



Volume VII • Issue IV

# 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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## FALLING INTO WINTER

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the fall edition of *MNRAAA News*! I encourage you to read the entire edition as it is filled with updates, as well as upcoming events. We're also pleased to share information about our two newly-appointed Board Members. Each of them brings unique expertise to the Board and a unified commitment to supporting the older adults and caregivers in our service area. Welcome!

MNRAAA is very excited about the recent grant we received from the Southwest Initiative Foundation. To read more about the grant, see page 3.

We're also excited that two additional communities in our area received ACT on Alzheimer's funding. Way to go Sibley County and the City of Waseca!!

If you have questions about any information included in *MNRAAA News* or would like additional information about a specific article, please feel free to contact us at [kwolle@mnraaa.org](mailto:kwolle@mnraaa.org).

We look forward to hearing from you!

*Linda Giersdorf*  
Executive Director



### Mark your calendars:

- Tuesday, November 8: Election Day
- Friday, November 11: **Offices Closed** for Veterans Day
- Thursday, November 17: Give to the Max Day
- Thursday & Friday, November 24-25: **Offices Closed** for Thanksgiving Holiday
- Wednesday, December 7: Medicare Open Enrollment Ends
- Monday, December 26: **Offices Closed** for Christmas Holiday
- Monday, January 2: **Offices Closed** for New Year's Day

## MNRAAA Board Appoints New Members



Two new appointments were made to the Board of Directors. Jane Baldwin, RN is from Madison and is employed at the Appleton Hospital and Clinic. Candace Fenske is from Madelia and is the CEO at the Madelia Community Hospital and Clinic.

On October 27, MNRAAA held orientation for Board members and staff in Redwood Falls.

*Welcome!!*

*Pictured left to right: Bridget Schwebach, Senior Outreach Specialist; Kim Madsen, Program Development Coordinator; Sara Tackett, Pre-Admission Screening Specialist; Don Ebel, Board Member; Jane Baldwin, Board Member; Diana Madsen, Program Developer; Rose Schlieman, Board Member; Candace Fenske, Board Member; Mary Perry, Board Vice-Chair; Lisa Lange, Board Secretary; Amy Wilde, Board Treasurer; Linda Giersdorf, Executive Director and Bob Roesler, Board Chair*

## November is National Family Caregivers Month

November is National Family Caregivers Month. This month we honor and recognize the many people in our communities who care for older adults. Caretakers could be family, friends and even neighbors.

Caregivers provide daily assistance with managing health and personal care needs, while enabling their loved ones to stay in the community longer. Family caregivers are consistently present with their loved ones across all care settings. Since clinics, doctors, nurses and even pharmacists will often change, family caregivers are there as full partners with their loved ones through it all.

- **Most adults would prefer to age in place.** Of adults age 65 and older, 90%\* would prefer to stay in their current home as they age.
- **Almost 40% of adults are family caregivers.** Of all American adults, almost 40% care for a loved one who is sick, disabled, or living with natural ailments consistent with aging.

- **It's more than just basic care.** Almost half of family caregivers perform sophisticated medical/nursing tasks for their loved ones, and up to 70% of caregivers manage medications for their loved ones.
- **Diversity of caregivers.** The percentage of nontraditional caregivers is increasing. The number of men who say they are family caregivers is less than 5% of the number of women caregivers. More than one third of Americans between the ages of 18 and 29 identify themselves as family caregivers.
- **Out-of-pocket caregiving costs.** The average caregiver will spend almost \$5,500 each year to provide care for a loved one. This often requires families to juggle finances and re-budget. Caregivers may also need to make home alterations to ensure safety, security and cleanliness for their loved ones.

*\*Data acquired from the Caregiver Action Network website ([caregiveraction.org/national-family-caregivers-month](http://caregiveraction.org/national-family-caregivers-month)). The Caregiver Action Network is the nation's leading family caregiver organization working to improve the quality of life for the more than 90 million Americans who care for loved ones with chronic conditions, disabilities, disease, or the frailties of old age.*

If you would like more information on National Family Caregivers Month and the Caregiver Action Network, please visit <http://caregiveraction.org>.

# MNRAAA Awarded \$67,300 from the Southwest Initiative Foundation



MNRAAA has received a \$67,300 grant from the Southwest Initiative Foundation. The funding will be used to provide opportunities for two communities to engage in an age-friendly community building process that will identify the communities' age-friendly assets and desired assets. Each of the two communities will develop and implement initiatives that when completed, will result in new and/or enhanced assets that have a positive impact on the age-friendliness of the community and its livability for all ages.

The Southwest Initiative Foundation is an independent community foundation whose mission is "To be a catalyst, facilitating opportunities for economic and social growth by developing and challenging leaders to build on the region's assets." The Southwest Initiative Foundation includes eighteen counties and one hundred fifty-six communities.

## Join the MNRAAA Team

Join our team today! We're looking for a Community Living Specialist and an enthusiastic Administrative Assistant Intern.

### COMMUNITY LIVING SPECIALIST

*Full-time position*

The Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging, Inc. (MNRAAA) is seeking a full-time Community Living Specialist. This position requires strong interpersonal/communication skills and an interest in assisting consumers to transition from a nursing home to a community setting. This is a home-based position that requires daytime travel in southwest Minnesota. Candidates must live in one of the following counties: Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Meeker, Swift or Kandiyohi and possess a Bachelor's degree in nursing or social work and a valid license in the state of Minnesota.

A minimum of three years' experience in case management/care coordination or working as a professional in a health care setting is required. Candidate must have a reliable vehicle to drive and possess and maintain a valid Minnesota driver's license. If you meet these qualifications visit [www.mnraaa.org](http://www.mnraaa.org) to download an application. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Résumés will not be accepted without a cover letter and completed application.

For more information and to download an employment application, visit [mnraaa.org/contact-us/employment](http://mnraaa.org/contact-us/employment). We look forward to hearing from you! MNRAAA is an EOE/ADA employer.

*we're* HIRING!

### ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT INTERN

*Part-time, Paid, Temporary, Internship position*

We are looking for an Administrative Assistant Intern who can provide part-time support (10-15 hours/week) to Program Development Coordinator. Intern will have the following job responsibilities:

- Class/Training material preparation and organization including formatting, printing and binding.
- Special project work to support Program Development Coordinator.
- Draft and edit class/training materials for print, web and publications.
- Data entry.

The successful candidate will have a minimum of some post high school education and is: highly organized, detail-oriented, follows deadlines, takes initiative, can work well independently and in a team atmosphere, has a positive attitude and is reliable. Proficiency using Microsoft Office is required.

## Help Fight Depression in Older Adults this Winter

Winter in Minnesota brings hazards to older adults that can make it difficult and dangerous to get around. Many older adults become confined during cold months and feelings of isolation and depression may occur.

Friends and family can help reduce the risk of depression by checking in as often as possible. Setting up a system with family, friends and neighbors, allows for daily interaction and will reduce the sense of remoteness. Even a short phone call once a day can make a difference in the lives of our loved ones.

## Staff Announcements

The Senior LinkAge Line® continues to be instrumental in helping to provide comprehensive non-biased counseling to Medicare beneficiaries. This is particularly important each year during the Medicare Open Enrollment Period (October 15 – December 7). This fall the Senior LinkAge Line® contact centers once again hired seasonal employees to handle Medicare-related calls during this time.

MNRAAA hired Roger Elmquist, Wayne Johansen and Donna Appel as temporary seasonal employees to work in the Mankato office and Helen Brinks in the Slayton office. All three in the Mankato office have worked for us in the past and we feel fortunate they were all willing to return this year. This is Helen's first year as a temporary staff person in the Slayton office. They all received extensive training on both Medicare and Medical Assistance, the internet tools necessary for documentation and the protocols for answering calls through the Senior LinkAge Line® system. On October 1<sup>st</sup> they started on the phones and their work will conclude the third week of December.

The addition of the seasonal staff across the state has been successful in being able to handle the increased call volume and has helped to decrease the call wait time for consumers. In the past, many of the MNRAAA seasonal

staff stay on as volunteers after their temporary positions end. We appreciate their help and enjoy the time we get to spend with them each year.



Congratulations to Jamie Lanners (Program Developer) and her husband Galen on the birth of their daughter, Ariana Lynn – 7 lbs 1 oz, 20 inches long. She was born on September 7.

### **GIVE TO THE MAX DAY 2016: EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAM SCHOLARSHIP**

On Thursday, November 17, Minnesotans will have 24 hours to show off their “Minnesota Nice” as they donate online to their favorite nonprofits on Give to the Max Day. Last year, over 50,000 Minnesotans gave more than \$18 million in just 24 hours to causes across the state.

This year, your Give to the Max Day donations to MNRAAA will go towards a scholarship fund we've created to train class leaders for evidence-based programs and for older adults to attend these classes.

MNRAAA offers class leader training and support for:

- Caregiver Coaching
- Chronic Disease Self-Management Program
- Diabetes Self-Management Program
- Tai Ji Quan
- Live Well at Home
- Matter of Balance
- Powerful Tools for Caregivers

Your generosity on this day makes a difference far beyond the 24-hour giving event. Please join us on November 17, 2016, for Give to the Max Day and help us continue to change the lives of older adults and their caregivers.

You can donate to MNRAAA on our website at [MNRAAA.org/donate](http://MNRAAA.org/donate) or at [GiveMN.org/organization/Minnesota-River-Area-Agency-On-Aging](http://GiveMN.org/organization/Minnesota-River-Area-Agency-On-Aging).

**give**  
TO THE  
**MAX**  
NOV. 17, 2016

# Evidence-Based Programs Class Leader Training 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)).

Training description and registration for 2016 leader training is available on our website at: <http://mnraaa.org/training-opportunities>. Continue to watch our website for 2017 leader training registration (coming soon).

DATE	LEADER TRAINING	LOCATION
November 9, 2016	Live Well at Home	Redwood Falls
December 13 & 14, 2016	Tai Ji Quan	Le Sueur
December 15, 2016	Caregiver Coaching	Redwood Falls
January 24-25, 2017	Matter of Balance	Mankato
February 15-16, 2017	Powerful Tools for Caregivers	Marshall
March 13-14 & 20-21, 2017	Chronic Disease Self-Management Program	Redwood Falls
April 18-19, 2017	Matter of Balance	Redwood Falls
April 25-26, 2017	Diabetes Self-Management Program	New Ulm
May 4, 2017	Caregiver Coaching	Redwood Falls
June 5-6 & 12-13, 2017	Chronic Disease Self-Management Program	Willmar
July 11-12, 2017	Matter of Balance	Willmar
July 24-25, 2017	Diabetes Self-Management Program	Hutchinson
September 12-13, 2017	Powerful Tools for Caregivers	Hutchinson
September 18-19 & 25-26, 2017	Chronic Disease Self-Management Program	Windom
October 4, 2017	Caregiver Coaching	Willmar
October 23-24, 2017	Matter of Balance	Marshall
November 8, 2017	Live Well at Home/Evidence-Based Training	TBD
November 13-14, 2017	Diabetes Self-Management Program	Worthington

## Healthy Living as You Age

Minnesota's Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) are leading a transformative effort to improve community health. The Healthy Living as You Age initiative builds a network of evidence-based programs to help people manage chronic conditions, prevent falls and more. The initiative leverages the AAAs' strong foundation of knowledge and experience with evidence-based health promotion programs. New partnerships with health care and community-based organizations will broaden the statewide reach and impact.

Approximately 35 percent of insured Minnesotans have at least one chronic condition and a large percentage have two or more. The cost of treating chronic diseases in Minnesota is estimated at \$5 billion annually, about 83 percent of total

medical and drug spending. In addition, falling is a major threat to well-being, especially for older adults. One in five falls results in serious injury. Minnesota ranks fourth in the nation in fall-related deaths among people age 65+. Healthy Living programs help people take an active role in their health and well-being. Participants experience improved health and quality of life and, at the same time, reduce the need for costly medical interventions.

MNRAAA's Health Care Partnership Developer for Healthy Living as You Age is Lynn Buckley. Healthy Living as You Age is funded through a private foundation and its managing partner is the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging.

## Medicare Open Enrollment is Here!

October 15<sup>th</sup> through December 7<sup>th</sup> is the 2017 Medicare Open Enrollment period. Robin Thompson, Information and Assistance Director with the Senior LinkAge Line<sup>®</sup>, reminds us that, “Medicare beneficiaries have the opportunity to evaluate their current plan and make changes that will take effect January 1, 2017.” She goes on to say, “There are only a few special circumstances when a person is allowed to make a plan change beyond these dates so it is important to use this time to make the best decision possible for you.”

Every year after open enrollment ends, the Senior LinkAge Line<sup>®</sup> receives calls from people who failed to open their mail and read about their current drug plan changes for the coming year. It isn't until the first bill for the new year is received, or the beneficiary is charged more at the pharmacy, that they realize their plan has changed. For most of these beneficiaries it is too late to make a change for that year. Since there are so many changes every year, the Senior LinkAge Line<sup>®</sup> recommends that each person review their options for the next year and open and read every piece of mail received from their plan.

Using the official Medicare.gov prescription plan comparison tool, which can be found at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov), allows beneficiaries to view a clear comparison of

their current plan with other plans available in 2017. The plan comparison tool will present the cost of the individual's medications in each plan offered in Minnesota. With this knowledge a person can make a sound decision on a drug plan and prepare for the coming year with confidence and peace of mind.

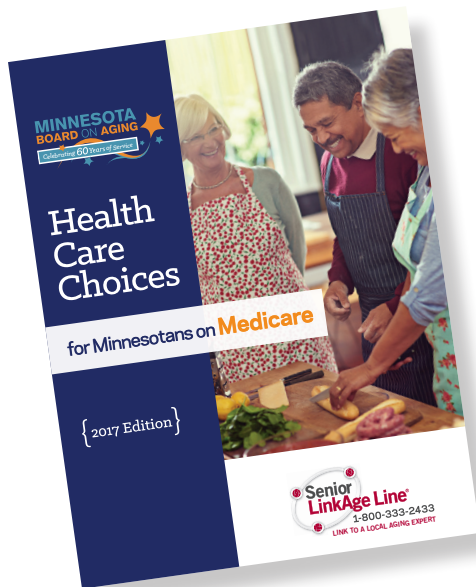
Volunteers are available to meet with Medicare beneficiaries to review their 2017 Medicare options. If you would like to schedule a time to meet with a volunteer contact the Senior LinkAge Line<sup>®</sup> at 1-800-333-2433.

Reasons to consider a re-evaluation of your Part D plan:

- Monthly premiums for each plan will most likely change
- Your medication list may have changed in the last year
- Plan formularies (the list of drugs covered by the plan) may change and the cost sharing may change (amount you pay for the drug under a plan)
- You may be eligible for the “extra help” offered to pay premiums and reduce co-pay amounts (applications are accepted at any time of the year)



The Senior LinkAge Line<sup>®</sup> is a free statewide service of the Minnesota Board on Aging and Area Agencies on Aging. Specialists provide one-to-one assistance with helping older adults age well and live well. The Senior LinkAge Line<sup>®</sup> 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 Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 4:30pm.



## Health Care Choices for Minnesotans on Medicare 2017 Edition Now Available

The Minnesota Board on Aging has published its 2017 edition of Health Care Choices for Minnesotans on Medicare. This annual guide includes comprehensive information about Medicare plan options available in Minnesota. Health Care Choices is available online, or to request a copy, call the Senior LinkAge Line<sup>®</sup> at 1-800-333-2433.

Download a PDF at:  
[http://www.mnaging.net/hcc/~media/HealthCareChoices\\_101416.ashx](http://www.mnaging.net/hcc/~media/HealthCareChoices_101416.ashx)

Senior LinkAge Line<sup>®</sup> staff can also help you review your plan options and enroll in a plan. Call 1-800-333-2433 for free, objective help. The Senior LinkAge Line<sup>®</sup> is a service of the Minnesota Board on Aging and does not sell or market any health plans or insurance products.

# Senator Klobuchar Hears About Local Concerns on Alzheimer's Care

MARSHALL - Alzheimer's disease is something no one really faces alone, members of a local action group said.

"It's a condition that affects the whole family. That's what's unique about it," said Jaen Weilage, one of the members of the Marshall ACT on Alzheimer's group.

ACT on Alzheimer's was spreading the word to a high-profile audience on Friday. U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar visited with the group during a stop on a two-day tour of southwest Minnesota. The meeting was mostly a listening session for Klobuchar, as area residents spoke about their experiences as caregivers for loved ones with dementia, and how local resources and programs helped them.

Support for people with Alzheimer's disease, and for their caregivers, is an issue Klobuchar has focused on this year. Together with Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine), Klobuchar introduced a bipartisan bill that would expand grants for training and support services for caregivers of people with Alzheimer's. Back in April, she also met with members of ACT on Alzheimer's and other support organizations in Sauk Rapids.



While ACT is working to help Alzheimer's patients and caregivers, the condition still has a huge impact on families. One of the big challenges local residents talked about was the difficulty of providing the intense level of care that family members with memory loss may need.

"I'd like to see more programs to help caregivers out," said Kathy Paxton. Paxton is a caregiver for her husband, who has Parkinson's disease and Lewy body dementia. Good support, and resources like respite care, could help make it easier for people with dementia to live at home, she said.

"We need more feasible options for caregivers," said Kim Madsen of the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging.

Local programs, like adult day care, and educational resources have been a big help, caregivers said. Margaret Swanson said her husband has dementia, and taking classes through ACT and senior college have helped her in caring for him.



Senator Klobuchar (left) with Jamie Lanners and her daughter, Ariana. Jamie is a Program Developer with MNRAAA.

Just being able to connect with other caregivers, who know what you're going through, is also helpful, the women said.

"I like the (memory) support group that meets once a week" in Marshall, Swanson said.

"They become your friends," Paxton said.

Since 2013, ACT and other area support organizations have also worked to educate the community about Alzheimer's disease and dementia. ACT has offered classes on making businesses more "dementia-friendly," and training for emergency responders. Madsen said making more people - especially young people - aware of what it's like to have Alzheimer's or dementia can help them interact with those who have it.

Madsen said even accommodations like having "family" restrooms in public places can help make life easier for caregivers and family members who may need help going to the bathroom.

ACT team member (and MNRAAA Program Developer) Jamie Lanners said she hoped the program will be able to continue offering resources in the Marshall area and even other communities.

Lanners said the group was happy to meet with Klobuchar. "I think it's a great opportunity to have her here, because we're a rural community," Lanners said. Lanners said she hoped Klobuchar would take the group's needs and suggestions back with her to Washington.

By Deb Gau, Marshall Independent  
(Reprinted with permission from Editor)



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## 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.

Have questions about your Medicare options?  
Call the Senior LinkAge Line® at **1-800-333-2433** for help.

## Medicare Open Enrollment: **OCTOBER 15 - DECEMBER 7**

During open enrollment, you can:

- Review your current plan for benefit changes
- Change your health plan and/or prescription drug coverage for the next year



Contact the **Senior LinkAge Line®** at **1-800-333-2433** to answer questions about enrollment, Medicare Health Plans and Part D comparison or to schedule an in-person appointment.

### Our Board

Bob Roesler, <i>Chair</i> .....	Sherburn	Donald Ebel, Ph.D. ....	Mankato
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