



Transforming Service Delivery for Tennessee's Most Vulnerable Citizens

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Executive Summary

The Therap Project represents a transformative step forward in how Tennessee delivers services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Historically, these services were managed through five disconnected systems, each requiring manual inputs, complex back-end coordination, and siloed departmental operations. This fragmentation led to inefficiencies, limited data insights, and delayed reimbursements for service providers.

In response, the Department of Disability and Aging, in partnership with the Division of TennCare and the Department of Finance and Administration, launched the Therap Project to implement a unified, cloud-based Software as a Service (SaaS) platform. The system now integrates case management, service delivery, claim submission, validation, and payment tracking into one streamlined solution.

This modernization has yielded substantial benefits: service authorization processes are faster, claim errors have decreased, and payment timelines have improved by over 75%. Importantly, all service data is now collected in a single system, enabling enhanced trend analysis, forecasting, and interagency data sharing.

With direct alignment to top identified priorities—including cloud migration, data sharing, and improved decision-making—the Therap Project delivers scalable, measurable impact. It stands as a model for how states can reimagine human services delivery through smart technology investment and cross-agency collaboration.

Idea

What problem or opportunity does the project address?

Prior to implementation, the delivery of services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in Tennessee was fragmented across five separate systems. These systems required complex back-end processes and manual interventions to coordinate case management, service delivery, and billing. Functional areas operated in silos, and visibility across departments was limited. Manual compilation of reports was necessary for system-level insights, impeding timely decision-making.

The Therap Project replaced this disjointed infrastructure with a unified platform that integrates case management, service delivery, claim submission, claim tracking, and validation. This consolidation enables real-time visibility, seamless collaboration, improved data availability, and comprehensive reporting capabilities.

Why does it matter?

Demand for IDD services often outpaces available resources. Increasing operational efficiency not only ensures higher service quality but allows funding to be reallocated to expand offerings. By centralizing service data across an individual's lifetime, the system improves trend analysis, budget forecasting, and service delivery planning. Integrating billing with service authorization automates claim generation, significantly reducing submission errors and accelerating payment timelines.



What makes it different?

This solution fundamentally transforms the claim submission process by validating claims at the point of service. Providers enter service documentation directly into the system during delivery, which is automatically checked against authorizations and later converted into claims. This removes the burden of manual record-keeping and data entry, eliminating errors and delays. Additionally, integrating claim tracking with service data enhances transparency and allows departments to monitor service delivery in real time.

What makes it universal?

The project aligns directly with priorities shared by many states:

- **Better Decision Making:** Unified service data enables trend monitoring, outcome tracking, and more accurate budgeting—critical in an era of constrained resources.
- **Cloud Migration:** The system’s SaaS model eliminates on-premise infrastructure, reducing technical debt and enabling shared risk management.
- **Data Sharing:** Consolidated service planning and billing enhances interoperability with Medicaid and other agencies, providing a single source of truth for data exchange.

What was the roadmap?

Social service delivery demands cross-agency collaboration. The Department of Disability and Aging led the effort in partnership with the Division of TennCare and Strategic Technology Solutions within the Department of Finance and Administration. Together, they aimed to implement a system that provided actionable insight into service delivery and enabled seamless data sharing between agencies.

What was the project management approach?

Using a modular, blended agile methodology, the project team developed requirements iteratively. Each module followed a cycle of planning, configuration or development, testing, and stakeholder review before implementation. Weekly working sessions ensured steady progress and issue resolution. The roadmap prioritized the Billing module due to an immovable deadline, with all other modules sequenced accordingly to meet this critical milestone.

What constitutes success?

Success hinged on timely deployment of the Billing module. The project team reverse-engineered the timeline from this fixed delivery date to build a phased implementation plan. A module was only considered complete once it passed final testing and received stakeholder acceptance, ensuring system readiness and performance quality.

Who was involved?

The project's success reflects the collaboration of executive leaders, subject matter experts, and technical teams across three departments. Executive sponsors provided vision, guidance, and momentum from day one. Embedded SMEs ensured that each module met the real-world needs of service delivery. Technical experts—including analysts, developers, and security professionals—contributed deep expertise and institutional knowledge, accelerating development and adoption.

How was buy-in and adoption secured?

Early stakeholder engagement was central to the project's success. The Department's Communications team was embedded in the project to translate technical updates into accessible content. Communications were tailored for both internal and external audiences. The vendor also facilitated stakeholder engagement by hosting regional and national events, offering participants a chance to see the solution in action and connect with other successful implementations.

Another cornerstone of the project's success was its leadership. The DDA IT Director and the STS Project Director served as co-leads, combining complementary skills to guide both strategy and execution. Their collaborative approach ensured alignment across technical, business, and executive stakeholders. As effective communicators, they built strong relationships with STS and DDA executive sponsors, vendor leadership, business subject matter experts, and the project team.

By proactively addressing day-to-day issues, risks, and roadblocks, the project leaders kept momentum high and obstacles minimal. Simultaneously, they remained focused on long-term strategy, ensuring the project's direction aligned with broader departmental goals. Their commitment to recognizing team contributions and fostering morale created a motivated and resilient project culture.

Impact

What did the project make better?

This project directly supports the department's mission to empower Tennesseans with disabilities through more responsive, data-driven service delivery. By unifying service data in one platform, the department can better monitor outcomes, forecast budgets, and ensure individuals receive timely, appropriate services. Automation has streamlined workflows, reduced manual entry, and accelerated reimbursement.



Before	After
Five fragmented systems	Single, unified system
Manual service plan entry	Automated plan and claim generation
Disparate reporting and tracking	Real-time visibility into service and payments
Payment processing took a minimum of 4 weeks	Payment processing reduced to just 1 week

How do you know it is better?

The system’s impact is clear through both data and day-to-day experience:



- **Efficiency Gains:** Digitizing service plans saves 1–2 hours per plan. Authorizations are now faster and more accurate.
- **Error Reduction:** Claims are automatically generated from service data, eliminating manual entry and reducing errors.
- **Processing Speed:** Payment turnaround reduced from 4 weeks to 1 week.
- **System Retirement:** Decommissioning five legacy systems reduced infrastructure costs and freed up IT staff for innovation.

What are stakeholders saying?

“We used to spend hours tracking down claim errors and reconciling data across five platforms. Now, everything is in one place. It’s faster, cleaner, and more accurate—and the impact on families is real.”

— Billing Coordinator, Department of Disability and Aging

“For the first time, we can see service delivery trends statewide in real time. This is a game-changer for planning and resource allocation.” – Program Director, Department of Disability and Aging

What Now?

What's the long-term plan?

The project's success has laid the groundwork for broader transformation. The department is actively identifying additional programs and services to migrate into the platform. As a SaaS solution, the system will continue to evolve, and the department will benefit from features adopted by other subscribers. Each new module will be evaluated for strategic value and alignment with departmental goals.

Why is it worth continued investment?

The initial investment has already delivered measurable improvements in efficiency, accuracy, and service delivery. As more programs are integrated, the system will continue to reduce costs, enhance operations, and improve lives. Ongoing investment ensures Tennessee remains a leader in accessible, data-driven government services.