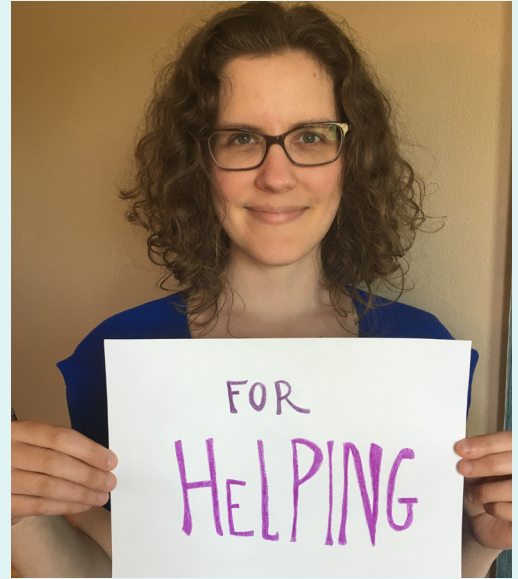


MNRAAA news

The Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging provides advocacy, information, resources and assistance so that older adults can maintain the lifestyle of their choice.



National Volunteers Week: April 19-25

Volunteers assist all areas of MNRAAA connect older adults and their families to services and resources throughout Southwest Minnesota. We wanted to provide a special shout-out to all our volunteers for their dedication and compassion.

To learn more about volunteering with MNRAAA, visit our website at mnraaa.org or contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Brittany Johnson at bjohnson@mnraaa.org or 1-800-333-2433 ext.82067



Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging (MNRAAA)

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Continuing to Work During COVID-19

Jason W. Swanson, Executive Director

Our worlds have been flipped on its side recently with the latest pandemic sweeping across our communities. I wanted to take this opportunity to update everyone on how MNRAAA is doing as well as our partners.



MNRAAA enacted its emergency plan and Continuity of Operations Plan immediately upon hearing the Governor's orders to close the schools. MNRAAA is structured to allow staff to work from home and found that this switch to full-time working from home was relatively seamless.

Currently, MNRAAA is fully operational and working to assist our older populations to thrive. All of our Title III providers are still working; although they may not be doing their normal work, they are still providing services in their communities. Below are a few examples of our partners and what they are doing. For a full list, visit www.helpolderadultsmn.org:

- › **Interfaith Caregivers Faith in Action** – have added shopping for food and other essential items to the list of services they provide to people who live in Faribault County. interfaithcaregivers.net
- › **Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota** – are delivering meals on wheels from all of their sites and have the option for frozen meals. lssmn.org
- › **Prairie Five Community Action** – with their hot/cold food truck, they can deliver meals on wheels and people have the option to also sign up for frozen meals. prairiefive.org
- › **Wellspring Faith in Action** – are providing support and education to their caregivers via telephone and also assisting in delivering meals. wellspringfia.org
- › **A.C.E. of SW Minnesota** – are currently providing caregivers with check-in calls and support utilizing phone and face time, when available. aceswmn.org

Every day brings more changes, so we encourage everyone to stay tuned to the following websites for up-to-date information:

- › www.mn.gov/covid19
- › www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html
- › www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

Take care, and stay safe.

Jason W. Swanson



MNRAAA offices and the Senior LinkAge Line will be closed on:

MEMORIAL DAY
Monday, May 25

INDEPENDENCE DAY
Friday, July 3



Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act

On March 25, President Donald Trump signed into law the Supporting Older Americans Act. The Older Americans Act (OAA) is reauthorized through 2024 and includes a seven percent increase in 2020 plus an additional six percent increase each year through 2024. Funding for OAA programs and services is essential to the health and independence of millions of older adults and caregivers, including 80,000 plus older adults and caregivers that MNRAAA serves in our twenty-seven county area. The number of Minnesotans turning 65 in this decade (about 285,000) will be greater than the past four decades combined. A couple of highlights from the reauthorization include:

- › Services to assist those living with young-onset Alzheimer's Disease;
- › Improves elder abuse prevention through education and outreach;
- › Extends the RAISE Family Caregivers Act; and
- › Promotes multigenerational programming.

A few main points that we had been advocating for with our congressional delegation was also included in the reauthorization, these points include:

- › Clarifies that non-profit area agencies on aging can provide services not provided or authorized by the OAA;
- › Focus on social isolation and adverse health effects to older individuals; and,
- › Placing more emphasis on suicide awareness and implementing suicide prevention for older individuals.

I want to thank each and every one of you who contacted their Congressman either via email, telephone or standard mail. Our voices were heard, and we have a solid bill that we can work with over the next five years. MNRAAA will be sending a thank you to our

delegation and will also be sending a special thank you to Senator Tina Smith for her lead in the aging network, primarily focusing on social isolation. I would encourage you all to send a quick thank you email to them as well.

Echo, MN: Community for a Lifetime

Betty Christensen, Program Developer

With funding support through the Southwest Initiative Foundation, MNRAAA was able to work with the city of Echo to make improvements to their Community Center, which also serves as a meal site for Prairie Five Community Action Council's nutrition program. The process we are using in Echo is called Communities for a Lifetime.

An Age-Friendly Community survey in Echo will help determine assets and areas that need improvement. Working with local officials, a Community Leadership Team has been established. The Leadership Team will assist MNRAAA's Program Developer in reviewing the survey results and making recommendations to the City Council on improvements

that may take little to no funding, as well as improvements that will need local or outside funding.

The survey and Echo Leadership Team are great resources in helping Echo move towards becoming a Community for a Lifetime.

MNRAAA has worked with other communities in our 27-county service area through grants provided by Southwest Initiative Foundation. Kerkhoven and Porter have completed accessibility projects and MNRAAA staff are currently working with Adrian, DeGraff, Milan and Tyler. If you are interested in learning more about Communities for a Lifetime, contact MNRAAA at 507-387-1256 or online at mnraaa.org.





Medicare Changes during the COVID-19 Crisis

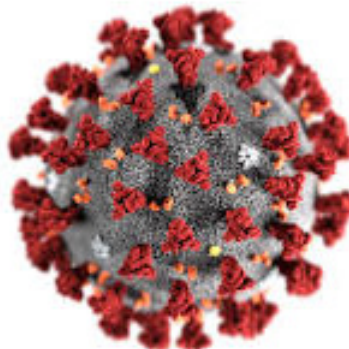
The federal government has made some temporary policy changes and issued multiple waivers to prevent gaps in accessing care for people on Medicare as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. If a doctor orders a COVID-19 test for you, Medicare and Medicare health plans will cover the full cost of the test. When a vaccine is available, Medicare will cover that cost.

Some Medicare waivers include:

1. Waiving the three-day inpatient hospital stay requirement:
 - a. The three-day qualifying stay is being waived for people who require skilled care in a skilled nursing facility (SNF) and who are evacuated, transferred or otherwise dislocated as a result of the emergency.
 - b. This provides temporary emergency coverage for people who need to be transferred because of the emergency, but did not have the qualifying three-day inpatient stay prior to the admission.
2. Allowing renewed SNF coverage for some beneficiaries:
 - a. Certain beneficiaries who recently exhausted their SNF benefits will be able to receive renewed coverage without starting a new benefit period.
3. Relaxing requirements when replacing Durable Medical Equipment Prosthetics, Orthotics and Supplies (DMEPOS):
 - a. At this time, providers can waive replacement requirements when DMEPOS are lost,

destroyed, irreparably damaged or unavailable.

- b. DMEPOS providers can waive the face-to-face requirement, new doctor's orders and new medical necessity documentation. This will allow Medicare beneficiaries to get the medical equipment and supplies they need more quickly.
 4. Allowing for medication refills for Medicare Part B covered medication:
 - a. Medicare will allow pharmacies to provide replacement fills for Medicare Part B prescription medication when someone has lost their medication, or the medication is unusable as a result of the emergency.
- For more information or to see other waivers, see the COVID-19 Emergency Declaration Health Care Providers Fact Sheet. If you are a Medicare beneficiary or caregiver and have questions about these waivers, call 1-800-Medicare or contact the Senior LinkAge Line® at 1-800-333-2433 to get help calling Medicare. The Senior LinkAge Line is a service of the Minnesota Board on Aging and the local Area Agencies on Aging.



Senior LinkAge Line is Still Here to Help

The Senior LinkAge Line continues to be a resource for older adults and their families to call during this emergency. We can help you find resources and make connections with alternative services if your provider or support network has changed or temporarily stopped providing services.

The Minnesota Board on Aging, Minnesota's Area Agencies on Aging and the Minnesota Department of Human Services are working closely together to share information to make sure that all parts of the state have the resources they need to support older Minnesotans and caregivers.

The Senior LinkAge Line has temporarily paused in-person assistance, presentations and Medicare classes throughout the state to comply with social distancing orders. In the meantime, staff are available by phone to help older adults and their caregivers get the information and assistance they need during this difficult time.

To get help, call 1-800-333-2433 or chat with a specialist at www.minnesotahelp.info, Monday – Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. The Senior LinkAge Line is a free service of the Minnesota Board on Aging and the Area Agencies on Aging.



MNRAAA Receives Grant from Minnesota Council on Foundations

MNRAAA received \$100,000 from the Minnesota Council on Foundations (MCF) to assist organizations serving older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic. "We are excited to focus this grant in our communities to assist our families, friends and neighbors, with nutrition-related services, Stipends for volunteers, culturally specific staff costs and loaner technology and technology or other related services," said Jason W. Swanson, Executive Director.

"As we work to mobilize the philanthropic community in Minnesota to meet the immense needs growing out of the pandemic, we seek to deliver a high impact, coordinated response. We recognize and support the many other efforts underway to help during this challenging time and will do our best to coordinate with

them to provide the most strategic response," said Susie Brown, MCF President.



MINNESOTA COUNCIL
ON FOUNDATIONS

"In times of need, the generosity of Minnesotans can be counted on to support community-led solutions for those who are vulnerable and at-risk in our state," said Eric J. Jolly, Ph.D., president and CEO of the Foundation. "As Minnesotans face risks associated with the coronavirus, that generosity will again be deployed through the Minnesota Disaster Recovery Fund. We are proud to play a contributing role with the MCF in the fund and in continuing Minnesota's legacy

of giving, especially during this challenging time."

MNRAAA is currently developing the grant applications and will post information regarding the grant on our website at www.mnraaa.org. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to us at 507-387-1256.

The MCF exists to collectively advance prosperity and equity in the state of Minnesota. MCF currently connects, mobilizes and strengthens over 140 philanthropic partners within the sector, serving grantmaking organizations for 50 years. Members of MCF include family and independent foundations, community and other public foundations, corporate foundations and giving programs. Learn more at www.mcf.org. #WeAreMCF

HelpOlderAdultsMN.org

When the going gets tough, people work together. The seven Area Agencies on Aging in Minnesota worked together the last week in March to quickly develop a website: www.HelpOlderAdultsMN.org


The site hosts resource information for older adults during COVID-19. Resources topics include:

- › adult day services
- › care coordination
- › caregiver services
- › chores & homemaker
- › community centers
- › grocery & prescription delivery
- › health & well-being
- › home care
- › home-delivered meals

- › legal/tax assistance
- › safety
- › social support
- › transportation

Information on this website is meant to include newly created services or newly created methods of delivery in response to COVID-19. We will continue to add information as it becomes available. Information about ongoing services is always available by calling Senior LinkAge Line or looking at www.minnesotahelp.info

Program development staff are committed to reducing gaps in services. If you know of a need



Resources for Older Adults During COVID-19
HelpOlderAdultsMN.org
from Minnesota's Area Agencies on Aging in partnership with the Minnesota Board on Aging

Click on a link below to see resources by category.

This list includes community-based services and resources used by older adults and their caregivers to support daily living needs and safety at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. It lists services offered across the state, including those provided to American Indian elders.

We track and report changes such as new service offerings, reductions to services, and closures.

If you don't find what you are looking for, visit Minnesotahelp.info for a more comprehensive listing or call the Senior LinkAge Line at 1-800-333-3433 and we will help.

[Search resources](#) | [See all resources](#) | [Frequently asked questions](#)

[Add a new resource](#) | [Request a change to a resource](#)

Adult Day Services	Care Coordination	Caregiver Services
Chores and Homemaker	Community Centers	Grocery and Prescription Delivery
Health and Well-Being	Home Care	Home-Delivered and To-Go Meals
Legal/Tax Assistance	Safety and Emergency Assistance	Social Support
Transportation		

Brought to you by the Minnesota Area Agencies on Aging in partnership with the Minnesota Board on Aging.

in your area or perhaps have an idea for a solution; please contact MNRAAA at 507-387-1256.



New Staff



Molly Petersen

Program Developer

Molly joined MNRAAA in June 2019 as a remote staff Program Developer. She lives in Garvin with her husband, Brett and their two children, Georgia and Boden. Molly volunteers with the American Cancer Society Relay for Life and her church. Before joining MNRAAA, Molly worked with the American Cancer Society.



Program Developer Molly and Executive Director Jason helping deliver meals with Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota.



Rachel Crawford

Information & Assistance Specialist

Rachel joined MNRAAA in March as an Information & Assistance Specialist in the Mankato office. She lives in Eagle Lake and enjoys hiking and biking.

Before joining MNRAAA, Rachel worked as a Life Enrichment Assistant at Water's Edge; an IPS Career Development Specialist at MRCI; Gerontology Intern at Multnomah County Aging, Disabilities, and Veteran Services; Direct Support Professional at REM and Support Staff at Ron Wilson Center.

Volunteering During COVID-19

Volunteering takes on a whole new purpose now during COVID-19. Organizations throughout Minnesota are looking for volunteers to help at-risk groups, such as older adults to deliver groceries and meals (meals on wheels, frozen meals, shelf-stable meals, etc.), pick up medications or simply provide telephone check-ins on individuals.

You can find these organizations through news outlets, social media, non-profits and at www.helpolderadultsmn.org.



Kirby Hurd

Information & Assistance Specialist

Kirby joined MNRAAA in March as an Information & Assistance

Specialist in the Mankato office. She lives in Mankato with her husband, Drew and their spoiled rotten supermutt, JuJu. She enjoys reading, cooking and curling in the winter. Kirby volunteers with Committee Against Domestic Abuse (CADA) and serves on the Board of Trustees at the Blue Earth County Historical Society. Before joining MNRAAA, she worked as an adjunct professor in the department of sociology and corrections at MSU-Mankato.

Scams Relating to COVID-19

The old saying that crime never sleeps can now be expanded to crime does not stay home during a pandemic. As we begin to see relief bills, stimulus plans and more communication from officials relating to COVID-19, scammers have latched on like a barnacle on the hull of an old ship. Sadly, we are starting to see scams increase.

We wanted to share some of the scams we are hearing and seeing going on to assist you in making good decisions during this time. First and foremost, we all want to do what we can to assist our family, friends and neighbors during this pandemic, many of us will look to donate to charities. Be careful of donating to organizations you are not familiar with, especially if you are giving through social media. You should research the organization before making any contributions. At the outbreak of the pandemic we saw people go around in communities or make phone calls stating they were with a hospital, health plan and/or Centers for Disease Control. Note – no one will come to your house to offer you a kit, one must go to the hospital or designated area. If you see someone or a group of people doing this contact your local authorities.

Once the stimulus plan was announced we heard reports of people getting calls from the IRS stating that they needed information to deposit the checks. Remember, the IRS will never call you. Here are a few tips to prevent being scammed over the phone, never give out:

- › Bank Information
- › Social Security Number



MAY 2020

Make Your MARK!

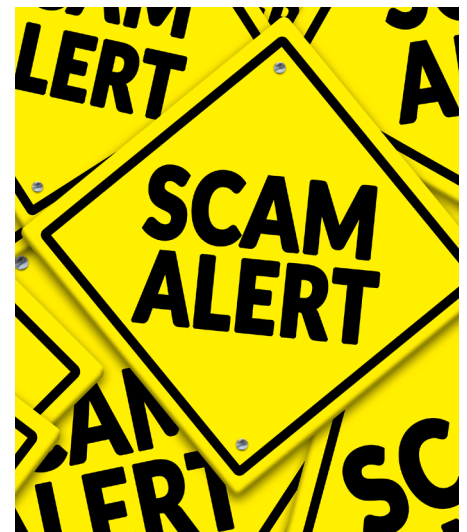
OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

VISIT [ACL.GOV/OAM](https://acl.gov/oam) FOR MORE INFORMATION.

- › Medicare ID Number
- › Driver's License Number
- › Credit Card Information

Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison recently announced a new task force to assist people from being defrauded during this pandemic called Minnesota COVID-19 Action Team. If you have any concerns relating to illegal activity surrounding COVID-19 please contact them at 1-651-296-3353 or 1-800-657-3787.





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 or 507.387.1256 x102.

AARP Employer Pledge

The AARP Employer Pledge Program is a nationwide group of employers that stand with AARP in affirming the value of experienced workers and are committed to developing diverse organizations. Stand with AARP and show your commitment:

- › Believe in equal opportunity for all workers
- › Recognize the value of experienced workers
- › Recruit across diverse age groups and consider all applicants on an equal basis, regardless of age
- › Believe that 50+ workers should have a level playing field in their ability to compete and obtain jobs



Join MNRAAA and sign the AARP Employer Pledge online at <https://www.aarp.org/forms/employer-pledge-form.html>



Shape the future for every generation.

Responses to the 2020 Census will influence funding in your community for services that help every generation—from newborn babies to the oldest among us. Count everyone in your home to benefit you, your children, and future generations.

For more information, visit:
2020CENSUS.GOV

D-PO-EL-EN-428

Shape
your future
START HERE >

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2020**