



MN Leadership Council on Aging

Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging is a champion, thought leader, planner, and educator that advances positive system change for older adults, their families and caregivers. We are focused on creating communities and systems that support aging with dignity and a spirit of well-being in Minnesota.

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March 7, 2023

Honorable Members of the House Human Services Finance Committee
Room 200 State Office Building

On behalf of the many undersigned members of the Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging, **I write today in support of HF2523 (Fischer) requesting \$20 million this biennium to meet the minimum nutritional needs for older adults in our state.**

As trusted organizations in the state's aging sector, our shared mission is to create communities and systems that support aging with dignity and a spirit of well-being in Minnesota. One of our longstanding values as a Leadership Council is to ensure basic human needs. *What can be more fundamental in meeting our societal obligation than ensuring older adults have access to food!*

Programs that provide meals to older adults are severely underfunded and are not meeting the needs of older Minnesotans. The Minnesota Senior Nutrition Program has not had a funding increase in the past 20 years, while the need and costs have grown exponentially. From 2020 to 2022 alone, the cost of meals has increased 26%. Meal providers are responding by serving fewer people or fewer meals per person, with devastating impacts on older adults.

We also know that food insecurity disproportionately affects those from low-income, BIPOC and rural communities who live in food deserts, have limited English proficiency, or lack access to transportation. Inadequate nutrition has a negative impact on health, erodes quality of life and contributes to rising healthcare costs. The Minnesota legislature has stood up to help feed children, now we ask that you do the same for Minnesotans across the lifespan.

On behalf of our members and the one million older Minnesotans we work with who call our state home – especially the 1 in 2 who today are at risk for malnutrition – we ask for your urgent support to meet this basic human need.

Respectfully submitted,

Adam Suomala

Executive Director

Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging

Cc: Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging Delegates

Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging

Delegates supporting *Meals for Seniors* legislation in HF2523 (Fisher):

Cathy McLeer, *State Director*
AARP Minnesota

Amanda Vickstrom, *Executive Director*
Minnesota Elder Justice Center

Susan Parriott, *Chief Executive Officer*
Alzheimer's Association MN/ND

Tom Hyder, *Interim Executive Director*
Minnesota Gerontological Society

Nona Ferguson, *Vice President, Economic Stability and Aging Services*
Amherst H. Wilder Foundation

Kathy Messerli, *Executive Director*
Minnesota Home Care Association

Patti Cullen, *President and CEO*
Care Providers of Minnesota

Jessica Hausauer, *Executive Director*
Minnesota Network of Hospice and Palliative Care

Beth Wiggins, *Director of Caregiving and Aging Services*, **FamilyMeans**

Phil Duran, *Senior Advocate, Aging and Gender Care Access*, **Rainbow Health**

James Falvey, *Executive Director*
Friends & Co.

Deb Taylor, *Chief Executive Officer*
Senior Community Services

Jonathan Palmer, *Executive Director*
Hallie Q. Brown Community Center

Jane Pederson, *Chief Medical Quality Officer*
Stratis Health

Ruth Hampton Olkon, *Chief Executive Officer*
Jewish Family Services of St. Paul

Joseph Gaugler, *Robert L. Kane Endowed Chair in LTC and Aging*, **University of Minnesota**

Kari Thurlow, *President and CEO*
LeadingAge Minnesota

Kate Grathwol, *President and CEO*
Vision Loss Resources

Carol Lundquist, *Executive Director*
Living at Home Network

Vickie Snyder, *Chair, Board of Directors*
Vital Aging Network

Roxanne Jenkins, *Associate Vice President for Services for Older Adults*
Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota

Julie Manworren, *President and CEO*
Volunteers of America – MN/WI

Jarrod Peterson, *Public Policy Chair/President*
Minneapolis Area Senior Workers Association and St. Paul Senior Workers Association

Dawn Simonson, *President and CEO*, **Trellis Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging**

Heidi Holste, *Executive Director*, **Minnesota Association of Geriatrics Inspired Clinicians**

