

January 22, 2019

Welcome back! It is time again to send our legislative updates and bill tracking information out to older adults and their advocates to keep them 'in the know.'

What Happened in November?

With a record number of voters at the polls in November, Minnesota sent five new members and four returning members to Washington, D.C. They started work on January 3rd. They have already had a busy first few weeks, and we expect them to have many more.

Back here in Minnesota, Minnesotans elected Tim Walz, and Peggy Flanagan as Governor and Lieutenant Governor. They both began their roles as the state's executive branch leaders on January 7th. Additionally, Minnesotans voted a new majority party into the state House of Representatives. The new majority for the Democratic Farm Labor (DFL) will be led by Rep. Melissa Hortman while the Grand Old Party (GOP) minority will be led by Rep. Kurt Daudt. There were only two empty state senate seats open for election, and the DFL and GOP each gained one of them. The GOP maintained the majority in the state senate.

One noteworthy item for our readers of Carlton, Kanabec, Pine, and St. Louis counties is the special election set for early February to choose its new state senator. Governor Walz named former state senator Tony Lourey as his incoming Department of Human Services (DHS) Commissioner. Commissioner Lourey has been involved with health and human services finance and policy issues at the state senate his entire career.

Other state agency changes include Governor Walz selecting Jan Malcolm as the Department of Health's (MDH) Commissioner. Commissioner Malcolm continues her role as MDH commissioner after former Governor Dayton selected her in 2018 to oversee the agency. The Continuing Care for Older Adults Administration (CCOA) at DHS will be led by Assistant Commissioner Dan Pollock, former Deputy Commissioner at MDH. With such tenured experience in the health and human services realm, the future for our state's older adults looks promising.

As a reminder to our readers, if you would like to contact your congressional delegates the easiest way to determine who represents you is to use the Minnesota State Legislature's website, [Who Represents Me?](#) It uses your address to quickly identify both your federal and state elected officials who represent you. It also provides links to their contact information so you can reach out to them.

**Senior Advocates FYI is a periodic update from the
Minnesota Board on Aging.**

What's Happening Now?

Federal Government Shutdown

The federal government shutdown is impacting older Minnesotans in a variety of ways. First, only certain parts of the federal government are shutdown. The Administration for Community Living, the federal entity responsible for implementing the federal Older Americans Act, was funded in fall 2018 along with most federal agencies. This means that services administered by the Minnesota Board on Aging will continue to operate as normal.

Recent news publications are specifically detailing the plight for recipients of federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funds. These funds provide eligible recipients with food-purchasing assistance. As a result of the shutdown, the program will not have federal funds to provide benefits to eligible recipients after February 28th. The federal agency is issuing recipients their February benefits early and reminding them the aid is supposed to last through the end of the month. As a result of this situation, demand for food shelf and food assistance or meal programs will likely increase.

Federal Older Americans Act Reauthorization of 2019

One of the important items Congress will likely be taking up once it reopens is to reauthorize the Older Americans Act (OAA). The OAA was last reauthorized in 2016 for a three year period ending in September 2019. As one of the most cost effective efforts to assist older adults to "age in place" for as long as possible, the work results in numerous social, economic, and health savings to both the state and federal government.

The MBA along with its state and federal partners will be working to educate and advocate for the OAA reauthorization before the end of the federal fiscal year coming this fall. Continue to watch for updates via this newsletter regarding this topic.

Minnesota Legislative Items

The ninety-first session of the state legislature began on January 8, 2019. The Minnesota Constitution requires this session to end before May 20, 2019. Upon taking control of the House of Representatives, the Speaker of the House, Representative (Rep.) Melissa Hortman, named several new committees and renamed a few others. She selected Rep. Rena Moran to lead the Health and Human Services (HHS) Policy committee, Rep. Tina Lieblich to lead the HHS Finance division, and Rep. Jennifer Schultz to lead the Long-Term Care division.

While only a few legislative days into session, there are a number of bills the MBA is already tracking. Some of them are familiar and were very news worthy last session. Most notably are Sen. Karin Housley's Eldercare and Vulnerable Adult Protection Act of 2019 (SF11) and her electronic monitoring bill (SF11). These two bills will have many hours of committee hearing time and public testimony heard regarding them. Stay tuned for future updates about these two bills.

Other noteworthy bills include a Social Security income subtraction for state income tax purposes and a permanent funding appropriation for the Department of Public Safety's Lifesaver Grant Program. This program provides grants to law enforcement agencies who apply for it to establish rapid response programs to quickly locate individuals with serious medical conditions, including those with cognitive impairment or dementia.

The following pages list bills introduced so far this session that impact older adults. MBA staff seek to identify bills of interest to older adults and aging advocates beyond those in the health and human services arena (i.e. Social Security, consumer and vulnerable adult protections). You as subscribers to SA-FYI can help by calling our attention to bills you are following that you don't see on this tracker. Send your information to Mark Schulz at mark.schulz@state.mn.us.

A subscription to the SA-FYI can be arranged by sending email addresses to Nate Patterson at nathaniel.j.patterson@state.mn.us. You may also contact Nate to be removed from this mailing list. Thank you for your ongoing interest in policy and legislative issues that affect older Minnesotans.

MBA Legislative Tracker – 2019 Session

MBA Tracking **	Senate File (Author)	House File (Author)	Description	Status
Yes	SF8 (Housley)	HF90 (Schultz)	Eldercare and Vulnerable Adult Protection Act of 2019. Make numerous changes to the Department of Health regulatory functions and consumer protections under various bills of rights. Also modifies the Vulnerable Adult Act.	1/10/19 – Introduced in Senate and referred to SEN Family Care & Aging. 1/17/19 – Introduced in House and referred to HSE Health & Human Services Policy.
Yes	SF11 (Housley)	HF146 (Schultz)	Electronic Monitoring. Authorizes electronic monitoring within specific settings by consumers.	1/10/19 – Introduced in Senate and referred to SEN Family Care & Aging. 1/17/19 – Introduced in House and referred to HSE Health & Human Services Policy.
Yes	SF121 (Dibble)	None	Older & Vulnerable Adult Rights Protection Act of 2019. Modifies a variety of statutes concerning facility licensing, consumer rights, housing with services and assisted livings. This bill contains concepts similar to SF8 and SF11 but is not the same. Some bill language may be identical to those two bills.	1/14/19 – Introduced in Senate and referred to SEN Family Care & Aging.
Yes	SF147 (Dziedzic)	None	Provides for a state income tax subtraction of public pension plans income beginning for taxable years after December 31, 2018.	1/17/19 – Introduced in Senate and referred to SEN Taxes.
Yes	SF157 (Jensen)	None	Recommends a state constitutional amendment for the 2020 general election to change the size of the Minnesota house and senate from being set by the state legislature to figures set by the state constitution. The proposed amendment would limit the house to 98 members and the senate to 49 members.	1/17/19 – Introduced in Senate and referred to SEN State Government Finance & Policy and Elections.

** = MBA tracking assumes that bills are ‘track only’ unless otherwise noted in the MBA tracking column

MBA Legislative Tracker – 2019 Session

MBA Tracking **	Senate File (Author)	House File (Author)	Description	Status
Yes	SF245 (Goggin)	HF56 (Jurgens)	Provides an unlimited subtraction for Social Security when calculating state income taxes.	1/14/19 – Introduced in House and referred to HSE Taxes. 1/17/19 – Introduced in Senate and referred to SEN Taxes.
Yes	SF259 (Senjem)	None	Creates an ongoing appropriation for Department of Public Safety’s Lifesaver Grant program. These funds will be used by law enforcement agencies to establish rapid response programs to quickly find individuals with medical conditions (including Alzheimer’s disease) that cause wandering and result in missing person alerts.	1/17/19 – Introduced in Senate and referred to SEN Judiciary and Public Safety Finance & Policy.
Yes	SF324 (Eken)	HF258 (Lien)		1/14/19 – Introduced in Senate and referred to SEN Family Care & Aging. 1/22/19 – Introduced in House and referred to HSE Health & Human Services Policy
Yes	SF334 (Newton)	None	Provides a state income tax credit for individuals who pay for an eligible veteran’s cost to live in any nursing home. This person does not have to be related to the veteran.	1/22/19 – Introduced in Senate and referred to SEN Veterans and Military Affairs Finance & Policy.
Yes	SF352 (Jensen)	None	Provides a state income credit for health insurance premiums.	1/22/19 – Introduced in Senate and referred to SEN Taxes
Yes	None	HF123 (Nelson)	Eliminates the Legislative Budget Office established in a previous session.	1/17/19 – Introduced in House and referred to HSE Government Operations.
Yes	None	HF198 (Lucero)	Provides a state income tax subtraction for health insurance premiums.	1/17/19 – Introduced in House and referred to HSE Taxes.
Yes	None	HF267 (Schultz)	Revises and recodifies the Elderly Waiver statute into a new location	1/22/19 – Introduced in House and referred to HSE Health and Human Services Policy.

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MBA Legislative Tracker – 2019 Session

MBA Tracking **	Senate File (Author)	House File (Author)	Description	Status
Yes	None	HF281 (Koegel)	Revises the Minnesota Open Meeting Law to clarify the requirements of meeting minutes when a member attends the meeting not physically present.	1/22/19 – Introduced in House and referred to HSE Government Operations.

Introductions/Actions current through 1/22/19 @ 1200

Bill Count: SF394/HF291

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