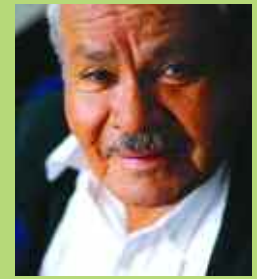


Report to the Community

Age well,
live well,
plan well,
care well



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Letter from the Chair

The mission of the Minnesota Board on Aging—and our passion—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. The large demographic shift which is occurring as baby boomers age requires private and public sectors to change not only the services we provide to older Minnesotans, but also how we provide them, now and in the near future.

As advisor to the Legislature, Governor and State Agencies, the Minnesota Board on Aging provides objective information and data to help shape policies that fairly reflect the needs and interests of older Minnesotans. We identify and actively promote ways to meet the changing needs of our older adults. We partner with Area Agencies on Aging and other groups to administer the effective use of Older Americans Act funds and state funds.

Since 1994, the Senior LinkAge Line,[™] a service of the Minnesota Board on Aging, in conjunction with Area Agencies on Aging, has provided critical information and assistance by phone, Internet, and in-person in areas such as health, home care, housing, and prescription drugs.

Committed to helping older people and their families make informed long-term care decisions, the Board developed tools for seniors and caregivers, implemented pilot aging and disability resource centers with Hennepin County in libraries and senior centers, linked people to resources, and further enhanced the use of volunteers and existing resources.

In addition, the Minnesota Board on Aging strengthened its role in helping people under 65 who are on Medicare or need help with prescription drugs.

The changing needs and demands of older Minnesotans requires a strategic reassessment of service delivery and public/private partnerships for the future. Personal accountability, informed decision-making, and community and home-based service delivery are evident in our work in 2005 and in our priorities for 2006.

This report highlights the accomplishments of the Senior LinkAge Line.[™] However, we could not celebrate our successes without citing our key partners and services to which we are critically linked. Those include the Disability Linkage Line[™] and other partners of the MinnesotaHelp network. While we cannot highlight each of their individual successes, in reading this report, you will recognize the immeasurable value of these partnerships.

We extend a personal thank you to those partners and individuals who are taking action to help ensure Minnesotans Age Well and Live Well. We invite others to get informed and get involved!

Jeanette Metz

*Chair of the Board
Minnesota Board on Aging*

Minnesota Board on Aging Members

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Sandra Anderson
Brooklyn Center

Toni Baker
Woodbury

James Bougie
Afton

Adrienne Breiner
Owatonna

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Executive Director



Connecting people of all ages to community help

In the next three decades, Minnesota will experience dramatic demographic changes as a result of growing ethnic populations and the aging of the baby boomers, coupled with a dramatic increase in the number of people with disabilities. Providing inclusive and equitable services will place

amplified pressure on Minnesota’s health and human service providers—both public and private. Furthermore, the choices offered and the decisions people face are more complex. Having access to accurate and useful information on Minnesota’s abundance of crucial resources helps people make these sometimes tough choices—finding alternative care to remain living at home; choosing health insurance when suffering from a chronic illness; finding services for a visually impaired friend, or where to go for low-cost prescription drugs. On any quality of life scale, Minnesota has always ranked near the top. Accurate, integrated information and caring assistance for all Minnesotans is critical to keeping us there.

The Senior LinkAge Line,[™] designed in 1997 in a collaborative process with the Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA) and Area Agencies on Aging, was a first step in transforming Minnesota's system of access and assistance. Spurred on by a tri-partisan legislative task force convened in 2000 to address Minnesota's emerging long-term care financing challenges, the Minnesota Board on Aging has been working to restructure the statewide information, referral and assistance programs to meet the needs of an increasingly "graying" population. In the past five years, several successful efforts have been launched to address these challenges and to streamline access to other community resources and public services.

Because of its innovation and technical expertise, the Minnesota Board on Aging is now playing a leadership role in developing multiple statewide access systems, including those for older adults. While many states are just beginning to move toward a single point-of-entry design for accessing long-term care services and information, Minnesota broke new ground with such a system in 2001.

To compliment this effort, Minnesota built an ambitious outreach model based on a "no wrong door" approach, called the MinnesotaHelp information network. MinnesotaHelp is a more integrated network of information, assistance, resources and tools, developed to serve people of all ages and incomes in Minnesota's 87 counties.

The Minnesota Board on Aging recognized the need to create a revolutionary system that takes into account consumer preferences, learning styles, comfort, accessibility with technology and need for personal assistance in making care decisions that will affect the quality of the rest of their lives. Further, this system must be integrated so that whichever entry point seniors and caregivers use—whether county, state, or for profit agency—by phone, computer or printed materials, they would have access to the same information and could be referred to a long-term care consultant. In addition, this system would minimize the number of times people have to tell their story.

Now established, MinnesotaHelp is launching network access portals in communities. These community sites raise awareness about the availability of resources in each county as well as phone-based services through the Linkage Lines and the Web site, www.MinnesotaHelp.info.[™]

The Minnesota Board on Aging has played a lead role in the development of MinnesotaHelp by evolving the Senior LinkAge Line[™] as well as providing technical assistance in the rollout of the Disability Linkage Line[™] and the development of the Family Linkage Line.

In addition, a collaborative team under the leadership of the Minnesota Board on Aging and the Minnesota Department of Human Services has developed a vision, called "Transform 2010," which envisions a full complement of access options. Guiding this restructuring and transformation are three crucial values: the statewide system needs to be usable, accessible and relevant. Thus, the system must be coordinated, streamlined and consumer-driven.

Today, these integrated components are in various stages of development and are, or soon will be, available for seniors, caregivers, people with disabilities and family members. Read on to learn more about the SeniorLinkAge Line,[™] the linkages it has developed and the leadership provided to the Disability Linkage Line,[™] MinnesotaHelp.info[™] Web site, and the MinnesotaHelp community sites, all innovative services with one goal in mind: To help Minnesotans age well, live well, plan well and care well.



“The Senior LinkAge Line™ is Minnesota’s critical access point for beneficiaries seeking impartial information about Medicare’s new prescription drug program. The program is complicated, and their expertise and leadership has provided a crucial link to helping Minnesotans figure out how to sort through and enroll in Medicare Part D. AARP Minnesota is proud to have worked with the Minnesota Board on Aging to recruit 200 new qualified volunteers to help staff the phone lines. Without the Senior LinkAge Line™ and these volunteers, thousands of people wouldn’t have known where to turn for help.” —Skip Humphrey, state president, AARP Minnesota

Senior LinkAge Line™ links Minnesotans to information and real help

The Senior LinkAge Line™ works closely with a number of partners, in particular the Disability Linkage Line™ (which went statewide in July of 2003), to provide in-depth, free information and personal assistance to any Minnesota resident via a single toll-free number or in-person visit. While this report is focused on the Senior LinkAge Line™, the Aging and Adult Services Division and the Disability Services Division, through its Disability Linkage Line™ of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), work closely to provide information and assistance to people of all ages.

Operated by six Area Agency on Aging offices and working with AAA trained and MBA certified volunteers, the Senior LinkAge Line™ provides information and assistance on:



- In-home care
- Caregiver planning, support and training
- Medicare
- Prescription drug options for all ages
- Long-term care insurance
- Forms assistance.

Anticipating the most significant change in Medicare in the past 40 years—Medicare Part D—Senior LinkAge Line™ doubled volunteers and staff in 2005 to provide information on the new prescription drug benefit. Convening partners and stakeholders from throughout the state, the Minnesota Board on Aging, in partnership with DHS, launched the “Minnesota Medicare Part D Call to Action Campaign” in April 2005. The educational goal was twofold: to train entities that work with Medicare beneficiaries and to directly teach beneficiaries about the program.

The results are impressive. By the close of 2005, the campaign had conducted:

- 156 statewide “Minnesota Medicare Part D Road Shows” for people who work with beneficiaries, disability organizations and American Indian tribal staff
- 168 sessions with physicians, pharmacists and long-term care providers
- 700 beneficiary educational sessions in all 87 counties
- 15 sessions focused on minority groups
- Ongoing sessions in multiple community locations
- Recruited and trained 200 new LinkAge Line volunteers in collaboration with AARP-Minnesota.

Since its inception, the Senior LinkAge Line™ has answered an increasing number of calls and served more Minnesotans every year. But the service record in 2005 is extraordinary. From November 2005 through January 2006, the Senior LinkAge Line™ averaged 7,000 calls per week, compared with 7,000 calls per month in 2004. In addition, Senior LinkAge Line™ volunteers and staff successfully contacted more than 90% of 8,000 residents to transition them from the Minnesota Prescription Drug Program into Medicare Part D.

Senior LinkAge Line™ also helps people of all ages and income levels access the best options for affordable medications, including discount cards and patient-assistance programs offered by pharmaceutical companies.

In conclusion, the current information and assistance program is working at capacity with no end in sight. To expand the services to meet growing demand will require additional state resources.





“The Aging and Disability Resource Center initiative is an exciting step forward in streamlining information, assistance and access to long-term supports for seniors and other community members with disabilities. The pilot project in Minnesota has the potential to become a national model of integrated service provision.”

—Josefina G. Carbonell, Assistant Secretary for Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

MinnesotaHelp

Integrated information and assistance

An evolving concept, MinnesotaHelp is a virtual and human resource network that provides information and guidance on long-term care planning, decision-making and public and community-based services. An important component of the network is partnership with trusted existing community locations, including libraries, pharmacies, health clinics, human resources departments and senior centers. By building community capacity, this “network strategy” can reach and serve more people in a time of limited government resources. There, people can access information by way of computer, telephone or print and receive assistance from a knowledgeable resource person. People who are homebound or prefer to work on their own can access information “virtually” on their home computer or by phone.

A national model, MinnesotaHelp, includes an integrated and fully automated database that draws from a number of information and referral providers throughout the state. Conceived exclusively for long-term care, the concept was expanded during the development of the MinnesotaHelp.info™ Web site to also provide information on disabilities, housing, human services and health care. The network, now available in English, Hmong and Spanish, is comprised of:

- www.MinnesotaHelp.info,™ a user-friendly Web site
- Senior LinkAge Line,™ information and personal assistance by phone
- Disability Linkage Line™
- Family Linkage Line in development in 2006
- Personal assistance at trusted community resource sites
- Information kiosks stocked with printed materials.

With the aid of a federal grant and in partnership with Hennepin County, MBA opened a pilot MinnesotaHelp community site at the Brookdale Resource Library in 2005. This aging and disability resource site offers a trained resource librarian, computer terminals for access to MinnesotaHelp.info and printed materials and books on topics of interest to seniors, caregivers and persons with disabilities.

Hennepin County was chosen as the test location because the goals of the county were in line with the vision of the Minnesota Board on Aging and the Department of Human Services: To help people stabilize their circumstances, remain self-reliant and improve their quality of life. In addition, Hennepin County takes a holistic approach to health and human service delivery and is a microcosm for the state, comprised of urban, rural and suburban populations. According to the 2000 U.S. Census estimates, 11% of Hennepin County residents are 65 and older, and it contains 23% of Minnesotans with disabilities, aged 57 and above.

“MinnesotaHelp’s aging and disability resource center is a good example of a public/private partnership that really helps people in the community and reduces duplication of services,” says Alex Bartolic, Human Services area manager for Aging and Disability Services for Hennepin County Human Service and Public Health Department. “The county is working with the Linkage Lines to develop resources on the Web and a long-term care decision tool that gives people the information and help they need. The real promise of this partnership will be next year when we roll out to more locations. Then we will see some really significant changes in the information and assistance system.”

This year, as part of MinnesotaHelp, kiosks and printed materials on Age Well, Live Well, Plan Well, Care Well were distributed to all of the state’s Area Agencies on Aging, which have also become MinnesotaHelp community sites. With a grant from the Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians Foundation, Senior LinkAge Line™ has also developed information kiosks for doctor’s offices and clinics across the state and provides one-on-one assistance onsite to patients, regarding long-term care services.

Future MinnesotaHelp goals include: rolling out a newly redesigned, more Web accessible interface for consumers; a new power-user version; expanding network sites in Hennepin County to 18 libraries, and beginning to test other rural, urban and suburban locations around the state.

“There are challenges ahead and resource constraints. We are living in an aging society. At a time when the need is going up, the resources are going down. There is an important role for better consumer information, but that doesn’t get us off the hook for providing better services as well.”—Robert L. Kane, M.D, endowed professor, University of Minnesota

School of Public Health and director of the Center on Aging

MinnesotaHelp CareChoices

—making sense of care options

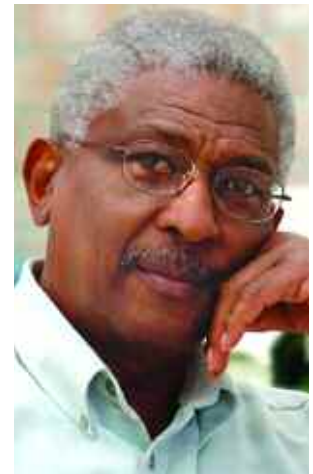
Interactivity and automated decision support is becoming a recognized strategy for guiding consumers through complex decisions, such as finding and accessing long-term care. This is especially true for baby boomers who are computer literate. Although the Internet is a major strategy in Minnesota to provide accurate information to the public, some of those most in need do not have access to a computer or the Internet. Therefore, Minnesota’s multi-pronged approach—Linkage Line phone service, in-person assistance, Internet resources and Web-based tools—was warranted.

Together with funding from the federal government, a collaborative effort was launched with the University Center on Aging, the Minnesota Board on Aging and Hennepin County Human Services and Public Health Department. With the help of hundreds of experts from a variety of fields, Robert L. Kane, MD, developed a set of recommendations related to long-term care. Under the leadership of the MBA, Dr. Kane then incorporated the research into the resulting Web-based MinnesotaHelp CareChoices. CareChoices asks older adults and their caregivers to answer questions regarding their health, daily activities, preferences, mobility and finances.



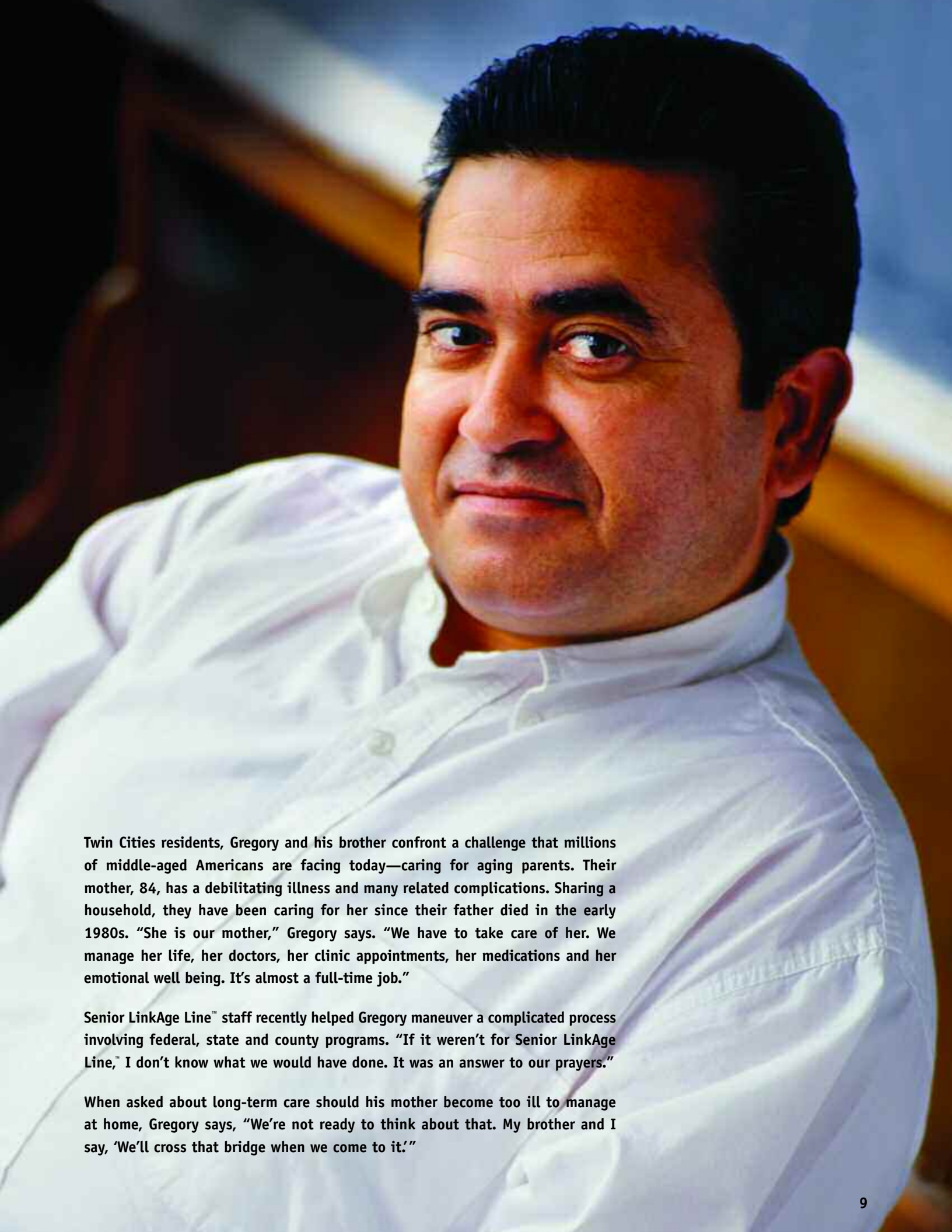
The interactive tool helps people understand and make decisions on the type of long-term care their situation demands. Once that is determined, CareChoices offers information on local providers and recommendations about services based on preferences such as location, personal interests and

self-reliance. Designed for flexibility, the tool can be accessed online by older adults or caregivers, or it can be used along with in-person assistance from a long-term care consultant. The real value of MinnesotaHelp CareChoices is that it allows older adults and families to make better-informed decisions about long-term care before a health crisis occurs.



Hennepin County is piloting the tool in conjunction with MinnesotaHelp.info.™ Launched in beta at the Age and Disabilities Odyssey Conference in August 2005, MinnesotaHelp CareChoices is being tested by Hennepin County at East Side Neighborhood Services in Minneapolis. A rollout will begin at Jordan New Life Church in the second quarter of 2006. After testing is completed, it will be released statewide on the Web site later this year.

Now MinnesotaHelp is interested in exploring other applications of Web-based decision tools. With a grant from the DHS Disability Services Division, Hennepin County will soon be gathering a large group of consumers with disabilities to glean information on their needs and preferences to develop a decision tool to meet the specific objectives of people of all ages who have disabilities.



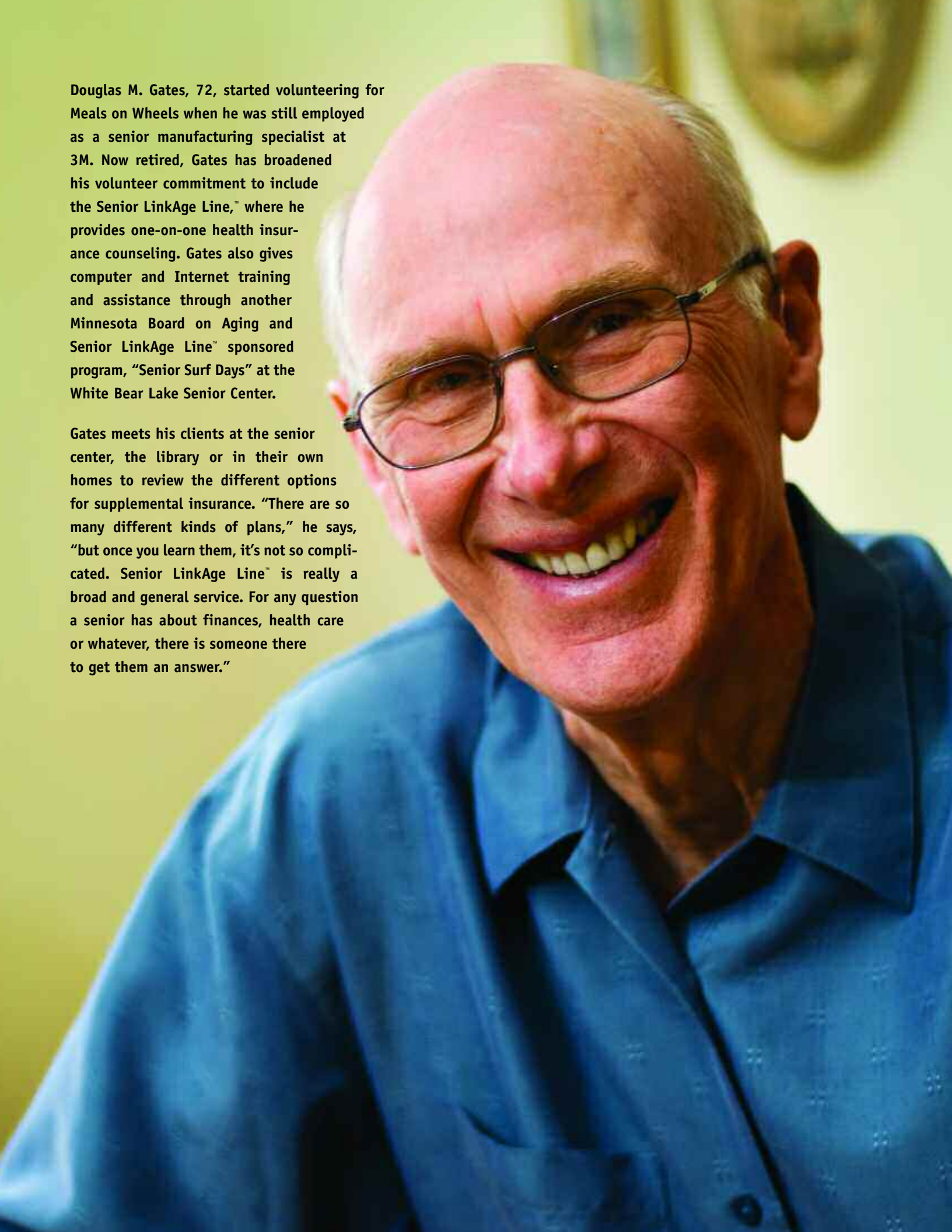
Twin Cities residents, Gregory and his brother confront a challenge that millions of middle-aged Americans are facing today—caring for aging parents. Their mother, 84, has a debilitating illness and many related complications. Sharing a household, they have been caring for her since their father died in the early 1980s. “She is our mother,” Gregory says. “We have to take care of her. We manage her life, her doctors, her clinic appointments, her medications and her emotional well being. It’s almost a full-time job.”

Senior LinkAge Line™ staff recently helped Gregory maneuver a complicated process involving federal, state and county programs. “If it weren’t for Senior LinkAge Line,™ I don’t know what we would have done. It was an answer to our prayers.”

When asked about long-term care should his mother become too ill to manage at home, Gregory says, “We’re not ready to think about that. My brother and I say, ‘We’ll cross that bridge when we come to it.’”

Douglas M. Gates, 72, started volunteering for Meals on Wheels when he was still employed as a senior manufacturing specialist at 3M. Now retired, Gates has broadened his volunteer commitment to include the Senior LinkAge Line,™ where he provides one-on-one health insurance counseling. Gates also gives computer and Internet training and assistance through another Minnesota Board on Aging and Senior LinkAge Line™ sponsored program, “Senior Surf Days” at the White Bear Lake Senior Center.

Gates meets his clients at the senior center, the library or in their own homes to review the different options for supplemental insurance. “There are so many different kinds of plans,” he says, “but once you learn them, it’s not so complicated. Senior LinkAge Line™ is really a broad and general service. For any question a senior has about finances, health care or whatever, there is someone there to get them an answer.”



“There is an adrenaline rush when you know someone has been taken advantage of. I thought this would be an interesting challenge. It’s rewarding because you can give someone peace of mind. It also fits my personality. I fight for the underdog.”—Lucie Andrie, volunteer

Volunteers

—the lifeblood of Minnesota Linkage Line services

Information and assistance volunteers are trained and certified to provide more than just information. Under the direction of professional senior outreach specialists, these volunteers provide in-depth assistance to callers, including seniors, caregivers and people of all ages. Thanks to these volunteers and the staff who train them, Minnesotans have more seamless access to information and services with statewide integration and standards.

Betty Johnson, Cushing, Minnesota

“Many seniors don’t understand what resources are out there. It is humbling to work with them because they are so thankful. I’ve learned to persevere. This work teaches you where to start and how to dig deeper to sort things out.”

Larry Rivers, Apple Valley, Minnesota

“Every client is memorable. Everyone is different, because people are different and so are their situations. So every day is interesting. The face-to-face assistance is quite good, because people aren’t up to speed on the options. Only about 20% are computer literate, so I teach them how to use the tools.”

Janet Warwick, St. Paul, Minnesota

“Senior LinkAge Line™ plays a vital role because some seniors are so intimidated by the complexity of issues. Senior LinkAge Line™ helps them obtain the help they need in a professional way. It’s a dynamic body of information. I can’t help everyone, but I can make a small difference with a few people. I can try to be responsible in my own area of expertise and try to help others.”



Douglas Gates, White Bear Lake, Minnesota

“I enjoy working with the people,” Gates says. “They are always so pleased to get the information they need. And when I can help someone who needs extra help—those who have to choose if they are going to take their medications or eat—that really makes me feel good.”

Nancy Rees, Brainerd, Minnesota

“The more you work with seniors, the more you realize that they need someone with knowledge of what is available. Coming into this volunteer work with a nursing home business background, I’ve dealt with Medicare and insurance issues. Most of the seniors I work with know what they need to do, but they don’t know the products that are out there and they don’t understand how to sort through their options. We’re there to support them, not make decisions for them.”

2005 Highlights

Partners

The Senior LinkAge Line™ is a system of overlapping programs and services all centered on providing information and assistance to people. It includes several programs that historically were separate. Partnerships keep the program strong and help prevent costly duplication of services.

The programs and funding streams that support the Network provide volunteer recruitment; training and management; a state technical support team; community education and visibility building; and Web-based tools and resources for all ages. They include:

Minnesota Department of Human Services
Aging and Adult Services Division
Disability Services Division
Community Partnerships Division
Health Care Eligibility and Access Division

Centers for Medicare a& Medicaid Services,
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

U.S. Administration on Aging, U.S. Department
of Health and Human Services

Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department
of Health and Human Services

Hennepin County Human Services and Public
Health Department

Hennepin County Libraries

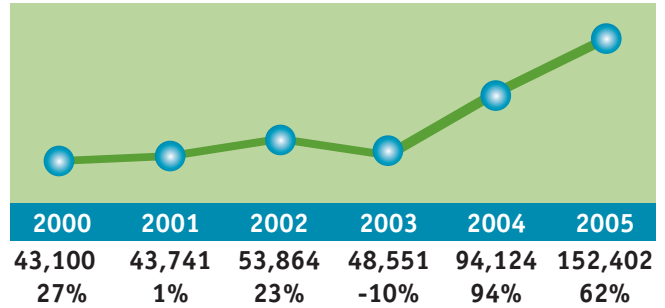
Metropolitan Center for Independent Living

Southeast Center for Independent Living

University of Minnesota Center on Aging



Senior LinkAge Line™ Number of Calls and Percent Change from Previous Year



Senior LinkAge Line™ Reason for Calls 2005

Reason	Percent
Prescription Drug Expense Assistance	56%
Health Insurance Counseling	20%
In-Home Services	3%
Housing	2%
Case Management	2%

Senior LinkAge Line™ Callers

Identity of Caller

Caller	Percent
Self	64%
Couple	6%
Family Friend	21%
Agency	9%

Age of Caller

Years of Age	Percent
Under 60	21%
60-64	9%
65-74	39%
75-84	22%
Over 85	9%

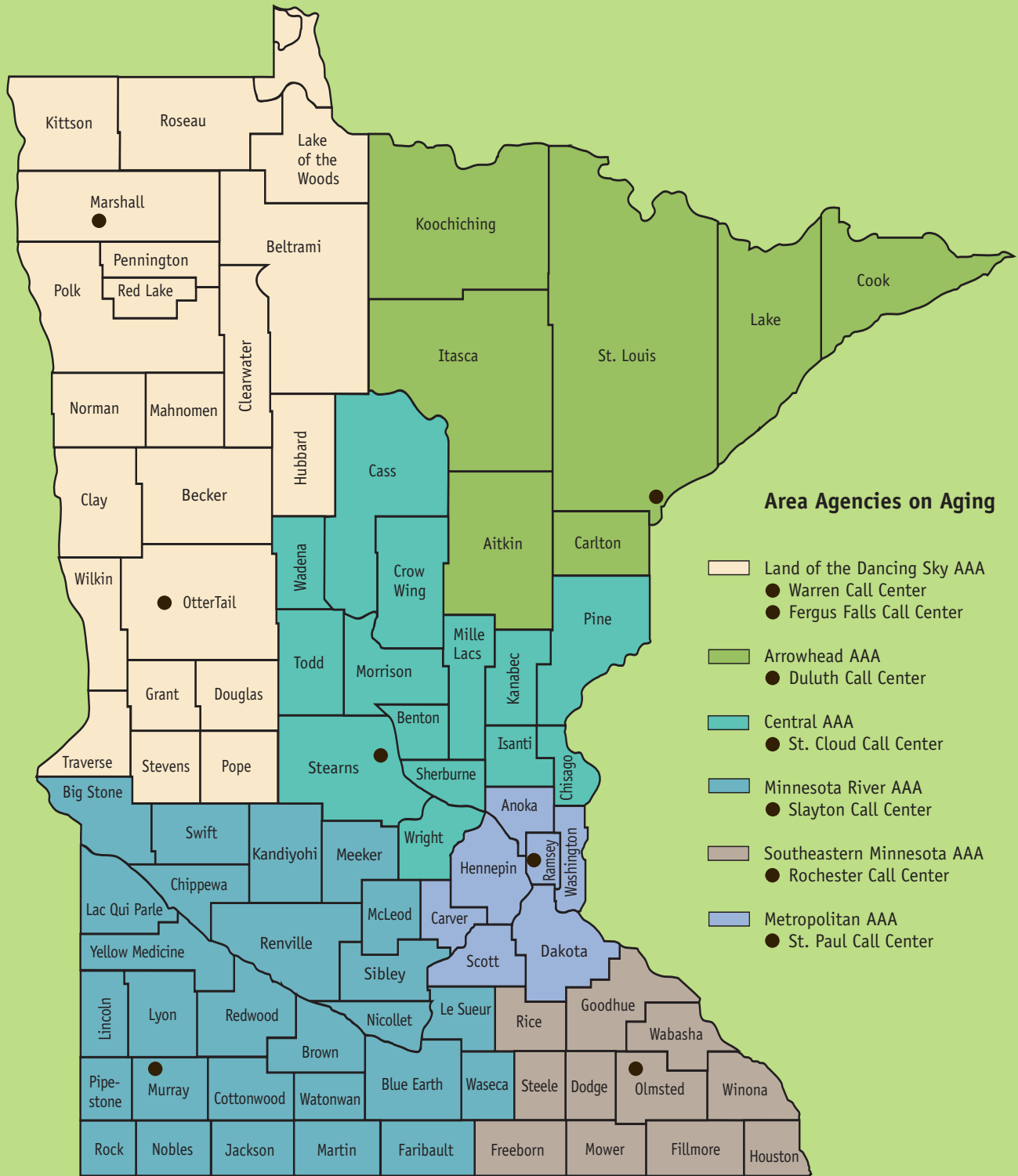
MinnesotaHelp.info Web Trend Report 2005

- Number of unique visitors: 48,472
- Number of visits: 89,853 (1.85 visits/visitor)
- Number of pages: 723,395 (8.05 pages/visit)

Customer Satisfaction Survey

- In 2005, 98% of the 813 respondents found the Senior LinkAge Line™ person they spoke with to be friendly and courteous.
- 97% of respondents were satisfied with the in-person assistance they received from the Senior LinkAge Line.™
- 96% of respondents would recommend Senior LinkAge Line™ to someone they knew who needed help.
- 90% of the respondents found the information they received from Senior LinkAge Line™ either helped them to make a decision or lead them to a service they were seeking.

Minnesota Senior LinkAge Line 2005™





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