

November 21, 2024

To: Members, Task Force on Aging

From: Citizen Advocates (See list of supporters at end of Draft)

Re: Support for Cabinet on Aging Legislation as Proposed by Chair Klevorn

Section XXX Minnesota Cabinet on Aging

Subdivision 1.

Purpose and Intent

1. (Insert) State Demographer's findings on Minnesota's aging population
2. Examine existing funding sources for all aging related programs in state government.
3. Conduct statewide planning process to build an infrastructure for and support of healthy aging in Minnesota communities to ensure:
 - a) Our aging population in Minnesota greater policy coordination and oversight within State government and collaboration with local communities and the private sector.
 - b) The choice to remain in and contribute to their communities as they age, with access to services and supports they need: access to health care including oral health and mental health care; safe affordable housing options; access to food, opportunities to socialize and broadband connectivity; home care; independent housing options; improved residential options for long-term care; safe and affordable transportation.
 - c) Recognition and support of older Minnesotans' contribution to the economic health and strength of our State by continuing employment, raising and mentoring children, providing care and support to family members and friends, and engaging in their communities through civic engagement and volunteerism.
 - d) State commitment to respectful, inclusive communities, free from ageism and other biases, where people of all ages and backgrounds are celebrated for their accomplishments and contributions
4. Establish Minnesota State Policy and Strategic Plan on Aging

Subdivision 2. Establishment; Governance; Citation Effective July 1, 2025

1. Minnesota Cabinet on Aging will be accountable to the Governor's Office to establish a state policy and strategic plan on aging.
2. The Minnesota Cabinet on Aging will have the authority given to it by the Legislature to initiate a planning process, and upon completion of the State Plan coordinate the ongoing implementation of that Plan to include the responsibility to coordinate and direct aging policy initiatives across state agencies.

Subdivision 3 Discretionary powers

1. Sponsor, support and facilitate innovation in economic and community development for older adults.
2. Contract for goods or services.
3. Receive appropriations, engage in contracts and expend funding from public and private sources in support of research and innovation for aging in community throughout the state.
4. Secure contracts with federal and local governmental agencies and other organizations.
5. Initiate contracts with federal and local governmental agencies, educational institutions, and private sector.

Subdivision 4 Duties

1. Identify Federal and State funding for programs currently dedicated to the older adult population across all state agencies including areas of potential savings.
2. Evaluate impact and outcomes of current aging-related initiatives including development of housing, workforce programs and communication effort, report on findings and identify ways to strengthen successful initiatives.
3. Collaborate with Area Agencies on Aging as lead community organizations promoting community engagement and healthy aging programs (continues services as set out in the OAA funded statewide plan).
4. Examine opportunities to collaborate with nonprofit organizations to enhance and secure grant opportunities for healthy aging in community.
5. Collaborate with state agencies to conduct a gaps analysis of health care delivery systems for oral health, chronic health conditions, acute health care conditions, palliative and end-of-life care to determine access problems across Minnesota; Report analysis by January 2026.

6. Collaborate with state agencies to analyze family caregiving policies in private and public sectors.
7. Analyze the extent of and costs for family and friends providing care for aging adults in Minnesota and the concomitant cost savings for the state.
8. Collaborate with the Department of Employment and Economic Development and public sector to create initiatives that support training, recruiting, and hiring of older adults in the private and public sectors.
9. Collaborate and lead multiple state agencies in designing education and training policies to support long-term care workforce development.
10. Collaborate with state agencies to study the necessity for additional state oversight of long-term care facilities, residences and home-care agencies, the need for additional development throughout the state and impact of corporate profits on both public and private funders for long-term care.
11. Develop transparency policy that tracks the uses of governmental funding to ensure the funds are used as intended.
12. Collaborate with state agencies and private sector to forecast the necessity for future long-term services and supports based on community need.
13. Develop and implement public policy initiatives with state agencies to drive innovation for vibrant aging across the lifespan.
14. Prepare a comprehensive report on findings of the above listed studies, activities and analysis for the Governor and MN Legislature by July 2026 with legislative recommendations.

Subdivision 5 Strategic Statewide Plan for Aging in Minnesota

1. The strategic statewide plan on aging through the lifespan shall address access improvements including but not limited to the following: housing, transportation, civic participation and employment, outdoor spaces and buildings, communication and information, social participation and social inclusion, and access to health care, oral health and mental health, home care and residential long-term care.
2. Conduct the multi-sector planning process with accessible data to ground decision-making, merging current demographic data on aging adults with funding streams, program cost, impact and outcome, providing baseline for an analytical model to inform decision-making, building into the analysis with state departments an exploration of need for a state Department on Aging.
3. Conduct planning process to ensure public participation across public and private sectors throughout the state.
4. Collaborate with agencies to design measurable outcomes for all aspect of the Strategic Statewide Plan on Aging; outcome measures shall recognize diversity, equity and inclusion across the aging lifespan in Minnesota.

5. Ensure ongoing discussion with the Tribal Nations and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council in planning for aging.
6. The MN Cabinet on Aging shall provide quarterly reports to the Legislature and the Governor on the progress of the statewide planning process.
7. The MN Governor shall provide the comprehensive report and the results of the planning process with the recommended Strategic Statewide Plan and legislation to enact the Plan to the MN Legislature by December 31, 2026.

Subdivision 6 Training and support

- Focus on training programs for state agencies and local governmental units on how to serve and support older adults
- Evaluation of strategies to assess the impact of initiatives on aging supports, and identify ways to strengthen the initiatives

Subdivision 7 Staff

- Executive director – broad competency in the field of aging focused on community development for aging; experience in the actions cited under Purpose and Intent for the Cabinet; demonstrates recognition of and support for the value of aging demographic and self-determination of elders,
 - deputy director
 - project director
 - public engagement officer
 - administrative staff

Subdivision 8 Funding

- Cabinet operational funding
- Subcabinet operational funding
- Coordination with other state agencies on federal funds available for programs

Subdivision 9 Citizens Subcabinet on Aging

- Revise MN Board on Aging statute
- Remove “state unit on aging” designation and transfer designation to Department of Human Services
- Advise Governor, Legislature and Director of the Cabinet

- Incorporate Age Friendly Council funding and intent, healthy aging in community
- Become the “public connection” for the Cabinet through direct engagement in the statewide planning process

Subdivision 10 Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care

- Transfer Office out of DHS

Citizen Advocates in Support of a Department on Aging/Cabinet on Aging

Ann Bussey, recent Member Rural Health Advisory Committee; Adjunct Faculty CSS Rural Health MBA Program (2014-2016)

Kate Grathwol, recent CEO of Vision Loss Resources

Leif Grina, President Minneapolis Regional Retirees Council, constituent body of the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO

Kay Hendrikson, Chair of Statewide DFL Senior Caucus

Kathleen Kelso, Board Member Elder Voice Advocates; former: MBA Board Member; Chair St. Paul Advisory Committee on Aging; E.D. ElderCare Rights Alliance

Stephanie Klinzing, Member of Minnesota Housing Board of Directors; former MN Legislator, county commissioner, Greater Minnesota mayor, and MN Board on Aging member

Mary Jo Schifsky, M.Ed., MBA, past member MN Board on Aging; E.D. Store to Door; GenSync LLC, founder

Kris Sundberg, Executive Director Elder Voice Advocates; Owner of public affairs firm; former corporate officer; appointed to several state Commissions

Jim Varpness, former Regional Administrator, Administration for Community Living, US DHHS; past Ex Dir, Mn Board on Aging

Gregg Wright, Olmsted County Commissioner; educator