

2014 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 2014:

- Home and Community-Based Services: Options and Information
- Education and Support for Vulnerable Adults
- Prepare Minnesota for Alzheimer's Disease
- Supporting Individuals to Take Action on Long Term Care

1. 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. Minnesota's Older Americans Act-funded services are targeted to individuals who are at risk for falling into the public safety net, and the demand for services continues to grow. These services are affected by automatic, across-the-board cuts known as sequestration.

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.

2. EDUCATION AND SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE ADULTS

The Minnesota Board on Aging has demonstrated its commitment to protecting and supporting vulnerable adults. The MBA is a key supporter of efforts to streamline and strengthen Minnesota's system for reporting maltreatment of vulnerable adults and ensuring their safety and well-being, and efforts to increase public awareness of maltreatment of vulnerable adults. The Office of Ombudsman for Long Term Care plays a critical role in educating and empowering consumers and their families about their rights and responsibilities. This enables consumers and family members to advocate for themselves and potentially prevent maltreatment. The Office must have increased flexibility to ensure that this need is met.



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 Minnesota Board on Aging supports enhanced efforts to educate and empower consumers to advocate for their needs and prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

The MBA supports the work of ACT on Alzheimer's toward improving Minnesota's response to Alzheimer's disease, as well as efforts to ensure that people with Alzheimer's receive care that meets their needs.

The MBA supports efforts that will encourage and enable Minnesotans to take action to meet their long-term care needs.

3. PREPARE MINNESOTA FOR ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

100,000 Minnesotans live with Alzheimer's disease and the number is growing. The rise in Alzheimer's disease and related dementias will bring enormous costs and burden to individuals with the disease, their families and caregivers, employers, communities and the state. The Minnesota Board on Aging is working with a state-wide collaboration, known as ACT on Alzheimer's, to prepare Minnesota for the impacts of this disease. The collaborative has made significant progress toward achievement of five goals:

1. Increase detection of Alzheimer's disease and improve ongoing care and support.
2. Sustain caregivers by offering them information, resources and in-person support.
3. Equip communities to be "dementia capable" to support residents who are touched by Alzheimer's disease.
4. Raise awareness and reduce stigma by engaging communities.
5. Identify and invest in promising approaches that reduce cost and improve care.

Many individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias receive ongoing care and support in assisted living or nursing home settings. Minnesota must ensure that these individuals receive high-quality care that is designed to meet their unique needs, from staff who are trained to care for people with dementia.

4. SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS TO TAKE ACTION ON LONG TERM CARE

The Minnesota Board on Aging has long supported efforts that help individuals plan for their long-term care needs, take action to manage their risks for needing long-term care, and understand their full range of options for services and supports. In 2012, Minnesota launched the Own Your Future initiative, specifically aimed at encouraging and enabling Minnesotans to create a plan for their long-term care, including how to pay for it. Demographic and economic realities require that we increase the amount of long-term care that is financed privately, thereby reducing fiscal pressure on the state budget. The Own Your Future Advisory Panel is developing recommendations on insurance, financial, or related products that should be available to middle-income households to help pay for long-term care costs.

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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