

# 2012 Legislative Priorities



Age Well, Live Well

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

651-431-2500 • 1-800-882-6262 • [www.mnaging.org](http://www.mnaging.org)

# 2012 Legislative Priorities

The MBA has identified the following priority areas for legislative attention in 2012:

- Prepare Minnesota for Alzheimer's Disease
- Criminal Penalties for Neglect or Abuse of a Vulnerable Adult
- Home and Community-Based Services: Options and Information

## **1. PREPARE MINNESOTA FOR ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE**

---

In 2011, the Minnesota Board on Aging issued a report of the Alzheimer's Disease Working Group. The Working Group, convened by the MBA, examined the needs of individuals with Alzheimer's disease, the services available to meet these needs, and the capacity of the state and providers to meet current and future challenges. The report made recommendations on needed policies and responses. Major themes of the report include:

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

The MBA continues its engagement on these critical issues through Prepare Minnesota for Alzheimer's 2020 (PMA 2020), 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. CRIMINAL PENALTIES FOR NEGLECT OR ABUSE OF A VULNERABLE ADULT**

---

The MBA supports strong protections for vulnerable adults. Under current Minnesota law, egregious cases of neglect of a vulnerable adult are punishable only at a misdemeanor level. These cases include intentional starvation, deprivation, isolation, and abandonment. They result in severe bodily harm as a result of this neglect, and may even lead to death. These are intentional, willful acts by caregivers of these individuals. Minnesota is one of only five states that does not provide for a felony level penalty for this type of severe neglect. In cases of severe abuse of a vulnerable adult, strong criminal penalties should also be in place.



The MBA strongly supports the Alzheimer's Disease Working Group report, its recommendations for state action, and the subsequent work of Prepare Minnesota for Alzheimer's 2020.

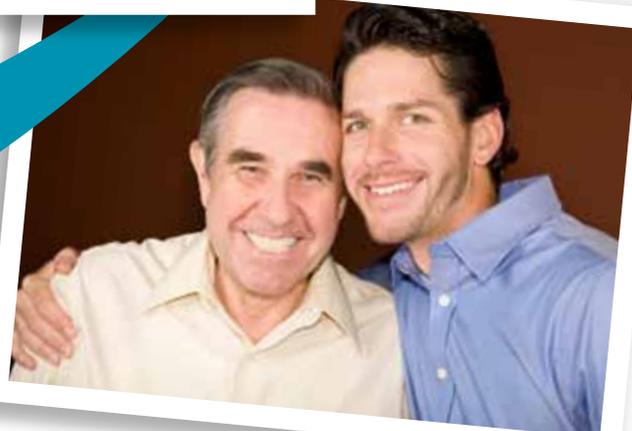


The Minnesota Board on Aging supports stronger criminal penalties for intentional neglect or abuse of a vulnerable adult.

The Minnesota Board on Aging supports the preservation of 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.

### 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. 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® is key in helping consumers and their caregivers live well in whatever manner they choose. Senior LinkAge Line® specialists are available to assist 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](http://www.minnesotahelp.info) and [www.db101.org](http://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<sup>®</sup>.

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.

**Minnesota Board on Aging**

**651-431-2500 • 1-800-882-6262 • [www.mnaging.org](http://www.mnaging.org)**