



Over the next 25 years, the number of Minnesotans over age 65 will increase—from nearly 900,000 to 1.3 million in 2030. This unprecedented age wave will impact Minnesota’s long-term services and supports landscape in ways the state has never experienced. As more people age, rates of chronic illness and disability, including rates of Alzheimer’s disease, will rise. With that rise will be an increase in the number of older adults and their family members needing to access and make decisions about long-term services and supports. Also, as more people receive services in their own homes and apartments instead of in institutions, the numbers of frail and vulnerable people living in the community continues to increase. Our systems for protecting vulnerable adults and ensuring accountability must likewise adapt.

While Minnesota has already taken a number of steps to manage and prepare for these changing demographics, pressures on the state’s budget will persist. We must continue to find ways to reform our system and to prepare communities and the state as a whole in order to meet the challenges and opportunities associated with an aging population. The Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA) and its partner organizations work together to support communities in efforts to become more livable for people of all ages, improve the quality of long-term services and supports, help individuals make decisions, protect vulnerable people, and build mechanisms for ongoing sustainability.

In advocating for the following legislative priorities, the Minnesota Board on Aging will advocate for an inclusive health and social system that treats people equitably and creates conditions in which all people can achieve optimal living and to work with its partners to raise awareness of, and address, the demographic, economic, environmental, and health disparities that relate to these issues.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR LEGISLATIVE ATTENTION IN 2017:

1. Home and Community-Based Services: Options and Information
2. Education and Support for Vulnerable Adults
3. Supporting Caregivers and the Long-Term Services and Supports Workforce
4. Preparing Minnesota for Aging into the Future
5. Supporting Individuals to Take Action on Long-Term Services and Supports
6. Supporting Affordable Housing Solutions for Older Adults



1. HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES: OPTIONS AND INFORMATION

The Minnesota Board on Aging supports continued expansion of access to home and community-based service options for older adults, in order to provide meaningful choice for consumers. Minnesota's Older Americans Act-funded services are targeted to individuals who are at risk for falling into the public safety net, and the demand for services continues to grow.

In addition, consumers and their family members must have access to information that will assist them to understand the full range of options. The Senior LinkAge Line® assists individuals to find community resources, including supports for family caregivers, and to create a support plan to remain in the community. This type of assistance, also known as long-term care options counseling, has been used successfully to help consumers and their caregivers make informed decisions about their long-term services and support needs.

The MBA supports the preservation and development of critical home and community-based service options across the state, as well as a strong system for providing long-term care options counseling to help older adults and their families make educated decisions about long-term services and support needs, helping them remain in the community.

2. EDUCATION AND SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE ADULTS

The Minnesota Board on Aging has demonstrated its commitment to protecting and supporting vulnerable adults. The MBA supports Minnesota's system for reporting maltreatment of vulnerable adults and ensuring their safety and well-being, as well as efforts to increase public awareness of maltreatment of vulnerable adults. The Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care plays a critical role in educating and empowering consumers and their families about their rights and responsibilities. This enables consumers and family members to advocate for themselves and potentially prevent maltreatment. The office must have increased flexibility and funding to ensure that this need is met which includes compliance with federal regulations governing the program.

The MBA supports enhanced efforts to educate and empower consumers and to advocate for their needs and prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

3. SUPPORTING CAREGIVERS AND THE LONG-TERM SERVICES AND SUPPORTS WORKFORCE

The Minnesota Board on Aging supports efforts addressing the needs of caregivers, especially working caregivers. Family and friend caregivers are the foundation of Minnesota's long-term services and support system. Minnesota has an estimated 585,000 caregivers who provide an estimated \$7.86 billion of unpaid care each year for adults of all ages. Working caregivers have unique challenges and often struggle to balance the competing demands of work, caregiving and family. The presence of a caregiver has been shown to improve medical compliance, reduce hospital readmissions, prevent or delay premature nursing home placement, and improve quality of life for older adults.

Minnesota is facing an unprecedented long-term services and supports workforce shortage at a time when the number of older adults requiring the services of those workers is growing larger each day. The State Demographer and Economist estimate that Minnesota will have approximately 50,000 to 60,000 openings for direct care workers to support people with disabilities and older adults by 2018. Creative solutions will need to be developed and implemented to support the increasing numbers of older adults who wish to remain active and independent in their communities.

The MBA supports efforts to increase caregiver education, counseling and respite services, support working caregivers, in addition to supporting creative solutions to increase the long-term services and supports workforce needed to assist our aging population.



4. PREPARING MINNESOTA FOR AGING INTO THE FUTURE

Historically, the 65+ age group in Minnesota accounted for 12-13% of the total population. However, this figure is expected to increase to 17% by 2020 and 21% by 2030. In other words, one in five Minnesotans will be an older adult by 2030. As the population ages, so does the number of individuals with complex needs and multiple chronic conditions that they need to manage on a daily basis. The Minnesota Board on Aging works with a variety of partners, to prepare Minnesota for the impacts of aging such as physical, mental, cognitive (including Alzheimer's disease and other dementias), and behavioral health issues; health equity; and historical, war or other trauma affecting aging persons.

The Minnesota Board on Aging administers a competitive grant program aimed at increasing awareness of Alzheimer's disease, increasing the rate of cognitive testing, promoting the benefits of early disease diagnosis, and connecting caregivers of persons with dementia to education and resources.

The MBA supports work toward improving Minnesota's system of supports for older Minnesotans with complex needs to ensure older Minnesotans have the information, resources, and services available to meet their diverse health needs.

5. SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS TO TAKE ACTION ON LONG TERM SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

The Minnesota Board on Aging has long supported efforts that help individuals plan for their long-term services and support needs, take action to manage their risks for needing long-term services and supports, and understand their full range of options for services and supports. In 2012, Minnesota launched the Own Your Future initiative, specifically aimed at encouraging and enabling Minnesotans to create a plan for their long-term services and support, including how to pay for it. Demographic and economic realities require that we increase the amount of long-term services and supports that is financed privately. The Own Your Future Advisory Panel has developed recommendations on insurance, financial, or related products that should be available to middle-income households to help pay for long-term services and support costs.

The MBA supports efforts that will encourage and enable Minnesotans to take action to meet their long-term services and support needs.

6. SUPPORTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR OLDER ADULTS

Minnesota's population is getting older each day. Most people prefer to remain in their single family home even as they experience a need for help around the house or with personal care. A growing number of older adults will be living on fixed incomes of 30 to 80% of the area medium income of their neighborhoods. These individuals will face the dual challenge of not being able to afford the maintenance and accessibility modification costs associated with staying in their homes and not being able to find affordable rental housing in which they could receive services.

The state needs to support the development of a range of affordable housing options for the growing older adult population in order to help individuals remain in their community and get the support that they need. New ideas to support home ownership, home modifications, multi-generational and other shared housing arrangements and a push to end older adult homelessness are needed in our future.

The MBA supports efforts that will develop and maintain affordable older adult and multi-generational housing, allow flexibility in the use of home modification funding, as well as activities to end homelessness among older adults.



About the MBA



MISSION

The mission of the Minnesota Board on Aging is to ensure that older Minnesotans and their families are effectively served by state and local policies and programs. The MBA works with seven Area Agencies on Aging throughout the state to deliver services that help residents to age well and live well in their communities. This partnership helps ensure local input and accountability for service funding and promotes local innovation for problem-solving.

The MBA is designated as the State Unit on Aging for Minnesota for the purposes of administering federal Older Americans Act funds. Its 25 board members are appointed by the governor and represent diverse backgrounds, ages, interests and communities across the state.

HELPING OLDER ADULTS HELP THEMSELVES

The majority of today's seniors want to stay in their own homes. The MBA provides support to make this a reality by connecting citizens to local services, including home and community-based services, Older Americans Act services and long term care options counseling, as well as the protection of a long-term care ombudsman.

These programs use nationally recognized, evidence-based models that have demonstrated budget savings by delaying more costly care. This has helped to manage increasing state deficits by seeking low-cost ways to prevent many elderly citizens from falling into the public safety net.

RESOURCES TO HELP MINNESOTANS AGE WELL AND LIVE WELL

Baby Boomers began turning 65 in 2011. This age wave will usher in unprecedented changes to the way we approach long-term services and supports. As the legislature works through long-term services and support policy, the MBA stands ready to provide unbiased research, insight and program information on aging issues.

The MBA and its Area Agencies on Aging are working to prepare Minnesota for this unprecedented wave of new retirees, so that citizens can age well and live well.

The MBA:

- Contracts for services (meals, transportation, in-home supports) to assist older adults and their family caregivers throughout the state.
- Provides long-term care options counseling so assist older adults can make informed decisions through the Senior LinkAge Line® 1-800-333-2433 and www.MinnesotaHelp.info®.
- Supports policy makers with objective research on current trends and evidence-based programs.
- Provides objective research about geriatric care and the aging population.



Minnesota Board on Aging

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