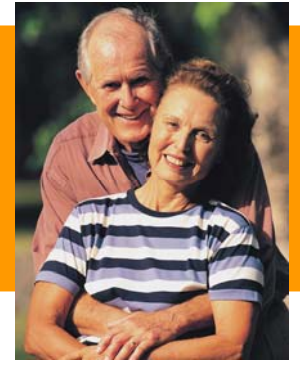
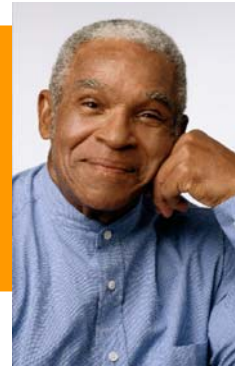


LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2008



Age Well Live Well

Over the next twenty-five years the number of Minnesotans over age 65 will double – from 600,000 to 1.2 million. The policies and public programs currently in place will be neither fiscally viable nor well suited to the next generation of older Minnesotans. Seniors want to stay in their own homes and communities and be self-sufficient and contribute for as long as possible.

Minnesota has made significant progress in reducing reliance on nursing homes and expanding the supply of home and community based services. But service quality and accountability remain a challenge. In 2007 the *majority* of older Minnesotans receiving long-term care live in their own homes and apartments.

In order to continue our progress and to ensure service quality and accountability, the MBA has identified the following priority areas for Legislative attention in 2008:

- **Adequate consumer protection and advocacy**
- **Consumer focus on quality and choice**



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY--2008

Adequate Consumer Protection and Advocacy

Minnesota's system for ensuring service quality was created for a long-term care system that was primarily institution-based. Today, the majority of Minnesotans with disabilities, of all ages, are living in the community. By national estimates, about 95,000 persons in Minnesota over the age of 65 need some kind of long-term care assistance with basic activities such as eating, dressing and bathing, whether or not they are receiving public services. However, the *public system* for protecting citizens who are frail/vulnerable was designed for a highly centralized and regulated system—namely facility-based care. Neither the design nor the funding of this system is in sync with current conditions.

The federal- and state-funded ombudsman service has minimal capacity to extend its advocacy services to consumers in community settings.

Frail persons who are living on their own must also be protected from abuse or exploitation. Trained and reliable personnel must be available to ensure that quality care is provided in all settings, whether in facilities or in the community, and to respond quickly in cases of immediate jeopardy. Minnesota's Vulnerable Adult Act is currently under review to determine whether new strategies should be adopted to protect at-risk adults and elderly in Minnesota.

To ensure adequate consumer protection and advocacy, we must . . .

- Increase staffing of Ombudsman services and advocacy for older Minnesotans who are frail and at risk.
- Support new strategies for protecting Minnesota's vulnerable adult population.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY--2008
Consumer Focus on Quality and Choice

Minnesota has made great strides in expanding the range and availability of services and programs to support frail older persons and their families. However, finding the “right” assistance is difficult and often confusing—both for older persons and their family caregivers.

With more choices among a growing variety of public and private community-based services and models, consumers need assistance in comparing the different options, and making choices that work for them. New information technologies could make it easier for older persons and their families to compare costs and services. Price transparency encourages consumers and their representatives to use price and quality information as part of their basis for making long-term care decisions.

Often the best choice is not immediately clear. Different family members may have different expectations about the “best” solution. An objective, trained person can help family members better understand the challenges and options available.

Minnesota’s telephone-based Senior LinkAge Line™ (SLL), Disability Linkage Line™ and the integrated MinnesotaHelp.info® website link older adults and their caregivers to the wide range of local services and resources available to them. In addition, decision-making tools are available online to help older adults better identify their needs and obtain quality help.

To focus on consumer quality and choice, we must . . .

- Add to the state’s Access System* a consumer report profile of services and support options such as Home Care and Assisted Living -- featuring information on service cost, quality and features that are important to consumers.
- Expand the availability of trained staff and volunteers who can assist consumers in sorting through the options -- to select the most appropriate, cost-effective option for them.

*** This includes *Senior LinkAge Line™*, *Disability Linkage Line™*, *MinnesotaHelp.info®* website, and MinnesotaHelp Network.**

AGING IN MINNESOTA Critical Changes Ahead

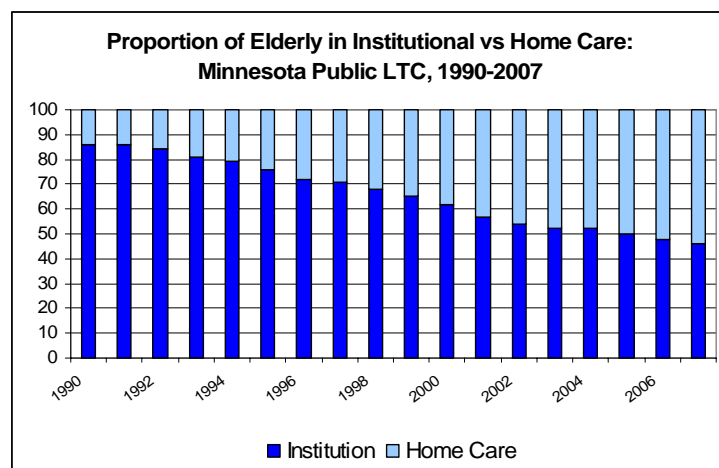
The Minnesota Board on Aging is a partner with the Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Health in project **Transform 2010**—exploring the impact of changing demographics in Minnesota. **Transform 2010** has identified five key areas where significant “transformation” work must be done to prepare for a permanent shift in the state’s age structure:

- **Redefining work and retirement**
- **Supporting caregivers of all ages**
- **Fostering Communities for a Lifetime**
- **Improving health and long-term care**
- **Maximizing the use of technology**

The MBA also strongly supports the following efforts of the state’s **Health Care Reform** initiatives:

- **Stronger health promotion and disease prevention activities**
- **Greater focus on complex disabling chronic conditions and high cost**
- **Sufficient and stable supply of competent/trained LTC workforce**
- **Use of technology to improve and streamline health and long-term care**

While we have made significant progress in moving away from an institutional-based system to one that is more in line with consumer preferences and choice, we have a lot of work to do to assure that Minnesotans can Live Well and Age Well.



The MBA Mission is to ***Ensure that older Minnesotans and their families are effectively served by state and local policies and programs in order to age well and live well.***