Minnesota Board on Aging

DATE: September 9, 2009

TO: Area Agency on Aging Directors

FROM: Jean Wood, Executive Director
                 Rolf Hage, Resource Development Unit

SUBJECT: Investments in Senior Nutrition Program

We have a rare opportunity to make important investments in the Senior Nutrition Program. Because of the infusion of ARRA funds we can continue to meet the need for congregate and home-delivered nutrition services and make some investments in critical infrastructure to strengthen the Senior Nutrition Program.

AAA Directors and representatives of Nutrition Providers received a copy of Jean Wood's May 5, 2009 memo to the MBA Executive Committee outlining the processes MBA would follow. Items 3 and 4 were:

> 3. Other Senior Nutrition funds will be used as appropriate to ensure sustainable changes to the Senior Nutrition Service system. Sustainable changes may include upgraded equipment and improved technology, innovative service options, better targeting of services to persons at higher nutritional risk, to areas with higher percentages of low income individuals including low income minority older individuals.

> 4. Suggestions for appropriate, sustainable use of total Senior Nutrition funds, including ARRA funds, will be solicited from providers and AAAs.

The suggestions for sustainable changes we have received demonstrate a strong consensus around: improving our NAPIS participant data collection and reporting system; expanding the use of bar code technology, based on the results of the current pilot; and upgrading local site equipment. We now need to prioritize the use of the funds that are available to make these investments. We want your help in doing so.

Please find some time to talk with the Nutrition Providers in your region to discuss the options with them and to develop your recommendations. Please be prepared to share your recommendations with us on September 28, 2009.

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In order to make the best decision regarding improvements to the NAPIS data collection system, we have contracted with Computer Integration Technologies, Inc. (CIT) to evaluate AIM and alternative applications. The timeframe for their work is September 14 – October 30, 2009. The analysis will focus on the following three software packages: (1) Advanced Information Manager (AIM), developed by the Saber Corporation, (2) Web Referral, developed by North Light Software, Inc., and (3) Social Assistance Management System (SAMS), developed by Harmony Information Systems, Inc.

The analysis will be performed on the following characteristics:

1. Operational feasibility
2. Cultural feasibility
3. Technical feasibility
4. Schedule feasibility
5. Economic feasibility

CIT will be conducting interviews with representatives of the Area Agencies on Aging and Nutrition Providers. In addition, MBA staff will conduct an anonymous survey of all Area Agency on Aging staff and Nutrition Provider staff to collect input from a broader set of stakeholders. The results of the survey will be incorporated into CIT's findings and recommendations. Please watch for more information on both activities. If you have any questions, please contact Kari Benson at 651-431-2566 or kari.benson@state.mn.us.