History & Overview

The Minnesota Board on Aging was established in 1956. This 25-member, Governor-appointed board works in partnership with Minnesota’s Area Agencies on Aging, counties, tribes and others to listen to seniors’ concerns, find solutions and propose policy to address these challenges and issues. The Board is charged with administering federal Older American Act funds, which provide a wide range of senior services statewide, including the Senior LinkAge Line®.

The Senior LinkAge Line® makes it easier for seniors to find the information and help they need by connecting them with resources in their communities. Services are provided locally in each of Minnesota’s 87 counties through Area Agencies on Aging. The Senior LinkAge Line® (1-800-333-2433) simplifies the complex issues and decisions that older adults and their caregivers face every day.

Together, the Board, the Senior LinkAge Line® and their partners are continuing to develop innovative, results-based solutions to effectively serve Minnesota seniors and their families, so older adults can age well, live well, plan well and care well.
A Word from Our Board Chair

The Minnesota Board on Aging saw another milestone in 2016—our 60th anniversary, which we recognized as the theme of our booth at the Minnesota State Fair, and through a Governor’s proclamation. Through its many programs and initiatives, like the Senior LinkAge Line® and others, the Board worked tirelessly throughout the year to serve older Minnesotans and their families.

This 2016 annual report is a snapshot of just some of the work that the Senior LinkAge Line® has done. This service has grown considerably from its early beginnings in 1994 as an information and referral service. It is now much larger and more robust, with many moving parts and a no-wrong-door philosophy. It offers Minnesotans the right services at the right place at the right time.

As you look through this report, you will see how the Senior LinkAge Line® and its hardworking, knowledgeable staff have accomplished amazing things. I am confident that as Minnesota’s senior population grows, the Senior LinkAge Line® will continue to innovate and meet their needs in new ways, so seniors can live well in our beautiful state.

Don Samuelson, Chair
Minnesota Board on Aging

A Word from Our Executive Director

For 60 years, the Minnesota Board on Aging has been one of the nation’s pioneers and leaders in the field of aging policy, information and assistance. One of the many ways Minnesota leads the way is through our Senior LinkAge Line® service. And to do this important work, we partner with Minnesota’s Area Agencies on Aging and others to offer an array services that help seniors and their caregivers, by connecting them with the programs and services they need.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Governor Dayton, the Legislature, our board members and to staff for their dedication to serving Minnesota’s aging population. I know the next 60 years will bring much change and uncertainty, but I look forward to seeing how the Minnesota Board on Aging and its Senior LinkAge Line® will rise to the occasion.

Kari Benson, Executive Director
Minnesota Board on Aging
The MinnesotaHelp Network™ is Minnesota’s federally designated Aging and Disability Resource Center. Through it, people can receive help by phone, in-person, online and via print—delivered by the Senior LinkAge Line®, the Disability Linkage Line®, the Veterans Linkage Line™ and www.MinnesotaHelp.info®. The MinnesotaHelp Network™ is the place for people to turn to for information, assistance and support.

Senior LinkAge Line®

Just a phone call away from anywhere in the state, the Minnesota Board on Aging’s Senior LinkAge Line® (1-800-333-2433) helps older Minnesotans and their caregivers find the help they need. Trained and certified staff and volunteers from six Area Agencies on Aging located throughout the state, provide information and assistance about long term care options, Medicare, Social Security, prescription drug coverage, home and community-based services, forms, application assistance and more.

• \textit{There were 272,435 contacts made to the Senior LinkAge Line®.}

• \textit{More than 53,000 Minnesotans attended Senior LinkAge Line® outreach and education events.}

• \textit{Nearly 46% of people who contacted the senior linkage line have used the service before.}

What people called about in 2016

- **Care Transitions**: 24%
- **Individual and Family Supports**: 3%
- **Housing/Shelter**: 19%
- **Financial Assistance/Management**: 7%
- **Health Insurance Counseling**: 47%
Return to Community

The Senior LinkAge Line®’s Return to Community initiative began in April 2010. This service helps people in nursing facilities who are not on Medicaid return home to a community setting. It uses research-based criteria to reach those who should have left the facility, but haven’t. Senior LinkAge Line® community living specialists meet with these people to find out if they want to return home.

Community living specialists then work with nursing home staff to help these individuals successfully transition back into a community setting. They offer follow-up for up to five years after the individuals return home, which helps ensure they have what they need to live successfully at home and hopefully avoid another nursing home stay. In 2016, Return to Community helped 1,223 people return home, which was a 13% increase from 2015. More than 4,000 people have returned home since the initiative began.

MinnesotaHelp.info®

Consumers, caregivers and professionals use the MinnesotaHelp.info® website to find home and community based services, waiver providers and other resources. Since the site launched in 2003, it has grown and now has information about nearly 13,000 providers, offering approximately 42,300 services in 29,000 locations.

In 2015, MinnesotaHelp.info® was completely revamped and improved. Finders were added, helping people to more easily find services that match their needs. In 2016, MinnesotaHelp.info® piloted the integration of consumers’ reviews of service providers, which continues to date. Once the pilot is over, staff will analyze the data and decide next steps. In 2017, translation into more than 90 languages will be offered on the site, and later in the year, it will also include a registry for direct support workers, called Direct Support Connect, that will allow people and workers to find one another.
Helping Minnesotans to

2016 Senior LinkAge Line®
Link to a Local Aging Expert

Top reasons consumers contacted the Senior LinkAge Line®

- Care Transitions: 24%
- Information and Family Support: 19%
- Housing/Shelter: 19%
- Financial Assistance/Management: 4.7%
- Health Insurance/Counseling: 3%

94% Would recommend to a friend or family

People Served by Senior LinkAge Line®

123,868 people

Number of Pre-Admission Screenings

- 2016: 64,782
- 2015: 63,874

Senior LinkAge Line® contacts

- Look who's calling
- 2016 = 272,435
- 2015 = 277,324
- 1% decrease

Average age: 74

426 average calls/day

36,765 caregiver sessions (family member or friend looking for information on behalf of consumer)

72,983 follow-up calls

431 online referrals made by hospitals and health care homes

What people are saying

"It's an invaluable resource both personally and in my job."

Who am I?

- 61% female
- 39% male
- Average age...79
- Age range......27-103

Why don't I leave the nursing home?

- 37% Preferred to stay
- 33% Declining health

Who helps me?

- 70% are spouses or adult children
- 59% are female

Almost everyday I need help with:

- Shopping 72%
- Driving 66%
- Cleaning house 52%

2016 Return to Community Initiative Results

More than 4,000 Minnesota consumers have been helped

- 69% of Minnesota nursing facilities had a Senior LinkAge Line® assisted discharge
- 64% of Minnesota nursing facilities had a consumer on the profile list
- 631 direct referrals from nursing homes

Recognized by Harvard University as a “Bright Idea in Government”

Where do I live?

- 76% move back home
- 24% move to supportive housing

People what they're saying

"Great helpful service you provided to Minnesota residents for the past 25 years plus!"

Return to Community Initiative Results

- Declining health: 37%
- Preferred to stay: 33%
- 65% have stayed in their home successfully without being re-admitted to nursing home

Source of Data: Senior LinkAge Line® 2016
2016
MinnesotaHelp.info®
Navigating Minnesota’s Over 10,000 Helping Agencies

Services to help people

What are people looking for?

1. Personal Care Attendant
2. Assisted Living
3. Adult Foster Care
4. Affordable Housing
5. Transportation
6. Homemaker Services

More than 12,654 helping agencies and 42,279 services for Minnesotans available in 28,858 locations statewide

COMING IN 2017

Direct Support Connect™

Direct Support Connect is a website where people who provide support and people who need help can connect. People and workers create profiles and choose who they’d like to work with.

Our users

Number of visits in 2015 | Number of visits in 2016
444,544 | 601,054

13% increase

5 average chats/day

2016

2016 Health Insurance Counseling for Seniors

Health Insurance Counseling for Seniors

376 community events about Medicare

During Medicare Open Enrollment (October 15–December 7)

47 MINUTES Average session length

1:23 MINUTES Average hold time for 10,769 consumers

Source of Data: Senior LinkAge Line® 2016

Source of Data: Senior LinkAge Line® 2016
2016 Minnesota Board on Aging Board Members

Chair
Don Samuelson, Brainerd

Members
Leonard Axelrod, St. Paul
Melanie Benjamin, Onamia
Lynnette Buckley, Bloomington
Meghan Coleman, St. Paul
Cathleen Faruque, Winona
Sylvia Garcia, St. Paul
Jeffrey Hane, Hallock
Sonja Hayden Berg, St. Cloud
Susan Henry, Minneapolis
Neil Johnson, Minneapolis
Cheryl Klinkhammer, Albertville
Stephanie Klinzing, Elk River
Katie Lundmark, Detroit Lakes
Patrick McFarland, Champlin
Susan Mezzenga, Pequot Lakes
Maria Michlin, Anoka
Carolyn Perron, Fridley
Sherrie Pugh, Mound
Patricia Schommer, Anoka
Ruth Shannon-Yarbrough, New Hope
Harlan Tardy, Nashwauk
Mor Vue, St. Paul
Gregory Wright, Rochester
Tashi Yangzom, Bloomington

Executive Director
Kari Benson