



**In Support of Healthy Aging Subcabinet and Healthy Aging Statewide Plan
Kathleen Kelso, Board Member**

SF 3045, second unofficial engrossment, Article 2, Section 6; line 18.26 and line 74 of the spreadsheet; the “right document” of the side-by-side comparison

- **The Healthy Aging Subcabinet will conduct a public statewide examination of aging in Minnesota and requires a Healthy Aging Plan with recommendations to be approved by the legislature. The Healthy Aging Subcabinet is the result of 18 months of public testimony before the Legislative Task Force on Aging.**
- Today 1.3 million Minnesotans are over 65. We are all aging. It is imperative that Minnesota invest in ourselves and our aging communities throughout our state. Aging requires planning for this investment in the future. Aging Minnesotans must be acknowledged and seen by our government. Aging Minnesotans require more than services and publicly funded grant projects scattered across the state with no statewide impact.
- **The Subcabinet on Aging** will exam our current and future aging demographic in a positive manner; they will openly discuss planning across sectors and agencies: housing, transportation, jobs, services – strategies to enhance the quality of life as we age.
- Aging communities are experiencing a lack of safe and affordable housing and transportation. We must direct our attention to planning for a future that demands community development for aging; for jobs, keeping workers in the workplace; for a longevity economy.
- Most older adults experience changes in our mobility and abilities and some of us become disabled. We all choose to live at home for as long as possible within our communities of choice as we age. A Plan for all older Minnesotans must be included in the *strategic plans of every state agency* through an accountable planning process and an infrastructure for our aging communities.
- **The Healthy Aging Subcabinet** will identify the financial costs and lost opportunities for individuals, families and whole communities if we fail to plan and invest in healthy aging communities. A growing percentage of people over 65 who are not eligible or in need of publicly financed services will require community support for affordable housing options; safe and accessible transit; access to health care and food. The future of multiple and *system-wide* improvements is dependent upon a statewide plan for healthy aging.

- **The Healthy Aging Plan** will ensure that the entire state is engaged in pursuing strategies that include recommendations for public and private partnerships to include *housing, transportation and community development*:
 - Housing policy for aging that meets market demand and works with developers to stimulate innovative housing models,
 - Innovative policies for future development of “housing with services” to meet the growing need for care within our communities,
 - A variety of transit system options to encourage independence and access within one’s community, especially in rural MN, so that we will have access to social and civic activities, health care and food.
 - Improvements in the delivery system for home care and long-term care based on community need especially in rural Minnesota to include the absolute necessity for quality care providers.
- The State Demographer provides a glimpse of our reality today:
<https://www.lcc.mn.gov/aging/08242023/2-SusanBrower-Legislative-TaskForce-Aging.pdf>
 - Population aging will have permanent, far-reaching impacts.
 - The rapid and permanent transition to an older state is already occurring.
 - Greater MN has a larger share of the state’s older adults and is aging at a faster rate than the metropolitan areas in part due to outmigration of younger people.
 - 70% of women 65+ live in rural Minnesota.
 - Minnesota’s population aged 50 and older contributes \$154 billion to the state GDP while holding 1.7 million jobs, yet older workers face age discrimination and increasing challenges in securing and maintaining employment statewide.
- Full public participation is necessary for Minnesotans to engage in an effective and affordable infrastructure for aging. We know that staying in one’s own home – to the extent that one is able to do so - contributes to healthy living, and aging in one’s community contributes to healthy economic benefits for individuals, families, neighborhoods and towns.

Thank you for your support of aging and support for the **Healthy Aging Subcabinet and Healthy Aging Plan**.