

MNRAAA news





Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging (MNRAAA)

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Social Isolation

One evening, my family and I discussed going out to see some friends when we were abruptly reminded that we could not! It felt weird, but we had to be responsible. We had been exposed to someone with COVID-19. We could not go anywhere. It felt like we were in a cage, able to do things but only in our home. Once we met the quarantine timeframe, we re-entered society and participated in our usual activities. Upon reflection of our time secluded, I pointed out to my children, imagine being “quarantined” for a year.



Some older adults have been self-quarantined, isolated, or secluding themselves even before the pandemic. A few examples of why people may have become isolated could be from a fear of falling, inability to find adequate transportation, or dealing with untreated/undiagnosed anxiety.

A recent study by The Coalition to End Social Isolation and Loneliness stated that social isolation could lead to a 29% increased risk of premature death. The report discusses other negative factors that isolation and loneliness have on health, like, chronic lung disease, depression, self-neglect, addiction, abuse and exploitation.

What is MNRAAA doing to address this societal issue? First, we are naming it and calling attention to this issue. We may see it in our communities and within our families and we need to start talking about it. The first step in any solution is to identify the problem. So here it is, social isolation and loneliness is a problem.

Second, we are advocating at the federal and state level for additional funding to target organizations that assist those in combating social isolation. Because numerous programs have recently evolved, namely telemedicine and telephone reassurance programs, it is essential that reliable broadband internet is available to everyone. The Federal Communications Commission has made emergency broadband benefits available to assist in providing internet to everyone. Also, many local internet providers are working to establish more reliable and affordable internet service.

I challenge you to call attention to this problem. It will take all of us to work through social isolation and loneliness. We are stronger when we work together and together we can assist older adults to thrive!

Jason W. Swanson



CAPABLE Program Expands Eligibility Area

In partnership with Allina Health – Home Health and Habitat for Humanity, the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging is now accepting referrals for a new, grant-funded CAPABLE program.

CAPABLE (Community Aging in Place—Advancing Better Living for Elders) was developed by the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing. The program helps seniors by teaming a nurse, an occupational therapist, and a handy worker to address the home environment and assist the older adult in setting goals to improve safety and independence. As part of this, the program also provides minor home modifications. Our

goal is to support seniors in our community to safely age in place at home.

Changes to the physical space motivate participants, addressing both the person and the environment they live in, allowing them to thrive.

Participant criteria:

- › aged 65 years and older
- › own their own home and live in Brown, Nicollet, Watonwan, eastern Redwood, or southern Sibley counties
- › do not have the means to afford home modifications
- › cognitively intact or have only mild cognitive impairment to

be able to participate in the brainstorming and action planning process

- › some or a lot of difficulty in performing Activities of Daily Living, such as bathing, dressing, grooming, or walking across a small room

This program is separate from any insurance-covered Home Health episode (homebound status and skilled clinical need not required). This project is funded by the Minnesota Department of Human Services Live Well at Home Grant.

To enroll, contact:

- › lindsay.lankford@allina.com
- › kmcdonough@mnraaa.org

National Family Caregivers Month

National Family Caregivers Month is celebrated every November and is a time to recognize and honor caregivers across the country. It is also a time to raise awareness of caregiving issues, educate communities, and increase support for caregivers. This year's theme is "Caregiving Around the Clock."

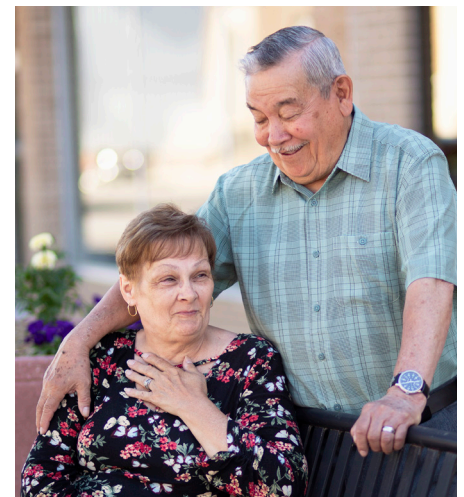
It is important to remember the friends, loved ones and neighbors who help with grooming and bathing, clean houses and shop for older adults and others who need to be cared for.

Watching a parent age or seeing

someone you care for change drastically due to illness can be devastating. If you are a caregiver, take time to check your wellbeing. If you are not sleeping well, exercising, or feel yourself becoming more isolated, talk to someone. There is no shame in feeling overwhelmed or in asking for help.

Some simple ideas that may be helpful include:

- › Attend a conference or workshop on caregiving. Many are available online now, and you may receive practical advice, as well as learn that you are not alone. Learn more at



aarp.org/caregiving or powerfultoolsforcaregivers.org/class-type/minnesota

- › Find a local support group. You can find some support groups on our website: mnraaa.org/calendar.

Staff Retreat

In August, MNRAAA staff and board members were finally able to get together for our staff retreat. The retreat was held at Painted Prairie Vineyards in Dovray, MN. With the picture-perfect weather, we were able to hold the retreat outside to accommodate guidelines. Or perhaps it was outdoors so our feline-adoring staff could play with and spoil the numerous kittens that ran around.

This retreat provided an opportunity for staff for some of our newer staff and board members to meet each other for the first time. The day started with a light breakfast followed by department meetings. That was followed by our speaker, Kit Welchlin, whose presentation was entitled, Communication, Emotional Intelligence, and Dealing with Stress. Kit's presentation was terrific and provided a lot of well-needed laughter. Everyone was able to have some takeaway, professionally and personally. Cory Becker, a staff person from Congresswoman Michelle Fischbach's office, provided an update on what is happening in Washington D.C. This was followed by Dr. Andrew Kopperud of Sanford-Westbrook, who gave an update on COVID-19.

At the end of the retreat, Dr. Kopperud and his wife Krista (proprietors of Painted Prairie Vineyards) gave tours and talked about their winery with staff and board members. All had a great day, and we look forward to getting together soon!

Photos from the MNRAAA August Staff Retreat





Dementia Capability Training Moves Online

On November 1 and 4, MNRAAA is hosting an online Dementia Capability training for 16 caregiver consultants in our 27-county service area. Caregiver consultants help caregivers develop strategies to achieve a balanced lifestyle that enhances their ability to provide good care and manage their well-being. This will be the first time this training is offered in a virtual format.

Dementia Capability training is part of the professional standards that caregiver consultants in Minnesota need to complete. Heidi Haley-Franklin delivers the training, MSW, LICSW, the Vice President of Programs at the MN ND chapter of the Alzheimer's Association and Dr. Terry Barclay, the Director of the Neuropsychology

Department at HealthPartners and Regions Hospital in St. Paul and Research Investigator with HealthPartners Center for Memory and Aging and the Institute for Medical Research.

The training will help participants recognize common dementia syndromes, learn to administer several cognitive screening tools, develop practical plans to support individuals with dementia and their families, and learn strategies for partnering with the medical community to provide good dementia care.

The topics covered in two half-day training sessions include Recent Alzheimer's Research and Emerging Therapies, Identification of Dementia Subtypes, Appropriate Activities for Each Stage of the Disease, Communication and Behavior

Management, Cognitive Screening Tools and Practice, Care Planning, Case Studies, and Navigating the Medical Community. MNRAAA is excited to pilot this training online.

Caregiver consultants are attending from the following organizations: A.C.E. of Southwest MN, Adara Home Health, CCM Health, Granite Falls Living At Home Block Nurse Program, Grove City Area Care Living At Home Program, Interfaith Caregivers, Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota, Prairie Five Community Action Council, Inc, VINE Faith in Action, and Waseca Area Caregiver Services.

To find a caregiver consultant near you, call the Senior LinkAge Line at 800-333-2433.

Photos from the MNRAAA August Staff Retreat





Stop - Look - Review for 2022

Once again, it's time for Medicare Open Enrollment, which runs from October 15 through December 7. This is the time when you can make changes to your Medicare and/or your prescription drug plan for the coming year.

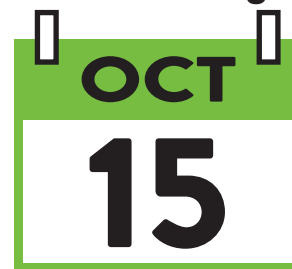
According to Robin Thompson, Information and Assistance Director with the Senior LinkAge Line®, "too many people on Medicare ignore this time-limited opportunity to review Medicare plan options that could save them money and improve their benefits. People shop around for gas, food and household goods, but don't consider the fact that health insurance is one of their most costly expenses."

People have a lot of different excuses for not taking the time

to review their Medicare plan choices — it's so confusing, or I like my current plan, or I don't want to have to mess with changing plans. Let the Senior LinkAge Line do the heavy lifting by helping you explore your options so you can find a plan that best meets your needs.

The Senior LinkAge Line is Minnesota's federally designated State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). We provide free non-biased help with all issues related to Medicare. Trained specialists are available Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Don't wait until it's too late, call the Senior LinkAge Line at 800-333-2433 to make sure you have the plan that is best for you.

Medicare Open Enrollment Begins



Medicare Open Enrollment Ends



MNRAAA Trainings and Presentations

MNRAAA is offering training opportunities for older adults, caregivers and professionals. Many of these trainings are free and are held online.

To find upcoming trainings and presentations, go to our Facebook page at facebook.com/MNRAAA and click "Sign Up" to receive our emails.

Upcoming Events

- › November 10: What's New in Medicare 2022: Senior LinkAge Line
- › December 1: What's New in Medicare 2022: Senior LinkAge Line

Scan with your phone to visit MNRAAA's Eventbrite site.



Sorry

— we'll be —
CLOSED

MNRAAA will be closed on the following dates.

VETERANS DAY

November 11

THANKSGIVING

November 25 & 26

STAFF RETREAT

December 21

CHRISTMAS

December 24

NEW YEAR

December 31



Don't Miss Your Chance to Make Changes to Your Medicare Coverage

Failing to review your Medicare coverage each year can lead to unexpected and unwelcome surprises. If you get your Medicare benefits through a Medicare Advantage or Cost Plan, it's important that you reevaluate your plan annually.

Health insurance is often one of the costliest expenses and taking the time to review your options can save you money and improve your benefits. You can review your plan options for the upcoming year during Medicare Open Enrollment from October 15 – December 7.

To review and compare plans, grab your Medicare card, your medications and get help by doing one of the following:

- › Visit the Medicare Plan Finder at [medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov).
- › Call 800-Medicare.



- › Call the Senior LinkAge Line® at 800-333-2433.

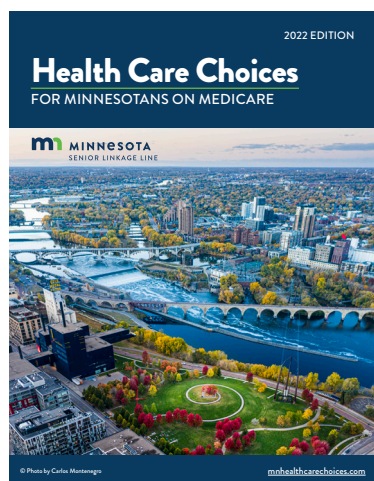
Don't forget to make sure your doctor, hospital and other medical providers are in your plan's network. Keep in mind this can change each year. If your plan has drug coverage, check to make sure your medications are covered and cost-effective. Plans can and do change the medications they cover. Finally, check to make sure your pharmacy is a

network provider.

Nobody said Medicare was easy, but taking the time to do your homework can save you money and give you peace of mind. Start a new annual tradition today!



Sign up to receive MNRAAA emails on our Facebook page at facebook.com/MNRAAA



The 2022 edition of Health Care Choices for Minnesotans on Medicare is available online only this year.

You can find the most up-to-date Medicare information anytime at

mnhealthcarechoices.com





Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging®

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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 or 507.387.1256 x102.



Call the Senior LinkAge Line to find out if you may be eligible to get help paying your Medicare costs. There are federal and state programs to help people with lower income and limited assets pay their Medicare premiums and other out-of-pocket costs.

Estimates show that only one in three people who are eligible ever apply. Those who are eligible can save up to \$6,000 per year. Don't leave money on the table, call the Senior LinkAge Line at 800-333-2433 to find out if you qualify.

800-333-2433
mn.gov/senior-linkage-line