

2013 Legislative Priorities



Over the next 25 years, the number of Minnesotans over age 65 will double—from nearly 700,000 to 1.4 million in 2030. This unprecedented age wave will impact Minnesota’s long-term care landscape in ways the state has never experienced. As more people age, rates of chronic illness and disability, including rates of Alzheimer’s disease, will rise. With that rise will be an increase in the number of older adults and their family members needing to access and make decisions about long-term care. Also, as more people receive services in their own homes and apartments instead of in institutions, the numbers of frail and vulnerable people living in the community continues to increase. Our systems for protecting vulnerable adults and ensuring accountability must likewise adapt.

While Minnesota has already taken a number of steps to manage and prepare for these changing demographics, pressures on the state’s budget will persist. We must continue to find ways to reform our system and to prepare communities and the state as a whole in order to meet the challenges and opportunities associated with an aging population. The Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA) and its partner organizations work together to support communities in efforts to become more livable for people of all ages, improve the quality of long-term care, help individuals make decisions, protect vulnerable people, and build mechanisms for ongoing sustainability.



Minnesota Board on Aging

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- The MBA has identified the following priority areas for legislative attention in 2013:
- Prepare Minnesota for Alzheimer's Disease
- Protect Vulnerable Adults
- Home and Community-Based Services: Options and Information

1. PREPARE MINNESOTA FOR ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

As Minnesota experiences a historic increase in its older population, the number of people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias is expected to rise dramatically. This rise will bring enormous costs and burden to individuals with the disease, their families and caregivers, employers, communities and the state. In response to this issue, the Minnesota Board on Aging convened and then issued a report of the Alzheimer's Disease Working Group. The report made recommendations on needed policies and responses. Major themes of the report include:

Supporting early identification and quality health care in connection with the disease, including improved models for coordinating primary care and community-based services

1. Raising awareness, reducing stigma and effectively communicating about the disease;
2. Preparing communities to support individuals with the disease, their families and their caregivers;
3. Sustaining caregivers in their support of those with Alzheimer's disease; and
4. Addressing the economics of Alzheimer's disease.

The MBA continues its engagement on these critical issues through ACT on Alzheimer's, a voluntary, state-wide collaboration of medical, academic, community, government, business, and nonprofit stakeholders across Minnesota seeking to implement needed systems change, using the Alzheimer's Disease Working Group recommendations as a springboard for action.

2. PROTECT VULNERABLE ADULTS

Minnesota has a history of commitment to protecting vulnerable adults. As our population ages, the number of adults living in the community who are potentially vulnerable and at risk of maltreatment will continue to rise. All older people deserve the right to live with dignity, in their communities, as independently as possible, and free from abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation. Minnesota must ensure that it has strong systems in place to prevent maltreatment and to respond to it when it occurs.



The MBA strongly supports the Alzheimer's Disease Working Group report, its recommendations for state action, and the subsequent work of ACT on Alzheimer's.



The Minnesota Board on Aging supports strong protections for vulnerable adults.

The Minnesota Board on Aging supports the preservation and development of critical home and community-based service options across the state, as well as a strong system for providing Long Term Care Options Counseling to help older adults and their families make educated decisions about long-term care needs, helping them remain in the community.

The MBA supports the following initiatives to provide stronger protections for vulnerable adults:

- Combat financial exploitation of vulnerable adults by increasing the protections for individuals who designate a Power of Attorney to attend to financial matters on their behalf.
- Protect victims of financial exploitation by making it easier to investigate and prosecute cases of financial exploitation.
- Streamline and centralize the system used by professionals and the public to report suspected cases of vulnerable adult maltreatment, and support and strengthen the system for investigating maltreatment and ensuring the safety and well-being of vulnerable adults.

3. HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES: OPTIONS AND INFORMATION

The MBA supports continued expansion of access to home and community-based service options for older adults, in order to provide meaningful choice for consumers. A one-time critical access study will define and identify critical access needs for older adults around the state, leading to more targeted development and support of needed services. In addition, consumers and their family members must have access to information that will assist them to understand the full range of options. The Senior LinkAge Line[®] assists individuals to find community resources, including supports for family caregivers, and to create a support plan to remain in the community. This type of assistance, also known as Long Term Care Options Counseling, has been used successfully to help consumers and their caregivers make informed decisions about their long-term care needs.



About the MBA

MBA'S MISSION

The mission of the MBA is to ensure that older Minnesotans and their families are effectively served by state and local policies and programs. The MBA works with seven Area Agencies on Aging throughout the state to deliver services that help residents to age well and live well in their communities. This partnership helps to ensure local input and accountability for service funding and promotes local innovation in problem-solving.

HIGHLIGHTS

The MBA administers the technology for the statewide system of Linkage Lines (Veterans, Senior and Disability Linkage Lines) together to better serve Minnesotans. This includes a resource database of over 10,000 agencies and interactive tools, which can be found at www.minnesotahelp.info and www.db101.org.

Return to Community provides long term care options counseling through face to face assistance to consumers who are residing in a nursing home and paying for their services through their personal funds or through Medicare and wish to return to a community setting.

Live Well at Home (LWAH) is a framework developed by the MBA that offers organizations and professionals a common approach for helping at-risk older adults and veterans delay or avoid a permanent move to assisted living or nursing home. MBA is working with key partners to disseminate statewide evidence-based interventions that address the risks identified through the LWAH Rapid Screen[®].

The MBA continues to play a role in Minnesota's health reform efforts. The MBA, in partnership with MN Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), facilitates partnerships between Area Agencies on Aging and state-certified health care homes to improve care for high risk older adults, including those with dementia.

The MBA has been a partner in Aging 2030 (a continuation of Transform 2010) since its inception, and works with the departments of Human Services and Health to develop strategies to sustain community-based services for Minnesota's aging population.

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