

2026
ASSISTED
LIVING
Conference

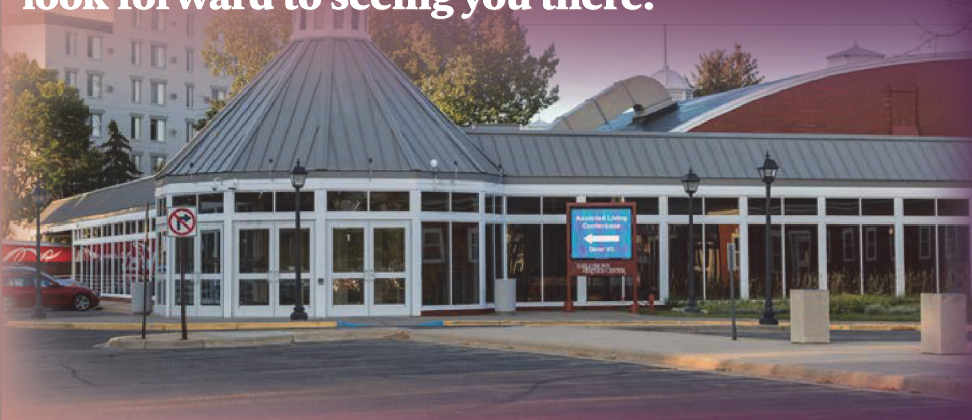
Aug. 12-13 | Heritage Center of Brooklyn Center

WELCOME!

Join us Aug. 12–13 for LeadingAge Minnesota's Assisted Living Conference—created for the realities of today's assisted living leaders and teams, including both operational and clinical staff. Over two focused days, you'll gain timely updates, targeted education, and practical tools to help you navigate state requirements, strengthen operations, and continue delivering exceptional care to residents.

Between sessions, visit the exhibit hall to discover products and services that support your work, connect with peers during built-in networking breaks, and unwind at our casual midweek happy hour.

Come ready for meaningful learning, fresh ideas, useful resources, and valuable connection. We look forward to seeing you there!



Conference Highlights



LALDs can earn up to 10 CEUs for re-licensure



Nursing and Social Work CEUs available



44 vendor displays highlighting products and services



Wednesday evening casual happy hour

Suggested Audience

Assisted Living Directors, Administrators, Clinical Nurse Supervisors and Nurse Managers, and Home Care or Assisted Living Staff

Assisted Living Conference Sponsors



2026 LEADINGAGE MINNESOTA

Annual Sponsors

With deep gratitude we recognize our Annual Sponsors whose unwavering commitment to our members and financial support to LeadingAge Minnesota help provide quality programs and resources throughout the year.

Please consider these sponsors as you make decisions about purchasing products and services to support your business operations.

FOR ALL YOU DO – THANK YOU. WE TRULY ARE BETTER TOGETHER.



Community Living Solutions -
A Division of DBS Group
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VISIT THE VENDOR DISPLAYS

Accelerated Care Solutions
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Senior Care Solutions
Signia Solutions
St. Croix Hospice
Sterling Long Term Care Pharmacy
Thrifty White Partners in Care
Twin Cities Physicians
WellRive
Wold Architects and Engineers

44 product and
service options
for you to explore



DISPLAY HOURS

Wednesday, Aug. 12

10:15 – 10:45 a.m.
and 1:45 – 2:15 p.m.

Thursday, Aug. 13

10:45 – 11:15 a.m.
and 2:15 – 2:45 p.m.



Here is a sneak peek
of exhibitors that
have been confirmed
as of June 2, 2026.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE



THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE - ASSISTED LIVING IN MINNESOTA

Updated in Winter 2025, the guide covers regulations and operations (volume 1) and policies, procedures, and self-audit tools (volume 2).



LICENSED ASSISTED LIVING DIRECTOR TRAINING

This on-demand virtual coursework meets the MN-BELTSS criteria for licensure as an Assisted Living Director in Minnesota.

FREE MEMBER RESOURCES



QUEST REPORT

A quarterly analytic resource for members focused on key trends in the senior care sector including Assisted Living. The information is intended as a general guide that may aid decision-making, policy development, and resource allocation.



DATA PORTAL

The data portal gives members access to data tracking and vital benchmarking data to facilitate data-driven decisions. Data for workforce, compensation, financial conditions, and assisted living quality are available.



EXPERT SUPPORT

You have questions. Our experts have answers. For questions about assisted living, contact Kelly Conrad, Director of Assisted Living Services at kconrad@leadingagemn.org.

FREE COMMUNITY RESOURCE



CARING CAREERS START HERE

Help job seekers understand all your organization has to offer. Update your Employer Match profile by sharing what makes your community unique.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Wednesday, Aug. 12



8 – 9 a.m.

Registration and Continental Breakfast Sponsored by



9 – 10:15 a.m.

WELCOME AND OPENING PANEL PRESENTATION

The Future of Assisted Living in Minnesota: A Panel Discussion Sponsored by



In this panel discussion we will explore what the future of Assisted Living in Minnesota might look like. We are all seeing that affordability, consumer autonomy, and transparency are becoming more difficult to achieve for many Minnesotans.

This panel, facilitated by Kari Thurlow, LeadingAge Minnesota's President and CEO, is designed to be a discussion of how we collectively support older adults in accessing affordable assisted living through the respective roles of the leaders and organizations participating.

During this panel we will:

- Examine current barriers to affordability, autonomy, and transparency in assisted living from multiple stakeholder perspectives.
- Identify shared goals to better support older adults seeking affordable assisted living options.
- Explore opportunities for collaboration and aligned action to improve access and outcomes for Minnesota's aging population.

Carol Backstrom, Assistant Commissioner, Health Systems Bureau, Minnesota Department of Health, St. Paul; Genevieve Gaboriault, Deputy Ombudsman, Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care, St. Paul; Kristine Sundberg, Executive Director, Elder Voice Advocates, Excelsior; Mor Vue, Interim Assistant Commissioner, Aging and Disability Services, Minnesota Department of Human Services, St. Paul; and Moderator: Kari Thurlow, President and CEO, LeadingAge Minnesota, Minneapolis

10:15 – 10:45 a.m.

Vendor Displays and Connection Break Sponsored by



10:45 – 11:45 a.m.

GENERAL SESSION Sponsored by



Minnesota Department of Health Assisted Living Updates

- Identify policy changes from the 2026 Legislative Session that impact assisted living providers.
- Review recent assisted living licensure survey trends.
- Understand the latest OHFC report trends so you can avoid citations and maintain compliance.

Matthew Heffron, JD, NREMT, Assistant Division Director, Rick Michals, Licensing Executive Operations Manager, and Daphne Ponds, RN, MSN, JD, State Executive Operations Manager | OHFC Director, Health Regulation Division, Minnesota Department of Health, St. Paul

11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

Networking Lunch Sponsored by



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Wednesday, Aug. 12



12:45 – 1:45 p.m.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Session #1 – Fire Safety and Evacuation Plans in Assisted Living

- Identify practical compliance strategies for assisted living fire safety and evacuation planning, including the importance of conducting regular drills.
- Describe the key elements of an effective evacuation drill and the documentation that should be maintained.
- Recognize common survey deficiencies related to fire safety and evacuation plans in assisted living settings.

Bob Dehler, P.E., Program Manager for Assisted Living Engineering Services, Mortuary Science, and Health Occupations Programs, Minnesota Department of Health, St. Paul

Session #2 – Working Together with Your Memory Care Families

- Identify what families expect from a memory care setting, including communication and partnership with staff.
- Describe ways to coach families through the changing caregiver role after a loved one moves into memory care.
- Discuss strategies to manage expectations, respond to family concerns, and build trust between families and memory care staff.

Amy House, CDP, LALD, Owner and Consultant, Think Dementia, St. Paul

Session #3 – Responding to Falls in Assisted Living

- Identify key components of an effective falls management and prevention process in assisted living settings.
- Describe provider responsibilities when responding to resident falls, including considerations related to “no-lift” policies, staff response, and post-fall assessment.
- Discuss appropriate alternatives to non-emergency 911 use and recognize common surveyor expectations and citation risks related to fall response and resident safety.

Julie Apold, PhD, Vice President of Quality, LeadingAge Minnesota, Minneapolis; and Dr. Kari Everson, RN, LNHA, LALD, Vice President of Clinical Services, LeadingAge Minnesota, Minneapolis and President, EverCare Aging Services Consulting, St. Paul

1:45 – 2:15 p.m.

Vendor Displays and Connection Break Sponsored by



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Wednesday, Aug. 12



2:15 – 3:15 p.m.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Session #4 – Balancing Sales, Care, and Family Expectations in Assisted Living

- Identify strategies to align marketing, admissions, and clinical teams to set realistic expectations before move-in.
- Explain assisted living licensure limitations and how to clearly communicate available services and care boundaries to families.
- Develop interdisciplinary communication practices and family engagement tools that reduce misunderstandings, complaints, and discharge conflicts.

Brianna Andrasfi, RN, Corporate Director of Clinical Operations for Assisted Living, Ebenezer, Edina; Kelly Conrad, LALD, LSW, Director of Assisted Living Services, LeadingAge Minnesota, Minneapolis; Teri Drake, Director of Marketing, Cornerstone Assisted Living, Plymouth; and Rachel Staven, LALD, Executive Director, New Perspective White Bear Lake

Session #5 – Voice of the Resident: Turning Feedback into Action

- Identify best practices for gathering meaningful resident and family feedback including what, when, and how often it should be gathered.
- Describe strategies for ensuring residents and families feel heard and valued.
- Gain a better understanding of correlations and what moves engagement the most.

Rob Lahammer, Vice President of Engagement and Advocacy, Presbyterian Homes and Services, Roseville

Session #6 – Understanding Vulnerable Adult Maltreatment Mandated Reporting Requirements

- Identify who may be a vulnerable adult and the different types of maltreatment, including abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation, defined under Minnesota's Vulnerable Adult Act.
- Explain mandated reporter responsibilities, including when and how to report suspected maltreatment of vulnerable adults to the Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (MAARC).
- Understand what happens after a maltreatment report is made including required referrals by MAARC, jurisdiction of lead investigative agencies, initial and final determination of maltreatment, and the role of adult protective services.

Mary A. McGurran, Adult Protection Manager, Minnesota Department of Human Services, St. Paul

3:15 – 3:30 p.m.

Break

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Wednesday, Aug. 12



3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Session #7 – Licensed Assisted Living Directors MN-BELTSS Updates

- Describe how to prepare for ALD license renewals and continuing education requirements.
- Explain changes to mentor responsibilities and identify ways to best support applicants.
- Discuss upcoming BELTSS changes and their impact on licensees.

Steve Jobe, Executive Director, and Rebecca Bollig, Director of Assisted Living and Education, Board of Executives for Long-Term Services and Supports (BELTSS), St. Paul

Session #8 – Social Search to AI Summaries: The Future of Brand Visibility

- Recognize how today's families discover and vet senior living options and understand what it means for how your organization shows up (or doesn't) in those moments.
- Identify the key signals that determine whether your community is visible and credible in AI-powered search results, including review volume and recency, and consistent local content across platforms.
- Apply at least three practical strategies to improve your organization's discoverability and digital reputation—even without a dedicated digital agency on staff.

Melissa Telsrow, President and Co-Founder, Hiper Inc., Minneapolis; Luke Vestrum, Managing Director, Tempo, Minneapolis; and James Caples, Founder of DCM, SEO Consultant and Front End Developer, Double Consciousness Media, Minneapolis

4:30 p.m.

Adjourn for the Day

4:45 p.m.

Join us at Embassy Suites Lounge/Bar for happy hour!

LeadingAge Minnesota invites all participants to stay a while longer and network. The first drink is on us.

**We look forward
to connecting
with you!**

Sponsored by

Wold

**HAPPY
HOUR**

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday, Aug. 13



8 – 8:30 a.m.

Continental Breakfast Sponsored by  Guardian pharmacy Minnesota

8:30 – 9:30 a.m.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Session #9 – Top Risks: Food Safety, Medication Management, and Elopement Prevention

- Examine trends and root causes behind frequently cited assisted living deficiencies and complaints related to food services, medication practices, and resident elopement.
- Explore real-world practices that organizations can implement to reduce risk, improve staff response, and enhance resident outcomes.
- Access and integrate LeadingAge Minnesota resources that support sustainable quality improvement and survey readiness.

Julie Apold, PhD, Vice President of Quality, LeadingAge Minnesota, Minneapolis; Linda Atkinson, RN, BSN, LNHA, LALD, Administrator, Winona Senior Services, Winona; and Dawn Nickleson, CDM, CFPP, Owner, Passion for Dining and Nutrition, Cottage Grove

Session #10 – Can You Hear Me Now?

- Develop a greater understanding of your own style of communication.
- Gain a greater understanding of your colleagues' style of communication.
- Apply relatable action steps to improve overall teamwork and communication within your community.

Beth Landers, Vice President of Operations, New Perspective Senior Living, Eden Prairie

Session #11 – Practical Strategies for Activities Using the Geriatric Montessori Approach

- Describe how purposeful activities and meaningful engagement can support emotional well-being, social connection, and a sense of purpose for older adults.
- Identify strategies for adapting activities to match an individual's strengths, interests, and current abilities.
- Apply practical Geriatric Montessori techniques, including offering choice, simplifying tasks, and using multi-sensory engagement to promote participation and independence.

Marlena Hemenway, LALD, Chief Experience Officer, The Geneva Suites, Bloomington

9:30 – 9:45 a.m.

Break

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday, Aug. 13



9:45 – 10:45 a.m.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Session #12 – Navigating DHS Expectations in Assisted Living

- Understand key DHS reimbursement processes and requirements that affect assisted living providers and day-to-day operations.
- Prepare for DHS heightened scrutiny and revalidation processes by understanding key expectations, common documentation needs, and strategies to support ongoing compliance.
- Strengthen collaboration with case managers through clearer communication, more effective service coordination, and shared focus on resident outcomes.

Kelly Conrad, LALD, LSW, Director of Assisted Living Services, LeadingAge Minnesota, Minneapolis; and Janet Perreault, RN, LALD, Director of Reimbursement, Assisted Living Clinical Services, Cassia, Edina

Session #13 – Empowering Frontline Teams with Needed De-escalation Skills

- Understand your role in maintaining a calm and safe memory care environment.
- Identify communication skills and scripts to establish and maintain trust.
- Understand a 7-step process to P.R.E.V.E.N.T. and de-escalate behavioral challenges.

Janelle Johnson, LSW, JD, Founder and Principal Consultant, JMJ Consulting and Advocacy, Osceola, Wis.

Session #14 – Emergency Preparedness in Assisted Living

- Describe the core elements of an emergency preparedness plan and how to tailor the plan to your setting.
- Discuss what surveyors are looking for in a plan and the compliance gaps they are finding.
- Identify tools and resources available to support assisted living providers with disaster planning and emergency preparedness.

Emily Moilanen, MPH, Regional Healthcare Preparedness Coordinator, Metro Health and Medical Preparedness Coalition, St. Paul

10:45 – 11:15 a.m.

Vendor Displays and Connection Break Sponsored by



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday, Aug. 13



11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Session #15 – Beyond Clean: Environmental Services Shapes Image, Safety, and Care

- Discuss how preventative maintenance strategies support resident safety and regulatory compliance.
- Explore the role of environmental services in supporting organizational marketing efforts and collaborating with marketing teams to enhance resident and family perceptions.
- Examine the critical role environmental services plays in infection prevention and control practices.

Vishwani Gherau, Director of Marketing and Development, Rakhma, Minneapolis; Carter Gibbons, Manager of Environmental Services, River Heights by Vivie, South St. Paul; and Kristin Stewart, RN, Clinical Nurse Supervisor, Saint Therese of Woodbury

Session #16 – Drug Diversion: It Can Happen Anywhere

- Review regulatory obligations regarding drug diversion prevention and reporting so participants can develop strategies to mitigate risks associated with drug diversion.
- Identify best practices aimed at preventing and detecting drug diversion.
- Understand when to contact outside agencies and law enforcement and manage relationships with those outside agencies.

Jen Bernstein, Paralegal, Compliance Specialist/Paralegal, and Robert Rodè, JD, President/Partner, Rodè @ Coffin, LLC, St. Paul; and Holly Williams, RN, LALD, Senior Director of Clinical Services, Cassia, Edina

Session #17 – Ethical Decision Making in Long-Term Care

- Identify the four principles of ethics: autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, and justice.
- Discuss ways to explore some of the most common ethical issues in long-term care.
- Outline how to develop strategies for having difficult ethical conversations with today's seniors.

Rev. Christopher Beckman, Corporate Director of Spiritual Care, Ebenezer, Edina

12:15 – 1:15 p.m.

Networking Lunch *Sponsored by*



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday, Aug. 13



1:15 – 2:15 p.m.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Session #18 – Top 5 Recruiting Strategies for Long-Term Care

- Identify the most common recruiting failure points specific to long-term care, including where candidates disengage, why offers fall through, and what drives application abandonment.
- Build a proactive sourcing strategy that generates candidate pipelines for high-turnover roles before vacancies create operational pressure.
- Evaluate current recruiting practices against five evidence-based strategies proven to reduce time-to-fill and improve quality-of-hire in care settings.

Sophie Larsen, Talent Acquisition Manager, Procare HR, Minneapolis

Session #19 – Care Planning for Substance Abuse, Addition, and Overdose Response and Prevention

- Identify current trends and risk factors related to substance use, addiction, and overdose among older adults.
- Describe assessment and care planning strategies for residents with known or suspected substance use concerns.
- Review documentation, investigation, and reporting expectations using real case examples and common deficiency findings.

Catherine Johnson, PsyD, LP, IMHS Clinical Lead, Associated Clinic of Psychology, Minneapolis

Session #20 – Practice Standards vs. Regulatory Compliance: Why Both Matter and How They Differ

- Distinguish practice standards from regulatory compliance and explain why confusing the two creates risk.
- Tailor the conversation about practice, compliance, and ethics to the audience for boards, surveyors, attorneys, families, and staff.
- Review how to guide action and documentation that reflects clinical care, not just compliance.

Dr. Kari Everson, RN, LNHA, LALD, Vice President of Clinical Services, LeadingAge Minnesota, Minneapolis and President, EverCare Aging Services Consulting, St. Paul; and Robert Rodè, JD, President/Partner, Rodè & Coffin, LLC, St. Paul

2:15 – 2:45 p.m.

Vendor Displays and Connection Break Sponsored by



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday, Aug. 13



2:45 – 3:45 p.m.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Session #21 – Aging with IDD and Dementia: Considerations for Assisted Living

- Describe the historical context and emerging trends related to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities aging into later life in assisted living settings.
- Recognize how dementia may present differently in individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and identify key considerations for assessment, communication, and support.
- Explore practical challenges and innovative approaches for supporting residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities and dementia in assisted living communities.

Luke Daily, Senior Director of Adult Programming, Down Syndrome Association of Minnesota, St. Paul; and Maren Levad, Dementia Friendly Community Initiatives Manager, Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging, Minneapolis

Session #22 – Addressing Violence Towards Staff in Assisted Living Settings

- Recognize behaviors and environmental factors that may increase the risk of violence toward staff in assisted living.
- Identify essential steps for HR and supervisors to take in responding to incidents of workplace violence against staff.
- Evaluate how providers can strengthen policies, reporting systems, training, and staff support following incidents.

Ashley Klipstein, LALD, Consultant, Advanced Health Institute, Bloomington

Session #23 – Creating Inclusive Communities: Supporting LGBTQ+ Older Adults

- Distinguish between key concepts including sex assigned at birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and chosen family using respectful, person-centered language.
- Examine how historical events, discrimination, policy changes, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic have shaped the experiences and service needs of LGBTQ+ older adults.
- Apply practical tools, resources, and best practices to foster an affirming, inclusive, and welcoming assisted living environment for LGBTQ+ residents, families, and staff.

Rajeane Moore, PhD, Faculty Director and Director of Graduate Studies for LTC and Associate Director for Policy in the Center for Healthy Aging and Innovation, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

3:45 p.m.

Conference Adjourns

GENERAL INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION



LOCATION

Heritage Center of
Brooklyn Center
6155 Earle Brown Dr.
Brooklyn Center,
MN 55430



FREE PARKING



Embassy Suites Minneapolis-North
(attached to the Heritage Center).
Sleeping room block is held under
“LeadingAge Minnesota” for the
evenings of Aug. 11 and 12, 2026.

Rate: \$145 per night includes cooked-to-order
breakfast and evening reception.

Call 763.560.2700 or book online at

<https://bit.ly/4aehkLz>.

Room block expires on July 21, 2026 at Noon.

Cancellation deadline is 72 hours prior to arrival.

CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS

Minnesota Board of Executives for Long Term Services and Supports (MN-BELTSS)

The educational programming at this conference has
been approved for a maximum of 10 clock hours for
Minnesota licensed assisted living directors and
licensed nursing home administrators.

Minnesota Board of Nursing

Programming has been designed to meet the
continuing education approval of the Minnesota
Board of Nursing for a maximum of 10 contact hours.

Minnesota Board of Social Work

LeadingAge Minnesota is an approved provider of
continuing education.

General CEUs

General certificates of attendance will be available.

HANDOUTS

Participants will receive links to electronic handouts in the
conference app before the event and are encouraged to print
them in advance or download to view on a laptop or tablet.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE AND CANCELLATION POLICY

Register online by Aug. 6, 2026.

To receive a partial refund, all cancellations must be made in
writing by Aug. 3, 2026, and are subject to a \$25 processing
fee. No refund for no-shows, but substitutions for the full
conference are welcome. LeadingAge Minnesota reserves
the right to cancel this conference or any individual sessions.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Olivia Scott at oscott@leadingagemn.org for
assistance or if your registration has not been confirmed.

REGISTRATION FEES

Early Bird Rate On or Before July 10

LeadingAge Minnesota Members	\$410
Prospective Members	\$575

Regular Rate July 11 to Aug. 4

LeadingAge Minnesota Members	\$460
Prospective Members	\$625

Late Rate Aug. 5 and After

LeadingAge Minnesota Members	\$510
Prospective Members	\$675

The full conference registration may not be
shared; each attendee must register
individually and pay a registration fee.



Registration includes breakfast
buffet, morning refreshments,
lunch buffet, and afternoon
refreshments.

**REGISTER
HERE**