



MINNESOTA RIVER AREA AGENCY ON AGING®, INC.

MNRAAA NEWS

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From Our Executive Director

Dear Readers,

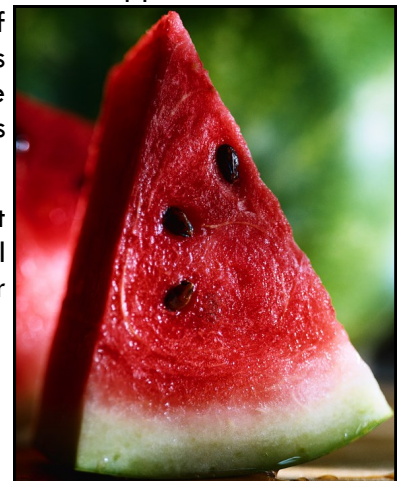
Welcome to our summer edition of MNRAAA News. As I write this letter, it's the week of July 4th – the height of summer and the perfect time to provide you with some *Summer Fun Facts!*

- *Did you know* that mosquitoes are insects that have been around for 30 million years? Their chemical sensors can detect mammals from 100 feet away. They also have heat sensors to detect warm-blooded creatures and visual sensors that detect movement and contrast in colors.
- *Did you know* that watermelon is a vegetable? It is most closely related to cucumbers, pumpkins and squash. Watermelons are 92% water and early explorers often used hollowed out watermelons as canteens.
- *Did you know* that the average American eats approximately 5 ½ gallons of ice cream a year?
- *Did you know* that the Frisbee was originally designed as a tin pie plate in the 1870s? It was a marketing scheme to encourage homemakers to see the name Frisbee on the pie tin and think how much easier it would be to buy a pie instead of making one. Eventually Mr. Frisbees' pies were sold all over Connecticut.
- And, *did you know* that an eleven year old boy named Frank Epperson invented the first Popsicle? He accidentally left a mixture of powdered soda and water, with a stirring stick, on his porch. The next morning he found a frozen pop. He first named it an Epsicle, but when he got older his kids asked for Pop's sicle.

Now that you've learned some fun facts, turn to the rest of the newsletter. It's filled with information we hope will be useful to you. As always, if you have questions or comments, feel free to contact any of MNRAAA's staff.

Happy Summer,

Linda Giersdorf



Mission Statement

The Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging®, Inc. is the gateway to resources for older adults, caregivers and service providers in the twenty-seven counties of southwest Minnesota.

Tech Talk: Cool Apps for Preparedness

Get your family and home ready for a tornado with the official Tornado App from the American Red Cross. The tornado warning app puts everything you need to know to prepare for a tornado – and all that comes with it – in the palm of your hand. With interactive quizzes and simple step-by-step advice it's never been easier to be ready.

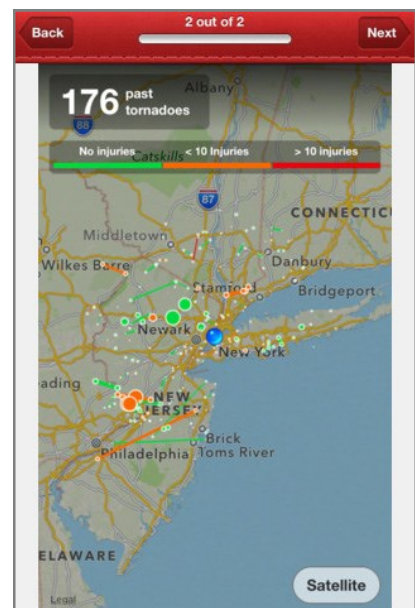
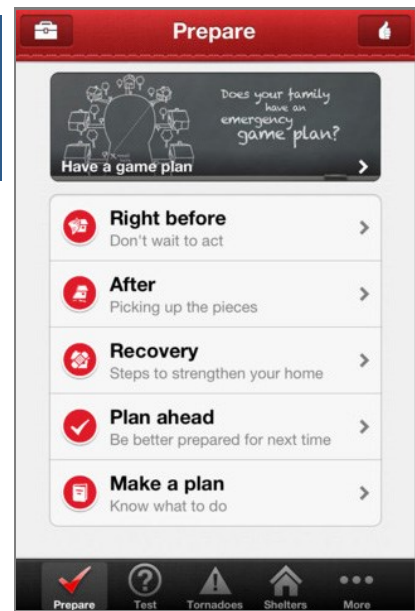
Some of the app features include:

- Simple step-by-step instructions to help you know what to do even if the cell towers and TVs are down. Prioritized actions for before, during and after requires no mobile connectivity.
- Audible siren that automatically goes off even if app is closed when the National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration (NOAA) issues a tornado warning, helping to reduce the chance of sleeping through an actual warning.
- Push notification sent when a warning expires – especially important if power goes out while you or your family are in your safe room.
- Ability to help distant friends and family in tornado alley by receiving tornado watch and warning alerts based on their location from NOAA.
- Red Cross location-based open shelters map for when you need it most.
- How to assemble an emergency kit for your family in the event of power outage or evacuation.

For additional information visit:

<http://apps.usa.gov/tornado-app.shtml>

Screen Shots



As Pedestrians Age...

...So Does Odds of Dying in Traffic Accidents



The analysis of 2001-2010 U.S. data showed that traffic-related death rates for men and women aged 75 and older were more than double those of people aged 34 and younger.

Overall, pedestrians make up 4,000 of the nearly 34,000 traffic-related deaths occurring in the United States each year, according to researchers from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The number of elderly killed while walking on America's roads could even increase given the aging of the U.S. population, said CDC experts commenting on the finding.

Thursday, April 18 (HealthDay News) -- Elderly pedestrians face a much higher risk of being killed in a traffic accident than the young do, a new government report finds.

Continued on page 6

Caregiver Corner

Planning for Excessive Heat

Did you know that each year more people die from “excessive heat events” than from hurricanes, lightning, tornadoes, floods and earthquakes combined? Anyone can be adversely affected by excessive heat, but older adults are particularly vulnerable. Excessive heat events are prolonged periods when temperatures reach 100°F or more.

Excessive heat events are believed to have a disproportionate public health impact in cities. One reason is that roads and buildings absorb the sun’s energy and contribute to the formation of “heat islands.” While rural areas cool off at night, cities retain this absorbed heat. As a result, urban residents get less nighttime relief from high temperatures. Fortunately, there are simple steps that older adults, their caregivers, and community leaders can take to decrease the impact of excessive heat events.

Who is At Risk From Extreme Heat?

Older adults, as well as young children, are at high risk from excessive heat events. For the growing number of aging Americans, the body’s cooling mechanisms may become impaired. Living alone or being confined to a bed and unable to care for one’s self further increases risk.

Existing health conditions, such as chronic illness, mental impairment, and obesity can also heighten an individual’s vulnerability. Persons taking certain medications are susceptible. In addition, people who live on the top floors of buildings without air-conditioning are more likely to be exposed to excessive heat. Participating in strenuous outdoor activities and consuming alcohol during unusually hot weather exacerbates heat-related health effects.

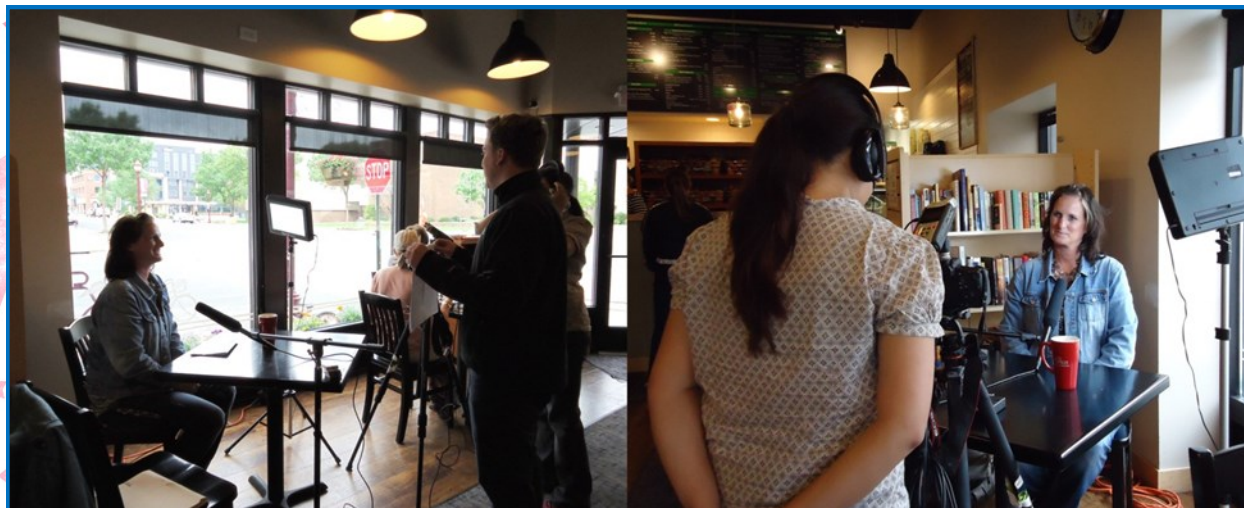


How do you Reduce Exposure to Excessive Heat?

The best defense against excessive heat is prevention. Air-conditioning is one of the best protective factors against heat-related illness and death. Even a few hours a day in air conditioning can greatly reduce the risk. Electric fans may provide comfort, but when temperatures are in the high 90’s fans do not prevent heat-related illness.

During excessive heat events, the following prevention strategies can save lives:

- Visit air-conditioned buildings in your community if your home is not air-conditioned. These may include: senior centers, movie theaters, libraries, shopping malls or designated “cooling centers.”
- Take a cool shower or bath.
- Drink lots of fluids. Don’t wait until you are thirsty to drink. If a doctor limits your fluid intake, make sure to ask how much to drink when it’s hot. Avoid beverages containing caffeine, alcohol or large amounts of sugar. These drinks cause dehydration.
- Ask your doctor or other health care provider if the medications you take could increase your susceptibility to heat-related illness.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, and loose-fitting clothing.
- Visit at-risk individuals at least twice a day. Watch for signs of heat-related illness such as hot, dry skin, confusion, hallucinations and aggression.
- Call 9-1-1 if medical attention is needed.



Senior LinkAge Line® volunteer Jodi Weller filmed for a MinnesotaHelp Network™ PSA at Tandem Bagels in Mankato

Volunteers are Stars:

Public Service Announcements

On May 30th, several Senior LinkAge Line® volunteers became stars. MNRAAA was asked to assist the Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA) with the filming of MinnesotaHelp Network™ public service announcements. A small film crew and Chris Benson, Senior LinkAge Line® Training Coordinator from MBA, came to Mankato with cue cards and camera in hand.

Volunteer Jodi Weller was the first star of the day. She portrayed a working mother who found herself now caring for her aging father. This public service announcement (PSA) highlights the Long Term Care Choices Navigator tool on the www.MinnesotaHelp.info™ website.

Another PSA shows volunteer Marilyn Dundas portraying an older adult happy to be back in her home after recovering from a fall. This scene informs viewers of the Senior LinkAge Line® and some of the services that can be provided. The third star of the day was volunteer Henry Kress. He did a wonderful job explaining not only how older adults can call the Senior LinkAge Line® to be connected to volunteer opportunities in their community, but also how volunteering with the Senior LinkAge Line® can be a great experience.

We look forward to seeing these public service announcements soon on our social media outlooks and MNRAAA website. A special thanks to Tandem Bagels for allowing us to film in their coffeehouse and bakery. And a very special thanks to our talented volunteers!

Find us on Facebook & Twitter



For MNRAAA Employment and
Volunteer Opportunities
check our website at
www.mnraaa.org



Emergency Planning for Vacation

Source: www.fema.gov

Its summertime! Kids, parents and adults are taking advantage of the warm weather and planning vacations locally and outside of their area. Some people live in areas where there is minimal risk of weather causing a major affect on the planning and excitement of the vacation, so when they move to other parts of the country or outside of the U.S., preparedness needs to be considered.

Vacationers must be aware of their surroundings and ensure proper precautions are made in emergency planning for their vacation. Below are helpful tips shared on the National Preparedness Coalition discussion board when preparing for vacation.

- Have copies of travel documents and passports available. Make electronic copies for back-up purposes.
- Check weather for your vacation destination.
- Consider travel insurance when traveling to areas with known risks such as the Caribbean during hurricane season. Make sure natural disasters are covered in the travel insurance.
- Pack an emergency kit that includes first aid supplies and any prescriptions.
- Heed the warning. Follow the lead of the residents when warning sirens are activated or advisories are made.

Before you leave

- Pack a travel-size emergency supply kit with water, snacks, first-aid kit, flashlight, small battery-operated radio, extra batteries and an emergency contact card with names and phone numbers.
- Pack extra supplies of critical items, such as prescription medications and baby formula, in case your return is delayed by a disaster.
- Let family and friends know your itinerary and how to reach you.
- Develop a communications plan and make everyone in your traveling group aware of the plan. Make sure everyone has the cell phone numbers of the others in your group. Designate an out-of-area person to contact in case your group is separated during an emergency and unable to place local calls.
- If traveling internationally, register with the U.S. Department of State through a free online service at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>. The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) allows travelers to enter information about upcoming trips abroad so that the Department of State can better assist them in an emergency.

During your trip

- If traveling by car, check the forecast for your entire route before and during your trip. Weather conditions can change drastically, especially if thunderstorms are expected.
- Bring along a travel weather radio, which will automatically switch to the weather radio station closest to your travel area and will alert you to any hazardous weather.
- Become familiar with the names of the counties you are traveling through because hazardous weather warnings are issued by county.
- If you are in a vehicle when a tornado warning has been issued or you see a tornado approaching, seek shelter in a sturdy building until the storm passes. If you're unable to reach a sturdy building, pull over and find a low area, such as a ditch, and take cover there.
- Familiarize yourself with emergency plans in your hotel or place you are staying as soon as you arrive.

If disaster strikes your vacation spot, you can register on the American Red Cross' "Safe and Well" website at www.safeandwell.org so family and friends will know that you are safe.

Continued from page 2



They noted that older adults actually take fewer walks than younger people, "however, when struck, older adult pedestrians are more likely to die from their injuries."

Increasing frailty may leave the elderly more vulnerable to being hit by traffic, as well. Age-linked declines in mental function, vision and physical disabilities "might place older adult pedestrians at greater risk for being struck by a vehicle," the CDC added.

Between 2001 and 2010, more than 47,000 Americans died in traffic-related pedestrian deaths, with males having more than double the risk of being hit and killed versus females. It's been suggested that this may be because males tend to walk in more dangerous settings or take more chances when walking.

About three-fourths of pedestrian deaths occurred in cities, the researchers said.

The study appears in the April 19 issue of the CDC publication *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

When the researchers looked at ethnic/racial groups, they found that American Indians/Alaskan Natives had the highest death rates, while Caucasians had the lowest death rates.

Pedestrian fatalities can be prevented, the CDC said, and efforts to do so should include installing speed bumps on certain roadways, enforcing speeding and distracted driving laws, and "creating pedestrian safety zones and streets designated for walking."

By Robert Preidt, HealthDay News

A Matter of Balance

Many older adults experience concerns about falling and restrict their activities. A MATTER OF BALANCE is an award-winning program designed to manage falls and increase activity levels. This program emphasizes practical strategies to manage falls.

YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- view falls as controllable
- set goals for increasing activity
- make changes to reduce fall risks at home
- exercise to increase strength and balance

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

- anyone concerned about falls
- anyone interested in improving balance, flexibility and strength
- anyone who has fallen in the past
- anyone who has restricted activities because of falling concerns

Classes are held either twice a week for 4 weeks or once a week for 8 weeks. Each class meets for 2 hours.

For more information please call any of the following MNRAAA staff:

[Gail Gilman-Waldner](#) - Mankato office (507.389.8869) • [Robin Weis](#) - Slayton office (507.836.1642)

[Kate Selseth](#) - Willmar office (320.235.8504, ext. 251)



Social Toll of Hearing Loss Could Be Cause for Alarm

SOURCE: Johns Hopkins Medicine, news release, June 11, 2013

By Robert Preidt



Tuesday, June 11 (HealthDay News) -- Straining to catch the gist of conversations is frustrating enough, but a new study shows that seniors with hearing loss are also at increased risk for hospitalization, illness, injury and depression.

Researchers analyzed data from more than 1,100 American men and women aged 70 and older with hearing loss, and found that over a four-year period they were 32 percent more likely to have been admitted to the hospital than more than 500 adults with normal hearing.

Hearing-impaired seniors were also 36 percent more likely to have prolonged stretches (more than 10 days) of illness or injury and 57 percent more likely to have extended episodes (more than 10 days) of stress, depression or bad mood, according to the study, published online June 11 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

"Hearing loss may have a profoundly detrimental effect on older people's physical and mental well-being, and even health care resources," said study senior investigator Dr. Frank Lin, an otologist and assistant professor at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and Hopkins' Bloomberg School of Public Health.

"Our results underscore why hearing loss should not be considered an inconsequential part of aging, but an important issue for public health," Lin said in a Hopkins news release.

Hearing deficits can lead to social isolation, which in turn contribute to physical and mental declines, Lin said.

Hearing loss affects as many as 27 million Americans over age 50, including two-thirds of men and women aged 70 years and older, according to Lin.

The study doesn't prove that being hard of hearing directly leads to other health problems, but it does show an association between the two. And health policymakers need to consider the broader health impact of hearing loss when making decisions for older people, study lead investigator Dr. Dane Genther, a resident in otolaryngology/head and neck surgery, said in the news release.

Genther's recommendations: expanded Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement for hearing-related health care services, wider installation of hearing loops in various facilities, and more accessible and affordable approaches for treating hearing loss.

Higher rates of hospitalization, illness and depression for seniors reported in study

First Contact: Pre-Admission Screening and Resident Review (PASRR) Redesign

ATTENTION: Hospitals, Nursing Facilities, Healthcare Clinics and Lead Agencies—Attend to learn about new statutory changes



August 2013

Presented by

Minnesota Board on Aging
Aging and Adult Services Division
Minnesota Department of Human Services



A One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors

Presenter(s)

Krista Boston, Director, Consumer Assistance Programs,
Minnesota Board on Aging

Stephanie Minor, Senior LinkAge Line® Coordinator,
Minnesota Board on Aging

Elissa Schley, MinnesotaHelp Network™ Consultant,
Minnesota Board on Aging

Description

A legislative proposal known as "First Contact" passed during the 2013 legislative session resulting in a redesign of pre-admission screening and resident review (PASRR). Presentations have been scheduled across Minnesota for hospital and nursing facility social workers/discharge planners, lead agencies (managed care, tribes and counties) and Linkage Lines. Please attend to learn about the changes and how they will affect providers as well as how the protocol will be implemented statewide. Changes are anticipated to take place October 1, 2013.

[See below for date and locations](#)

Target Audience

Hospital and Nursing Home Discharge Planners/Social Workers, Directors of Nursing, Care Managers, Home and Community Based Service Providers, County Social Workers, LTC Consultants, Health Plans, Managed Care Coordinators, County Directors, Health Care Clinics/Homes, Health Systems, Senior LinkAge Line® staff, General Public

Goals of Presentation:

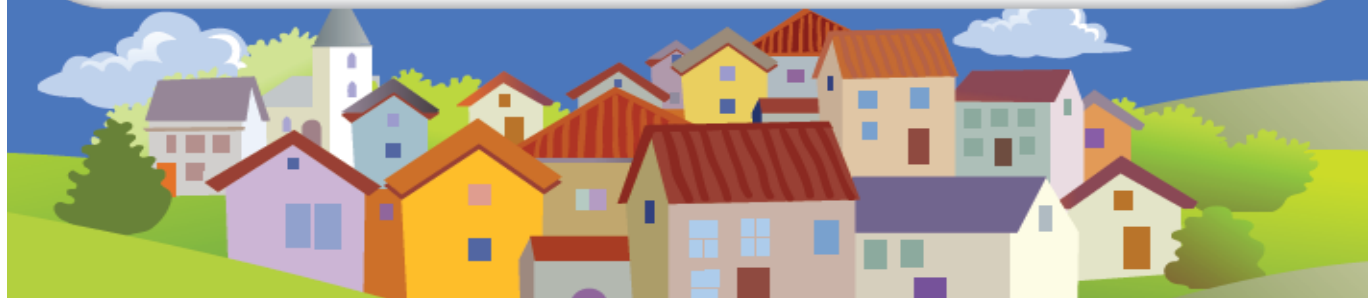
1. Overview of changes made to PASRR
2. Understand what is changing and what is staying the same
3. Why we are here and how we are in this together
4. Focus on new requirements and opportunities for nursing facilities, counties, providers, and the Senior LinkAge Line® to work together and review draft protocols.

Handouts and Resources

1. Handouts and resource materials will be distributed on site
2. Health Care Choices for Minnesotans on Medicare will also be available.

Registration is not required for attendance at the in-person presentations

Refreshments and snacks will be provided at the presentation



DateTuesday, August 13th, 2013

CityMankato

Time.....9:30–11:30 a.m. for Lead Agency Staff
1:00–3:00 p.m. for Hospitals, Nursing
Facilities and other healthcare providers

LocationBest Western Plus Hotel
1111 Range Street
North Mankato, MN 56003

DateMonday, August 19th, 2013

CityMarshall

Time.....9:30–11:30 a.m. for Lead Agency Staff
1:00–3:00 p.m. for Hospitals, Nursing
Facilities and other healthcare providers

LocationYMCA
200 South A Street
Marshall, MN 56258

Our Staff

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Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging®, Inc.

PO Box 3323

Mankato MN 56002-3323

Return Service Request

Your Opinion Matters!

Please share your feedback with us. If you would like to read about specific topics in future

MnRAAA News or to request **MnRAAA** News by email, contact us at:

erica@rmdc.org or 507.389.8879



Our Board

•DuWayne Underthun, *Chair*
Willmar

•Maureen Melgaard-Schneider, *Secretary*
Atwater

•Susan Meyer
Olivia

•Francis Schweiss, *Alternate*
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•Caroline Wood
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•Sharon Hollatz
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