

CENTER FOR HEALTHY AGING & INNOVATION

MN LEGISLATIVE SESSION

POLICY BRIEF - MARCH 2024



BACKGROUND

The Minnesota Legislature meets in biennial (two-year) sessions and the second year began February 12th, 2024 and must end by May 20th. The second year of the session:

- is typically not a budget year, but instead explores capital projects,
- makes any policy or regulatory adjustments to previously passed legislation,
- takes up any emergency needs, and
- has a forecasted \$3.7 billion surplus which assures that some spending will be proposed.

Key Points

MN Legislature meeting in 2024 in a policy year

Estimated \$2.4 billion surplus in one-time money

A number of proposals are being circulated related to older adults and aging in the state

AGING-RELATED COMMITTEES & TASK FORCES

No single committee comprehensively oversees aging and/or older adults and family caregivers. The following committees touch on aging-related topics. Meeting times and locations for committees are posted on their Legislative website.

MN House	MN Senate
Health Finance and Policy Human Services Finance Human Services Policy Transportation Finance and Policy Veterans and Military Affairs Finance and Policy Workforce Development Finance and Policy	Health and Human Services Human Services State and Local Government and Veterans Transportation

LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON AGING

In 2023 the Minnesota State Legislature created the Legislative Task Force on Aging (Minnesota Laws 2023 Chapter 62, Article 2, Section 120). The Task Force is charged with exploring the state government's investments and roles related to aging in Minnesota, including identifying and prioritizing supports. The Task Force's work will culminate with a report to the Legislature in January 2025 outlining their recommendations.

Representative Ginny Klevorn and Senator Kelly Morrison co-chair the Task Force. Members include Representative Natalie Zeleznikar, Senator Karin Housley, MN Board on Aging Chair Maureen Schneider, MN Council on Disability member Jen Foley, MN Indian

Affairs Councilwoman Agatha Armstrong, and the Center for Healthy Aging & Innovation (CHAI)'s Director Dr. Joe Gaugler.

Topics and presentations covered since the first meeting include overviews of: demographics, area agencies on aging, the Dept. of Human Services, the Dept. of Health, chronic illness, Alzheimer's disease, geriatrics and geriatrics education, workforce, transportation, CAPABLE program, Housing Finance Agency, long-term care, and housing.

Meetings are held on the second Friday of the month from 9:00 - 11:00 am and are streamed live on the Legislature's YouTube channel. The Task Force welcomes public testimony at monthly meetings. Comments can also be submitted on the Task Force's website. For more information, including past meeting recordings and agendas, visit the Task Force on Aging's website at <https://www.lcc.mn.gov/aging>.

PROPOSALS TO WATCH

The University of Minnesota is a member of the Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging, which works to support positive systems change for older adults, family caregivers, and the aging services sector workforce. The Council has endorsed a series of legislative proposals through a consensus process. For more information and to track the progress of the proposals, please visit www.mnlcoa.org/policy. CHAI does not endorse legislation but tracks relevant legislation impacting aging and older adults. Council-endorsed proposals include:

\$25 By '25

A proposal to increase wages for most employees at skilled care centers by \$5/hour (for nursing assistants, this elevates the wage to \$25/hour).

Elderly Waiver Benchmarks

A proposal that addresses Elderly Waiver being the only Medical Assistance (Medicaid) waiver without a rate updating function, allowing rates to be indexed to a future value.

Value-Based Reimbursement Cost Factors

A proposal that adds a rate inflation factor to cover the 15-27 month time period between cost reports and rate increases for skilled care centers.

Trained Medication Aide Training Expansion

A proposal to expand TMA training options beyond the current higher education programs to include other MDH-approved programs.

Nursing Assistant Language Accommodation

A proposal that would allow the MN Department of Health to offer a language accommodation beyond English in the current written nursing assistant exam.

Supplemental Nursing Staffing Agencies Private Right Of Action

A proposal allowing providers to seek legal recourse from supplemental nursing staffing agencies in situations where fines are assessed.

Housing Support In Board and Lodge

A proposal to bring board and lodge into the protections language limiting 30% of "unearned income" to be used toward Housing Support costs.

Elimination of the Assisted Living Verification Code

A proposal to redeploy Senior LinkAge Line resources by no longer requiring people to sign an assisted living lease to obtain a verification code.

Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative: Alzheimer's Focus

A proposal for the first investment in the Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative grant in 20 years and the addition of a focus on Alzheimer's disease.

Permanent Respite Supports

A proposal to make permanent short-term respite care supports for primary caregivers seeking to recharge their batteries or complete chores.

Healthy Aging and Alzheimer's Disease Health Curriculum

A proposal to create a voluntary health curriculum module about healthy aging and Alzheimer's disease for grades 8-12.

Dementia Services Coordination

A proposal to establish a permanent, full-time program manager at the MN Department of Health to work across state agencies and divisions on programs and policies.

Home Care Medical Assistance Rates

A proposal that increases Medical Assistance (Medicaid) rates for underfunded home care evaluations to be closer to the actual costs of the services provided.

Minnesota Homeless Study

A proposal that replaces fragmented and insecure funding with a streamlined and going funding for the crucial Minnesota Homeless Study.

More Homes Initiative

A proposal that expands affordable housing options and eases zoning barriers by allowing for construction of "missing middle housing" options.

Palliative Care Benefit

A proposal that creates a palliative care benefit for Medical Assistance to reimburse interdisciplinary palliative team members in all care settings.

DAYS AT THE CAPITOL

Advocacy organizations coordinate days at the Minnesota Capitol where their stakeholders can meet with elected officials to talk more about topics important to them. A comprehensive list of Capitol Complex events is available [online](#). The following are currently identified advocacy days:

- [Alzheimer's Association MN/ND Advocacy Day MN - March 21, 2024](#)
- [Housing Day at the Capitol - April 3, 2024](#)
- Long-Term Care Imperative Day at the Capitol - **March 20, 2024** ([Care Providers of Minnesota](#) and [LeadingAge Minnesota](#))

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