

10/29/24

To: Members, Legislative Task Force on Aging

From: Stephanie Klinzing, former MN Legislator, county commissioner, Greater Minnesota mayor, and former MN Board on Aging member. Current member of Minnesota Housing Board of Directors.

While watching Task Force meetings virtually or attending in person, I have heard members comment, question, or speculate on the potential costs associated with the Task Force's final recommendation to the Legislature. Even though funding will be a major concern during legislative debates on any proposed law regarding the final recommendation, the statute that created the Task Force ([*Minnesota Laws 2023 Chapter 62, Article 2, Section 120*](#)) does not require a fiscal note.

And, as such, potential costs of the Task Forces' final recommendation shouldn't be a deciding factor prior to the legislature beginning its deliberation on specific introduced bills. I don't believe that this was a mistake or an oversight on the part of the Legislature but intentionally done to give the Task Force a wide latitude to recommend, without the limitation of budget, the best path forward to a better future for Minnesota's aging population.

In leaving out the requirement of a fiscal note, the legislature gave the Task Force members freedom to guide its recommendation primarily by what they have discovered through months of testimony. The recommendation can reflect what Minnesotans want and need and not only what would fit within any future state government budget. Minnesota's aging population deserves the chance to have the best.

There is no fear that funding will eventually be a major consideration as the state's budget restraints come front and center during Legislative debate on specific bills related to the Task Force's recommendation.

11/5/24

To: Members, Legislative Task Force on Aging

From: Stephanie Klinzing, former MN Legislator, county commissioner, Greater Minnesota mayor, and former MN Board on Aging member. Current member of Minnesota Housing Board of Directors.

I just read the article in Sunday's Minneapolis Star Tribune regarding the closing of pharmacies throughout Minnesota, which are creating "pharmacy deserts" in areas of the state.

This situation was most likely not a "suddenly." I would imagine that "someone" was aware that pharmacies were struggling and that impending closings would have serious consequences for elders. So it begs the question, "Who's watching the store?"

This is, yet, another example of the lack of attention and coordinated efforts to stem threats to the lives of Minnesota's elders, who are affected the greatest when access to medical services are curtailed and/or stop. This joins a growing list of overwhelming evidence to support acceptance of the Task Force's Draft Outline for Cabinet on Aging Legislation, released by Chair Rep. Klevorn at the Oct. 29 Task Force meeting.

Establishment of a "cabinet-level department . . . under the direction of the Governor's Office to direct and coordinate aging policy, initiatives and services" will go a long way to fill the void that is allowing such things as "pharmacy deserts" from getting established with little to no notice.

Going in this direction is the best we can do, right now, to prevent a haphazard future for Minnesota elders that will cause unnecessary pain and suffering.