



Task Force on Aging Position Statement

Elder Voice Advocates supports the Task Force on Aging legislation. The needs of the growing senior population are stressing our current programs and infrastructure. This will get much worse as the senior population grows. It is important that we plan for the human right to receive the support necessary to live our lives with dignity and quality resources.

Bill Summary (HF 979 – Rep. Ginny Kleborn and SF 1022 – Senator Kelly Morrison)

A Legislative Task Force on Aging will review our aging demographics, make policy recommendations for building an infrastructure to provide for over 1 million seniors and determine a governmental entity to lead and execute a Statewide Plan for Aging Minnesotans.

This is necessary because we require must have a statewide plan and agency that will drive fundamental change in how we care for and support current and future seniors and Minnesota families.

Crisis Situation

Rapidly growing aging population - The MN state demographer has reports that:

- The MN population of over 65 years in 2021 was 956,000, eclipsing the K – 12 population of over 870,000 in 2021 – 2022.
- Seniors make up 17% of the population.
- MN will reach a milestone this year: 1 million people will be over the age of 65.
- In the next 7 years, 300,000 Minnesotans will be over the age of 75.

Rural areas have more older adults & challenges

- Greater Minnesota (geographic area outside the Twin Cities metro area) is home to a larger share of older adults, 482,026 compared to 466,815.
- Rural realities of distance, transportation challenges, financial constraints, insufficient housing, reduced access to healthcare, and limited access to internet are barriers to successful aging (Henning-Smith, C., 2021).

Most live in their home, while many live in senior residences

- Over 90% of older adults live independently in Minnesota communities.
- 21% of these older adults receive community supports and services funded through the Older Americans Act and various state programs (MN Board on Aging Report, 2019).
- 7% of MN older adults live in congregate settings--2.5% in Long-term Care and 4.5% in Assisted Living settings (Genworth Cost of Care, 2019; AHCA National Center for Assisted Living) .

Note: Demographic data source from Aging in Minnesota Fact Sheet 2022 by Ann Bussey, MA, Community Healthy Aging Advocate (abussey6824@gmail.com) University of Minnesota Project Reach, March 2022.

Currently a Fragmented Approach to Senior Issues

Minnesota currently has at least 10 state agencies/departments with a substantial piece of elder services and policy work. [MN Board on Aging, Attorney General, Department of Health, Department of Human Services, MN Statewide Independent Living Council, Board of Examiners for Nursing Home Administrators, Board of Nursing, Office of Health Facilities Complaints, Ombudsman for Long Term Care ,and the University of MN] .

None of them are planning for the rapidly growing elder population nor evaluating the infrastructure and support services that will be needed. Our state is woefully unprepared.

Seniors Currently Struggle with Many Issues.

- Affordable housing is getting more challenging with rent and property tax increases.
- Adequate transportation contributes to isolation and inability to get to basic services.
- Quality home care options are needed to enable staying in our homes.
- Long-term care facilities are understaffed and creating a significant care crisis that is resulting in needless suffering and premature death.
- Inflation is impacting our available income to meet our basic living expenses.

Please vote for HF 979 and SF 1022. Thank you for your support.

Addendum

Other state examples (from the MN Board on Aging)

Other states are moving toward comprehensive planning efforts to address the ongoing demographic changes:

Colorado

In Colorado, understanding that quality, replicable data is essential to understanding long-term progress, needs and opportunities in the aging community. The State of Aging in Colorado has begun to develop a useful and powerful database. <https://www.bellpolicy.org/2021/12/01/state-of-aging-in-colorado/>

California

California’s Master Plan (MPA) released on January 6 bold goals and twenty-three strategies to build a California for All Ages by 2030...This is , 2021, “the MPA outlines five not a plan simply for today’s older adults. Instead, the Master Plan is a blueprint for aging across the lifespan. The Master Plan calls on all California communities to build a California for All Ages: for older Californians currently living through the many different stages of the second half of life; for younger generations who can expect to live longer lives than their elders; for communities of all ages – family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and caregivers – surrounding older adults.” <https://mpa.aging.ca.gov/>

Illinois March 8, 2022

The MISSION of the Illinois Department on Aging is to serve and advocate for older Illinoisans and their caregivers by administering quality and culturally appropriate programs that promote partnerships and encourage independence, dignity, and quality of life.”

https://www2.illinois.gov/aging/AboutUs/Documents/Org_Chart.pdf

Ohio

This is a cabinet-level state agency. The director is appointed by the governor. The U.S. Administration for Community Living designated Ohio as lead agency for Older Americans Act services. The Ohio Department of Medicaid contracts with this agency to administer certain Medicaid program.s