



Volume VII • Issue 1

# 2016



## MNRAAA news

The gateway to resources for older adults, caregivers and service providers in the twenty-seven counties of southwest Minnesota.



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### JANUARY WAS A BUSY MONTH...

Staff were getting settled in our new office locations, learning new software systems and implementing programmatic work plans.

In January we learned that Kari Benson was appointed director of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) Aging and Adult Services Division and executive director of the Minnesota Board on Aging effective February 1, 2016. This position provides statewide aging services leadership for both DHS and the Minnesota Board on Aging. As we face a major demographic shift, with a doubling of Minnesota's older adult population in the next 15 years, Kari will play a critical role with other stakeholders in continuing to innovate to meet changing needs and ensuring individuals receive the right service at the right time. She will oversee planning for and providing sustainable financial, housing and service options for older Minnesotans, including management of Minnesota's state and federally funded home and community-based services programs. Jean Wood will remain with DHS and the Board on Aging through February 23 to help ensure a smooth transition of Kari to her new position. We wish Jean all the best as she transitions to a new chapter in her life and we extend our sincere congratulations to Kari!

There are several reports that were recently released that you may find of interest. Results from the 2015 Survey of Older Minnesotans, conducted by the Minnesota Board on Aging in partnership with DHS, showed that older Minnesotans are working longer, delaying retirement and escaping in fewer numbers to warmer climates during the winter. The full report is posted on the Minnesota Board on Aging website at: <http://www.mnaging.org>.

For the third straight year, Politico ranked Minnesota one of the two strongest states in the nation. Politico's annual analysis is based on fifteen separate categories that demonstrate the educational attainment, quality of life, and economic health of each of the fifty states. Overall, Minnesota scored as the

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second strongest state in the nation. To view the report, go to: <http://politi.co/1X3lh6V>.

The White House Conference on Aging Final Report summarizes the work conducted in 2015, as well as the feedback received in carrying it out. The report can be accessed at: <http://bit.ly/1Kqpili>.

The 2013-2014 Gaps Analysis study is one of four studies that inform the biennial legislative report on the status of long-term services and supports for older adults, people with disabilities and adults and children living with mental health conditions. The report fulfills statutory requirements to report the full range of long-term services and supports for all Minnesotans. DHS contracted with Wilder Research to conduct the study and to assist with streamlining the process of gathering the data. Through this collaboration, the study used surveys and interviews to gather information from counties, tribes, managed care organizations, people receiving services, providers and stakeholders about their perceptions of the capacity and gaps of the Minnesota service system to support older adults, persons with disabilities and children, youth or adults living with mental health conditions. The service system includes home and community-based services and continuum of mental health services and supports.

The Gaps Analysis also included a study to examine critical access to home and community-based services

at the local level. DHS contracted with Abt Associates to conduct this one-time study, known as the Home and Community Based Services Critical Access study.

Brief summaries of the results from both studies are included in the 2015 Status of Long-Term Services and Supports submitted to the legislature in August 2015.

The full details and findings from each study are available in several reports and can be accessed online at: <http://bit.ly/1JYwqp9>.

Looking forward, I want to encourage you to attend the fortieth annual Minnesota Gerontological Society (MGS) conference. AS WE AGE: Trends. Transitions. Triumphs. will be held on April 22 at the Earle Brown Heritage Center in Brooklyn Center. The morning keynote will be Aging in Context: Looking Back, Looking Ahead, Looking Within, presented by Andi Egbert, Minnesota State Demographic Center. The luncheon keynote will be We Know How This Ends: Living While Dying, presented by Cathy Wurzer, Morning Edition host, Minnesota Public Radio News. For additional information, please visit their website: <http://www.mngero.org>.

If you have questions about any of the above information, please free to contact me.

*Linda Giersdorf*  
*Executive Director*

## Evidence Based Programs Train the Trainer 2016 Calendar

MNRAAA partners with the Minnesota Board on Aging to provide evidence-based programs for older adults in our 27 county service area. These programs are available statewide through our Area Agency on Aging colleagues ([mn4a.org](http://mn4a.org)).

Watch our website for registration forms (coming soon) and training descriptions: <http://mnraaa.org/training-opportunities>

DATE	TRAINING	LOCATION
March 16 - 17	Caregiver Coaching	Redwood Falls
April 19 - 20	Matter of Balance	Redwood Falls
June 14-15 and 21-22	Chronic Disease Self Management	Mankato
August 24 - 25	Powerful Tools for Caregivers	Redwood Falls
September 13 - 14	Matter of Balance	Redwood Falls
November 9	Live Well at Home	Redwood Falls
December 15	Caregiver Coaching	Redwood Falls

## ACTE Announces Clifford Vrieze as National Award Winner



*Cliff Vrieze (right) accepting the 2016 ACTE Lifetime Achievement Award*

Clifford Vrieze was recently announced as the winner of the 2016 Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) Lifetime Achievement Award. Cliff is a volunteer for the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging in the Mankato area.

The ACTE Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes the contributions and distinguished accomplishments of members who have been identified with the work and purposes of the Association for Career and Technical Education over an extended period of time.

As the Region III winner of ACTE's Lifetime Achievement Award, he was one of five finalists considered for the national title. Cliff was announced as the national winner during the ACTE Awards Banquet on Thursday, November 19 at ACTE's CareerTech VISION 2015 in New Orleans, Louisiana.

For more information about the ACTE Excellence Awards, visit their website ([www.acteonline.org/awards](http://www.acteonline.org/awards)).

## When Is It Okay to Delay Medicare Part B Enrollment?

Many more people are choosing to work past age 65. When a person turns 65 they are eligible to enroll in Medicare, even though they are not eligible to take their full Social Security Retirement Benefit. If you or your spouse are actively employed and have group health insurance coverage through your employer or union based on current employment, you are eligible to delay enrollment into Medicare Part B. You are then allowed to enroll into Medicare Part B during a Special Enrollment Period (SEP). You can sign up:

- Anytime you are still covered by the employer or union group health plan through current or active employment, or
- During the 8 months following the month the employer or union group health plan coverage ends or when the employment ends (whichever was first).

There is often some confusion for people whose coverage ends; such as loss of a job. Electing to take COBRA benefits does not qualify as "active employment" and therefore, does not stop your 8 month SEP from starting. Therefore, it is best to enroll into Medicare during your SEP. If you do not enroll into Medicare when you are first eligible or during a SEP, you can enroll into Medicare during the General Enrollment Period, January 1 to March 31 each year. Enrollment becomes effective July 1 of the same year and you will be assessed a premium penalty.

If you have a question about whether you are eligible to delay Medicare Part B enrollment, contact the Senior LinkAge Line® for assistance by phone or in-person. The Senior LinkAge Line® is a free service of the Minnesota Board on Aging, as well as the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) and Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) for Minnesota. Specialists provide one-to-one assistance with all Medicare and health insurance issues and also provide in-depth long-term care options counseling. Call 1-800-333-2433 for assistance or go to [www.MinnesotaHelp.info](http://www.MinnesotaHelp.info)® to chat live with a Senior LinkAge Line® specialist.





# MNRAAA Senior LinkAge Line® Services

MNRAAA is proud to be able to help older adults age well and live well. In partnership with the Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA), MNRAAA provides Senior LinkAge Line® services to older adults, caregivers and providers living in our 27 county service area. Below is an outline of the services that are provided by MNRAAA staff through the Senior LinkAge Line®.

## **Senior LinkAge Line® (SLL) – Phone based assistance:**

Older adults, caregivers and service providers can access free state-wide information and assistance by calling the Senior LinkAge Line®: A One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors. This service is provided by the six Area Agencies on Aging that cover all 87 counties of Minnesota. Specialists from MNRAAA are available to answering these calls from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays and primarily answer calls from individuals living in MNRAAA's 27 county service area. Specialists and volunteers are also available to meet in-person with individuals as needed.

## **Client Services Center (CSC):**

Individuals can access the same information and assistance provided by the Senior LinkAge Line® through the Live Chat feature on the website [www.minnesotahelp.info](http://www.minnesotahelp.info)®. MBA contracts with MNRAAA to provide this state-wide service. When Live Chat specialists are unavailable, individuals can send an email and a specialist will respond. The Client Service Center specialists also assist other Senior LinkAge Line® specialists throughout the state to resolve complicated Medicare issues.

## **Pre-Admission Screening (PAS):**

All individuals entering a Medical Assistance certified nursing facility, a certified boarding care facility or a hospital “swing” bed receive what is called a Pre-Admission Screening (PAS). PAS is also referred to as an OBRA Level I screening. PAS specialists in the Mankato office perform the necessary functions related to PAS for people who live in MNRAAA's 27 county service area. PAS is completed to avoid unnecessary facility admissions, by identifying people whose needs might be met in the community. In addition, the PAS process screens for people with a mental illness or developmental disability who may need specialized services. Individuals with mental illness or developmental disabilities may be referred to other professionals for further evaluation to ensure their needs are met in the nursing home. These activities are referred to as OBRA Level II activities.

## **Return to the Community (RTC):**

Nursing home residents who express a desire to return to the community, can receive assistance to successfully transition from the nursing home to the community. Specialists provide residents in-person assistance with the transition from the nursing facility to the community. Individuals that transition back into the community then receive phone-based follow up assessments for a number of years. Specialists call on a quarterly basis to ensure that the individual's needs are being met and to assist them with referrals and support.



**A One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors**



## Senior LinkAge Line®:

### Another Amazing Year in the Books

Another amazing year has come to an end for the Senior LinkAge Line®. Let's take a quick look back at 2015 and all the work that was done throughout the state.

#### In 2015:

- The Senior LinkAge Line® helped 125,011 people – consumers, caregivers and professionals (5% increase from 2014).
- The Senior LinkAge Line® conducted 277,144 sessions, which includes both follow-ups and inquiries (2% increase from 2014).
- The Senior LinkAge Line® held 4,547 outreach and education events and activities (5% decrease from 2014).
- Pre-Admission Screening (PAS) received 64,567 PAS referral forms. Since November 2013, more than 139,000 forms have been received by PAS.
- Senior LinkAge Line® helped 10,591 Minnesotans with their Medicare questions and issues via phone and in-person visits during the past Open Enrollment Period.
- Return to Community service welcomed home its 2000<sup>th</sup> consumer in March.
- Since April 2010, Senior LinkAge Line® community living specialists helped more than 2,921 people return to the community from a nursing facility - 1,083 of those in 2015 alone.
- The year 2015 brought with it an updated, easier-to-use MinnesotaHelp.info®. Almost 300 providers have updated their records to add new features since the launch.
- The number of MinnesotaHelp.info® users has grown to 320,561 in 2015.

## Volunteers Needed.

Volunteer in your community with as little as four hours per month time commitment. Assist older adults, their caregivers or the MNRAAA office with:

- Health insurance counseling
- Community outreach
- Basic computer skills instruction
- Office assistance
- In-person forms assistance

### How do I get involved?

Please contact our volunteer coordinator, Sarah Reiman at 1.800.333.2433 ext. 82026 or email: [sreiman@mnraaa.org](mailto:sreiman@mnraaa.org)

You can find more information about volunteering on our website:

[mnraaa.org/volunteer-opportunities](http://mnraaa.org/volunteer-opportunities)



MINNESOTA RIVER  
Area Agency on Aging®

## We've Moved!

#### Administrative Office

201 N. Broad St., Suite 102  
Mankato, MN 56001

1939 Engebretson Ave.  
Slayton, MN 56172

[www.mnraaa.org](http://www.mnraaa.org)



facebook.com/MNRAAA27



twitter.com/MNRAAA



pinterest.com/mnraaa

## Will You be Eligible for Medicare Soon?

There are important decisions that need to be made when you become eligible for Medicare. Making the wrong decision can lead to inadequate coverage and financial penalties. The Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging® (MNRAAA) is sponsoring monthly two-part educational sessions for people who are becoming eligible for Medicare. Sessions are intended for people who will be turning age 65 in the near future or are becoming eligible for Medicare because they have been receiving Social Security disability benefits.

MNRAAA will begin offering these sessions in March. The first session will be held on the first Tuesday of each month and the second session will be held on the second Tuesday of each month. The intent is for people to attend both sessions. The first session will provide attendees with an overview of Medicare and their coverage options. During the second session, attendees will learn how to research their options using non-biased tools, such as the Medicare website.

Sessions will be held in Mankato at the Union Square Building (201 N. Broad St.), Suite 102 from 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM. Class size is limited, so call the Senior LinkAge Line® at 1-800-333-2433 to register. The Senior LinkAge Line® is a free statewide service of the Minnesota Board on Aging and Area Agencies on Aging. The Senior LinkAge Line® is the federally-designated State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) for Minnesota and is the place to call for Medicare and health insurance issues. Call 1-800-333-2433 for assistance or go to [www.MinnesotaHelp.info](http://www.MinnesotaHelp.info)® to chat live with a Senior LinkAge Line® specialist.

## FREE MEDICARE TRAINING SESSIONS

Attend monthly two-part educational sessions to better understand Medicare, coverage options and how to research these options independently.

Sessions begin March 1, 2016.

1st & 2nd Tuesday of each Month  
3:30 pm - 5:30 pm

201 N. Broad St., Suite 102  
Mankato, MN  
(Union Square Building)

Call the **Senior LinkAge Line®** to register.  
**1-800-333-2433**

Class size is limited.

## 2016 Older Americans Month Theme and Logo Announced

May is a month of fresh beginnings. Perennials bloom once again, blazing a trail of bright color. At the Administration for Community Living (ACL), May is Older Americans Month (OAM), a time to celebrate the perennial contributions of older adults to the nation. The 2016 theme is Blaze a Trail. In May, ACL will take the opportunity to raise awareness about issues facing older adults, and highlight the way older Americans are advocating for themselves, their peers and their communities.

ACL blazed a trail of its own this year by creating an evergreen OAM logo. The goal is to create a recognizable brand that can be carried over from one observance to the next, even though specific themes will be chosen each year. The new OAM logo reflects the tone of the month, and ACL's vision, people celebrating and helping one another to thrive. And, the blaze-like shape made by the figures seems especially appropriate for OAM 2016.

Join ACL as they Blaze a Trail by promoting activities, inclusion, and wellness for older Americans. More information on how you can participate in OAM will be coming soon!





# MNRAAA Contacts

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Mankato, MN 56001

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www.mnraaa.org



Slayton Office  
1939 Engebretson Ave.  
Slayton, MN 56172

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## Senior LinkAge Line®

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Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging®

201 N. Broad St., Suite 102  
Mankato, MN 56001



## WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

If you would like to read about specific topics in future MNRAAA news or to request MNRAAA news by email, contact us at: [kwolle@mnraaa.org](mailto:kwolle@mnraaa.org) or 507.387.1256 x102.

# MNRAAA open houses

Come see our our new office locations and join us for an open house celebration. Hope to see you there.

MANKATO  
THURSDAY, APRIL 14  
3:00pm - 5:30pm

201 N. Broad St., Suite 102  
Mankato, MN

SLAYTON  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27  
3:00pm - 5:30pm

1939 Engebretson Ave.  
Slayton, MN

## Our Board

Bob Roesler, *Chair* ..... Sherburn  
DuWayne Underthun, *Vice Chair* ..... Willmar  
Maureen Melgaard-Schneider, *Secretary* ..... Atwater  
Amy Wilde, *Treasurer* ..... Dassell

Rose Schlieman ..... Holloway  
Lisa Lange ..... Sherburn  
Mary Perry ..... Slayton