council is charged with advising the governor and state agencies on policy, programs, and services affecting people with mental illness as well as education and training about the public mental health system.
Access Press received a Community Engagement and Diverse Media Grant from the Minnesota Department of Health to provide information about COVID-19 and vaccinations to our readers and the community of people with disabilities. This is the first of many informational items we will share with you.

DISPELLING MYTHS ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINE

LEARN THE FACTS


FACT: COVID-19 VACCINES DO NOT CHANGE OR INTERACT WITH YOUR DNA IN ANY WAY. COVID-19 vaccines do not alter DNA.

FACT: ANYONE CAN REPORT EVENTS TO VAERS, EVEN IF IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER A VACCINE CAUSED THE PROBLEM. BECAUSE OF THIS, VAERS DATA ALONE CANNOT DETERMINE IF THE REPORTED ADVERSE EVENT WAS CAUSED BY A COVID-19 VACCINATION. Not all events reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) are caused by vaccination.

SOURCE FOR MYTHS AND FACTS:
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
WWW.CDC.GOV/CORONAVIRUS/2019-NCOV/VACCINES/FACTS.HTML

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