

MINNESOTA IS FACING THE COLLAPSE OF ITS SENIOR CARE SYSTEM.

Minnesota's long-term care system needs support from the state to pay caregivers the wages they deserve and ensure access to care in all the places seniors call home.



Minnesota's nationally recognized senior care system offers seniors and their families essential support in the communities they have called home. But with 23,000 positions unfilled, more and more seniors cannot receive the care they need when they need it close to home. We need bold action and permanent solutions this legislative session to preserve access to care for Minnesota's seniors.

This year, Minnesota will become home to over 1 million seniors, and the urgency for action grows. Minnesota's long-term care system needs support from our state partners so we can pay caregivers the wages they deserve and to ensure access to care in all the places seniors call home.

SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL CAREGIVERS WITH WAGES THEY DESERVE

Caregiving is an honorable, essential profession that require special skills and training and we should recognize this important work through meaningful wages that can support individuals and families. Low wages make it difficult to attract and retain skilled, compassionate caregivers. Many leave the field for jobs with less stress and better compensation. Our ability to increase worker pay is tied directly to state funding allocations and the regulatory requirements that govern senior care.

Data:

- There are 23,000 vacant caregiver positions across the state. This represents approximately 20% of all long-term care workers.
- From Aug. through Dec. 2021, senior services experienced 1.25 times more resignations than hires, a rate that is unsustainable.
- The professional caregivers in senior care are more diverse than workers in any other sector in Minnesota.

Solution:

Funding for permanent investments in Medicaid rates will allow us to raise wages, recruit new workers, and retain the dedicated professional caregivers to care for Minnesota's seniors – whether they live in nursing homes, assisted living, and other home-and community-based settings.

We ask lawmakers to support:

THE LONG-TERM CARE IMPERATIVE'S WORKFORCE BILL - HF 3729 (Edelson)/SF 3195 (Housley):

Lawmakers must provide permanent funding to address workforce and other critical needs. The bill would invest in seniors who qualify for elderly waiver care in assisted living, adult day, and other home and community-based settings and improve the value based reimbursement system for those who receive care in nursing homes.

ENSURE ALL SENIORS HAVE ACCESS TO THE QUALITY CARE THEY NEED CLOSE TO HOME

Caregiving is a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week commitment. Unlike other sectors, we can't limit our hours or sell fewer products – we need to provide our best and safest care for everyone we serve. Our workforce crisis means a growing number of seniors cannot receive the long-term care they need when they need it and where they want to receive the care.

Data:

- Over 78% of nursing homes and 30% of assisted living settings are limiting admissions. The primary reason cited was insufficient staff to meet resident needs.
- Minnesota is now home to over one million seniors.

Solution:

We must support new and alternative care models of care and fix regulatory barriers that impact access to safe, quality care in all the communities they call home.

We ask lawmakers to support:

PACE BILL - HF 2283 (Albright)/ SF 2103 (Housley):

If passed, this bill would allow Minnesota to fully implement the Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), a nationally recognized and supported community-based model of care for frail older adults. Through the program, older adults have a team of health care professionals working with them to make sure they get the vital recreational, social, medical, mental health, nutritional and spiritual services they need, allowing over 55,000 seniors nationwide to thrive in the communities they live and work. The bill provides a \$265,000 appropriation to fund a federally-required rate study to make the program operational.

REMOTE ADULT DAY - SF 4165 (Abeler):

This policy bill includes several different provisions on a wide variety of human services topics, including our proposed remote adult day provision. The remote adult day language gives adult day providers the option to provide care virtually. *A stand-alone bill received a hearing in the House, and we are asking representatives to support this policy provision in the companion to Sen. Abeler's bill (HF 4579 - Schultz).

UPDATES TO ASSISTED LIVING LICENSE:

In 2019, we worked closely with lawmakers and consumer advocates to pass landmark legislation to reform and license assisted living in Minnesota. Despite best efforts, issues have arisen since the law took effect in Aug. 2021. We continue to work with stakeholders to update newly-implemented assisted living licensure statute to make technical corrections, expand the role for LPNs, better define assisted living residents, and pre-empt zoning restrictions prohibiting specific assisted living settings.



QUESTIONS? CONTACT US!

Erin Huppert
VP of Advocacy
651-206-5302
ehuppert@leadingagemn.org

Matt Steele
Director of Gov't Affairs
651-659-1430
msteele@leadingagemn.org