

MINRAAA news





Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging (MNRAAA)

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Legislative Update – Volunteer Drivers

Volunteer drivers are vital in getting individuals to destinations and delivering groceries and meals to older adults. In 2019, members of the Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging, the Living at Home Network and the Minnesota Public Transit Association came together to raise awareness about issues affecting volunteer drivers. The Minnesota Volunteer Driver Coalition aims to eliminate barriers



for volunteer drivers and ease the financial burden of the current tax requirements on mileage reimbursement. In 2021, the State of Minnesota changed legislation that protects volunteer drivers in clearly defining what a volunteer driver is.

The Coalition reached out to Congressional representatives to look at the federal reimbursement rate. Currently, the business mileage rate is 62.5 cents per mile, while the volunteer driver rate sits at 14 cents per mile. On April 6, Representative Pete Stauber introduced H.R. 7432, Volunteer Driver Tax Appreciation Act of 2022. This act would increase the mileage rate to the current standard mileage rate. On July 1, Representative Angie Craig introduced H.R. 8265, Tax Emergency for Mileage (TEAM) Volunteers Act, which would immediately increase the mileage rate to 62.5 cents per mile through December 31, 2023. After January 1, 2024, the mileage rate would decrease to 24 cents per mile. The rationale for this increase in the next two years is due to the current high gas prices.

The Coalition supports these bills and has been working with national organizations to raise awareness around this issue. For more information, please visit the website at volunteedrivermn.org.

Jason W. Swanson

MISSION STATEMENT

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



Power of Produce

For the past two years, MNRAAA has financially supported local community nonprofits and governmental agencies to offer the Power of Produce (PoP) Plus program utilizing a University of Minnesota Extension toolkit. PoP Plus is a farmers market incentive program for adults 60 and older. Participants receive a \$4 token/voucher each week to spend on fresh fruits and vegetables. PoP Plus engages participants at the farmers market and empowers them to make healthy food choices. Farmers markets across the nation have implemented the program and documented the program's positive impact on the fruit and vegetable consumption of program participants.

This program encourages participants to attend the farmers market every week, helping create an equitable



space that community members want to visit and make part of their normal shopping routine.

MNRAAA supported PoP Plus programs this year:

- › Rural Advantage, Fairmont, MN
- › Care & Share, Mountain Lake, MN
- › City of Pipestone, Pipestone, MN
- › Granite Falls Living at Home Block Nurse Program, Granite Falls, MN
- › Nobles County Community Services, Worthington, MN
- › Marshall Area YMCA, Marshall, MN
- › Montevideo Area Memory Loss Network, Montevideo, MN

September – National Falls Prevention Awareness Day & World Alzheimer's Awareness Month

September 22 is the first day of Autumn, it is also National Falls Prevention Awareness Day. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), every second of every day, an older adult suffers a fall in America. Falls are preventable! Speak Up, Stay Active, and Make Your Home Safe!

September is also World Alzheimer's Awareness Month. Many events take place in September across the nation. One of the larger events is the Walk to End Alzheimer's®. This year Mankato (September 10) and Willmar (September 17) will be sponsoring events. To learn more about these events or to obtain more information relating to Alzheimer's, visit www.act.alz.org.



FallsFree CheckUp
YOU CAN PREVENT A FALL





New Partnership

If you are an avid reader of our newsletter and I know you are, you saw our last staff retreat was held at the Lower Sioux Indian Community (LSIC). LSIC recently developed and built a new Food Pantry. The pantry is open Wednesdays, and more information can be found by contacting Emily at 507-430-5746.

During the retreat and after seeing the Food Pantry, the ideas began to percolate. We talked with staff from the LSIC and decided to collaborate on a project. The LSIC agreed to allow a MNRAAA staff member, Cathy Larsen, to work out of the offices at the Food Pantry. Cathy started with MNRAAA this summer and will assist elders within the community and provide information and assistance service through the Senior LinkAge Line®, 800-333-2433.

MNRAAA is excited to partner with LSIC in this endeavor! The Senior LinkAge Line is a free statewide service of the Minnesota Board on Aging in partnership with Minnesota's Area Agencies on Aging. The Senior LinkAge Line provides help to older Minnesotans and their families and caregivers, helping them connect to local services, find answers and get the help they need.

New Staff



Catherine Larsen

Information & Assistance Specialist

Catherine joined MNRAAA in June 2022 as a remote staff Information & Assistance Specialist with an office located in the Lower Sioux Indian Community. She lives in Morton and has five sons and eight grandchildren.

Prior to joining MNRAAA, Catherine has worked in the mental health field and is certified to teach and provide hypnotherapy. She has served on several boards that support health, growth and safety in Minnesota.



Madalyn Iles

Case Aide

Madalyn joined MNRAAA in July 2022 as a Senior LinkAge Line Case Aide based out of the Mankato office. She lives in Lake Crystal with her husband, Austin and two daughters, Willow and Dahlia. Madalyn enjoys doing something fun outside and has a special place in her heart for animals.

Before joining MNRAAA, Madalyn has worked as a preschool teacher and an office manager.

MNRAAA Trainings and Presentations

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

- › Planning and Paying for Long-Term Care – August 3
- › New to Medicare Class – August 9
- › Medicare 101 – August 17
- › New to Medicare Class – August 25
- › Don't be a Target of Medicare and Consumer Fraud – August 31

To find these and upcoming trainings and presentations in September and October, go to our Eventbrite page at bit.ly/3oE9KBL. You can also scan the QR code to the right with the camera on your cell phone to visit our Eventbrite page.





I Think My Parents Need Help

During the summer you may be invited back home to a wedding, graduation, or class reunion. So, it's common at this time of year for an adult child to go home and stay with their parent(s). During the visit, you may notice one or both of your parents appear frail and seem to be struggling. You're worried, but when you mention your concerns, they are quickly dismissed. You can tell by their comments that they are afraid you're going to try and talk them into moving.

While there are many senior housing options available, staying home with services can also be a viable solution. Chances are you have no idea how to determine what your parents may need, or even what



services are available. That is where the Senior LinkAge Line can help. They have trained professionals available who can provide information on services that may be helpful in allowing your parent(s) to remain in their home. They can help you to get services started and follow-up to make sure their needs

continue to be met over time.

The Senior LinkAge Line is a free service of the Minnesota Board on Aging and the local area agencies on aging. To get non-biased help, call 800-333-2433, Monday- Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Call today, you don't have to do this alone.

2023 Title III Older Americans Act Funding Cycle

MNRAAA is seeking applicants for funding under Title III-E of the Older Americans Act. Funding is available to develop and/or expand caregiver support services in MNRAAA's 27-county service area for the period of January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023. Special consideration will be given to black, indigenous, people of color (BIPOC) applicants and/or those who serve BIPOC populations and those proposing to serve caregivers in Pipestone County.

Title III-E National Family Caregiver Support Program services available for funding include:

- › Caregiver Respite (In-Home, Out-of-Home Day, Out-of-Home Overnight, Other Respite)
- › Caregiver Counseling (Coaching/Consulting)
- › Caregiver Training
- › Caregiver Support Groups
- › Supplemental Services

Submission Process and Deadline:

Applications must be submitted via MNRAAA's grant platform, which can be accessed at mnraaa.smartsimple.com.

Applications must be submitted by 4:30 PM, on Friday, August 5, 2022. Late responses are not accepted.

Direct Questions to:
Rhonda Hiller Fjeldberg, LSW
Grant and Contract Manager
rfjeldberg@mnraaa.org



Live Well Age Wisely

Laura Thomas, Director of Aging Well at Prairie Five Community Action Council

A grandparent raising a grandchild, a spouse providing care for their partner, an adult child who stops in once a week to get meds set up for a parent and tend to household chores – these are all examples of caregiving. On the prairie, a modest estimate is that 25% of us serve as a caregiver for others in an informal capacity.

There isn't a class in school that everyone takes or a manual that we all receive in life to prepare us for caregiving. It can get overwhelming, and it's common for caregivers to wonder where to find answers, ideas, or support. The Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA) has two wonderful options available through Prairie Five to help identify and address needs and provide support – caregiver consults and a database rich with resources.

I am a Caregiver Consultant for our five counties (Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Swift, Yellow Medicine), and the MBA describes this service as “trained professionals that help you on an individual basis with problem-solving, information, skills and emotional support. Your consultant can help develop strategies to achieve a balanced lifestyle, allowing you to provide good care and protect your own health.” Sometimes I get calls from people who are worn out and

just looking for someone who will listen compassionately and non-judgmentally. I always feel honored when people share their stories or experience with me – our struggles are what make us human! Caregiving can feel isolating, and opening up to another brings the realization that we aren't alone in the world.

Recently, the MBA announced that they have made Trualta available to caregivers for free for the next 2.5 years. I got so excited when I started browsing the website – I can't believe everything they offer! Trualta is an easy-to-use, personalized, interactive portal that helps caregivers manage care independently. It is provided 'on demand,' which means it is available anytime you want to use the service. It can be accessed on a tablet, smartphone, or computer and is so convenient a person could use it while waiting for an appointment or before bed.

Trualta is offered to family, friends, or neighbors who are caregiving in Minnesota. It has short lessons created by clinical experts in aging. It allows you to personalize your experience based on what best fits your situation. The Personal Care section, for example, has information on 'Shaving,' 'Oral care for older adults,' 'Skin care,' and 'Choosing the right products when assisting in the

bathroom,' to name a few. The Caregiver Wellness section includes 'Balancing work and caregiving,' 'Caregiver guilt,' and 'Reframing negative thoughts.' And, it's more than just a place to find skills training; there are also activity ideas such as 'Relax and unwind,' 'Good morning stretches,' and 'Keeping hands and minds busy.'

There are also several longer presentations by Teepa Snow, a dementia expert who is well-known and highly respected for her informal, practical approach. If you can check the weather on your device, you have the skills to navigate this site!

If you are interested in more information, would like to set up a Trualta account, or would like assistance with a tablet from our lending library to access the site, please contact me at laura.thomas@prairiefive.org or 320-226-8861.

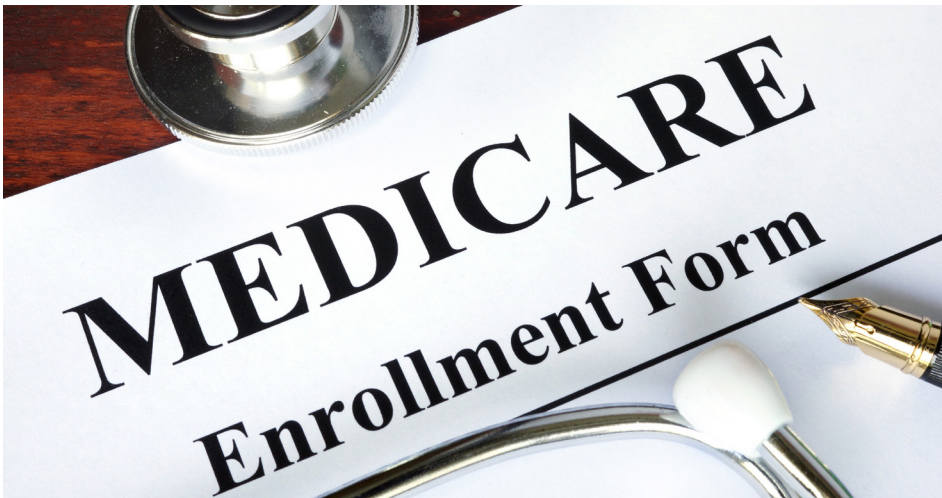
There are a limited number of Trualta user licenses for the state, so now is the time to get started!



Stay up-to-date on the latest news and follow MNRAAA on Facebook at facebook.com/MNRAAA



Turning 65? – Don't be Left in The Dark



If you are turning 65 and beginning to plan for your retirement, don't forget about Medicare. Medicare is health insurance for people age 65 and older, and for some people with a disability. Medicare can be complicated. So sometimes deciding if and when to enroll in Medicare can feel like walking through a maze in the dark.

You are first eligible to sign up for Medicare without penalty during your Initial Enrollment Period. For most people who are becoming eligible for Medicare because they will be turning 65, this period is three months before the month you turn 65 and ends three months

after the month you turn 65.

Medicare does not cover everything, and you will have other out-of-pocket costs, besides paying a monthly premium. So, you will want to consider adding additional insurance to help pay these expenses.

There is no reason to be left in the dark. Do your research, ask questions, know the costs, and compare your options. And remember, free, comprehensive, and objective help is available:

Medicare

- › Call 800-MEDICARE (633-4227)
- › www.medicare.gov

REMINDER

The Medicare Open Enrollment Period starts Saturday, October 15.



SENIOR LINKAGE LINE

The Senior LinkAge Line

- › Call 800-333-2433
- › Attend a presentation (virtual or in-person)
- › mnhealthcarechoices.com

The Senior LinkAge Line is a free, statewide service of the Minnesota Board on Aging in partnership with Minnesota's area agencies on aging. The Senior LinkAge Line is Minnesota's federally designated State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) and the place to call for questions and information on Medicare and much more.

MNRAAA and the Senior LinkAge Line will be closed on the following dates.

LABOR DAY
September 5



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.

Volunteers

"As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands – one for helping yourself, the other for helping others." This quote is associated with Audrey Hepburn and is one I find myself reviewing frequently. Many notice an increasing need for volunteers as organizations continue to dust themselves off after the COVID-19 pandemic. Volunteers assist all our programs and partners in providing services to caregivers and older adults.

MNRAAA's volunteers are a tremendous group of individuals who provide a wide variety of tasks, from data entry and supply organization to assisting in booths and presentations.

Volunteers make up many of our committees and our Board of Directors! We are grateful for those who take time from their day to assist our organization and their communities.

Last year, volunteers put in over 1,500 hours working with MNRAAA! That is incredible, and we thank you all for volunteering your time and talents to assist older adults to thrive.

If you are interested in volunteering with MNRAAA or one of our partners, please get in touch with us! We welcome the opportunity to get to know and work with you!



Marilyn Dundas was recently recognized for her 15 years of volunteering with MNRAAA.