

ages, races, ethnicities, lifestyles and incomes. Medical advances, shorter hospital stays, increased life spans with better management of chronic conditions, and the expansion of home care technology have increased caregiving responsibilities.

Caregiving can be rewarding and satisfying, but can also take a toll on the physical and emotional well-being of caregivers. Caregivers are at risk for higher levels of stress and depression, and have poorer physical health compared to non-caregivers. Caregiving can also negatively impact the financial well-being of the caregiver.

Many people don't recognize themselves as caregivers, and often don't seek services to help them provide care or to support themselves. But services are available!

The Minnesota Board on Aging has seven regional Area Agencies on Aging who work with community service organizations to address the needs of older adults and their caregivers by providing a range of services and resources in local communities.

Services and support available for family caregivers include:

- **Information** about available services and supports
- **Assistance** with finding and arranging service and supports that fit the unique needs and desires of the family.
 - ▶ **Caregiver Education and Training** about a particular disease or condition, direct care skills, tips for managing stress, building an informal network of support, legal and financial issues, understanding family dynamics, and communicating with others.
 - ▶ **Support Groups** provide the opportunity to meet, gain emotional support and network with others providing care; learn about managing care and finding community resources. A variety of formats are available including in-person, telephone or via the Internet.
 - ▶ **Caregiver Consultation/Coaching** equips caregivers with knowledge, skills and tools for caring for another person while maintaining a balance in their own life. Consultants assist caregivers in identifying needs, developing an individualized plan with follow up on established goals. Many have specialized training in chronic disease management, conducting family meetings, coaching skills, teaching self-advocacy, and navigating the health and long term care systems. Some specialize in working with families that are dealing with memory loss concerns.

- ▶ **Respite Care and Adult Day Services** offer temporary or substitute care which provides family caregivers with a break or time away from caregiving responsibilities and companionship, supervision and/or social activities to the person for whom they care. A variety of respite care options are available including in-home, out-of-home, adult day services and consumer directed options. The service may include personal care, assistance with meals, supervision and related assistance or simply companionship.

For more information call the Senior LinkAge Line® at 1-800-333-2433, a statewide phone-based service to help caregivers find local services to meet their needs and those of the person for whom they care. In addition to connection to services Senior LinkAge Line® specialists provide Long Term Care Options Counseling to help people live safely and successfully in their community as well as help with health and long term care insurance, Medicare and accessing services.

Or, log onto www.MinnesotaHelp.Info, an online directory of resources to assist caregivers in providing care as well as services to help them meet their own individual needs. The Caregiver Link (found under the Senior Link), is a resource portal especially for family caregivers, and the Long term Care Choices Navigator, is a web-based interactive planning tool for caregivers.

Beyond Medicare: Long Term Care Choices Navigator: Helping Minnesotans Stay Independent

The Minnesota Long term Care Choices Navigator is an award winning, easy-to-use Internet tool located at www.longtermcarechoices.minnesotahelp.info. The Navigator helps you create a personalized plan, no matter where you live in Minnesota, to help you or the person you are helping find what is needed to live well and age well in the community.

The Navigator is easy to use. Just follow the steps below:

- Go to www.longtermcarechoices.minnesotahelp.info
- You can become a registered user by completing the "Registered Users" information.
- If you do not want to register, you can just click the "Begin the Process" link and get started.
- The Navigator is a simple to use tool that walks you

through the process step by step.

- You begin by answering questions that will create a personal plan for you, your spouse, partner, parent, or friend. Professionals can use the Navigator when assisting clients.
- If a question doesn't fit your situation, you can skip that question and move on to the next question.

What do you need to do?

1. Be asked to create your plan profile
2. Build your community plan by answering questions about...
 - daily living needs
 - memory loss
 - health insurance
3. Housing and home repairs/modifications
4. Safety and security
5. Planning ahead
6. Explore housing options
 - living in your home
 - assisted living
 - nursing home

What will you receive?

Based on your answers, the Navigator will provide you with:

- Service and phone numbers to connect you to helping professionals in your local community
- Long term care recommendations
- Next steps like having a family meeting, safety concerns, honoring the wishes of the person needing help etc.
- Your finished plan for you to save and print

What is the finished plan?

Based on how you answered the questions, you will receive a personalized plan that includes:

- A list of specific formal and informal services
- Web sites
- Documents with detailed information

Your completed plan can be saved to your computer, printed out, or saved by registering at www.longtermcarechoices.minnesotahelp.info. All saved plans require you to create a user name and password to protect your identity and confidentiality.

If you have questions about the Long term Care Choices Navigator, please call the Senior LinkAge Line® at 1-800-333-2433 or you can chat with a Senior LinkAge Line® specialist by visiting www.MinnesotaHelp.info

Beyond Medicare: Return to Community

There may be a time when you are admitted to a skilled nursing facility or short term rehabilitation unit after a hospital stay. Did you know that Minnesota has options available to help you start planning for your return home and successfully remain there? Family and caregiver support are very important as you recover from an illness or surgery so make sure to talk to them about your goal of returning to an independent lifestyle. While residing in a skilled nursing facility or short-term rehabilitation unit, you will have a social worker or discharge planner available who will help you understand your options for returning to your home or another community setting.

The Senior LinkAge Line® is a resource for consumers and their family members as they are navigating through what may be a very difficult time. The Senior LinkAge Line® is a service of the Minnesota Board on Aging and Area Agencies on Aging. Specialists provide one-to-one, comprehensive Long Term Care Options Counseling. Call 1-800-333-2433 for assistance or go to www.MinnesotaHelp.info to chat live with a Senior LinkAge Line® specialist.

Minnesota has a service known as "Return to Community" that was established in 2009. This service is available through the Senior LinkAge Line® for private pay nursing home residents who would like assistance returning to the community. A Registered Nurse or Licensed Social Worker, known as a Senior LinkAge Line® Community Living Specialist, will visit with you and or your family members while you are still in the nursing home to identify your needs and preferences and concerns for returning to a community setting. After you have left the nursing home and returned to your home, a Senior LinkAge Line® specialist will provide phone based follow-up in the community to make sure you are living successfully and safely. For more information about this service, please call the Senior LinkAge Line® at 1-800-333-2433.

Services are also available for those enrolled in Medical Assistance or a Medical Assistance Managed Care Plan. You should have a case worker or managed care coordinator who can help you explore your options in the community after a nursing home stay. They will work with you and your family to identify options available in the community that will best meet your needs.

Minnesota also has a service called Relocation Services Coordination. This service is available to all nursing home residents who are current Medical Assistance enrollees. To receive this service, simply contact your nursing home social worker or discharge planner and request a referral