

2019-2020 Legislative Priorities

Over the next 25 years, the number of Minnesotans over age 65 will increase—from nearly 900,000 to 1.3 million in 2030. This unprecedented age wave will impact Minnesota’s long-term services and supports 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 services and supports. 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 services and supports, help individuals make decisions, protect vulnerable people, and build mechanisms for ongoing sustainability.

In advocating for the following legislative priorities, the Minnesota Board on Aging will advocate for an inclusive health and social system that treats people equitably and creates conditions in which all people can achieve optimal living and to work with its partners to raise awareness of, and address, the demographic, economic, environmental, and health disparities that relate to these issues.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR LEGISLATIVE ATTENTION IN 2019-2020:

- **Home and Community-Based Services: Options and Information.** The MBA 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 services and support needs, helping them remain in the community.
- **Education and Support for Vulnerable Adults.** The MBA supports enhanced efforts to educate and empower consumers and to advocate for their needs and prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- **Supporting Caregivers and the Long-Term Services and Supports Workforce.** The MBA supports efforts to increase caregiver education, counseling and respite services, support working caregivers, in addition to supporting creative solutions to increase the long-term services and supports workforce needed to assist our aging population.
- **Preparing Minnesota for Aging into the Future.** The MBA supports work toward improving Minnesota’s system of supports for older Minnesotans with complex needs to ensure older Minnesotans have the information, resources, and services available to meet their diverse health needs.
- **Supporting Individuals to Take Action on Long-Term Services and Supports.** The MBA supports efforts that will encourage and enable Minnesotans to take action to meet their long-term services and support needs.
- **Supporting Affordable Housing Solutions for Older Adults.** The MBA supports efforts that will develop and maintain affordable older adult and multi-generational housing, allow flexibility in the use of home modification funding, as well as activities to end homelessness among older adults.



MISSION

The mission of the Minnesota Board on Aging 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 ensure local input and accountability for service funding and promotes local innovation for problem-solving.

The MBA is designated as the State Unit on Aging for Minnesota for the purposes of administering federal Older Americans Act funds. Its 25 board members are appointed by the governor and represent diverse backgrounds, ages, interests and communities across the state.

HELPING OLDER ADULTS HELP THEMSELVES

The majority of today's seniors want to stay in their own homes. The MBA provides support to make this a reality by connecting citizens to local services, including home and community-based services, Older Americans Act services and long term care options counseling, as well as the protection of a long-term care ombudsman.

These programs use nationally recognized, evidence-based models that have demonstrated budget savings by delaying more costly care. This has helped to manage increasing state deficits by seeking low-cost ways to prevent many elderly citizens from falling into the public safety net.

RESOURCES TO HELP MINNESOTANS AGE WELL AND LIVE WELL

Baby Boomers began turning 65 in 2011. This age wave will usher in unprecedented changes to the way we approach long-term services and supports. As the legislature works through long-term services and support policy, the MBA stands ready to provide unbiased research, insight and program information on aging issues.

The MBA and its Area Agencies on Aging are working to prepare Minnesota for this unprecedented wave of new retirees, so that citizens can age well and live well.

The MBA:

- Contracts for services (meals, transportation, in-home supports) to assist older adults and their family caregivers throughout the state.
- Provides long-term care options counseling so assist older adults can make informed decisions through the Senior LinkAge Line® 1-800-333-2433 and www.MinnesotaHelp.info®.
- Supports policy makers with objective research on current trends and evidence-based programs.
- Provides objective research about geriatric care and the aging population.

Minnesota Board on Aging

651-431-2500 • 1-800-882-6262 • www.mnaging.org