Minnesota Department of Health Fall 2005

Healthy Aging Community Models

Communities are finding new and creative ways of addressing the needs of older adults The following models showcase a variety of ways that communities have responded by:

- Addressing basic needs
- Optimizing health and well-being
- Promoting social and civic engagement
- Maximizing independence for the frail and disabled.

Programs of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) – A Rural Possibility

Since 1983, PACE has been serving frail senior citizens in urban programs throughout the United States. The program enables at risk seniors to live as independently as possible, in their homes and communities. PACE programs offer a comprehensive set of services including:

- Medical care
- Physical and occupational therapy
- Transportation
- Nutrition and meals-on-wheels
- Day care and respite services
- Home care and chore services.

The PACE model of care is supported through federal, state and private funds.

PACE in Winona, Minnesota: A rural PACE program is being developed by Winona Health Services, the Sauer Memorial Home, St. Anne Extended Healthcare and the Winona State University Nursing program. It will offer programs and services, including home and day care and nutrition, at the lowest cost possible. The Winona PACE program coordinates with the Department of Human Services - Minnesota Senior Health Options Program.

A Design for the Future

Osceola Medical Center, in Osceola, Wisconsin, has a service area that includes Polk, St. Croix, Washington and Chisago counties, the fastest growing counties in Wisconsin and Minnesota. In response to enormous population growth and the challenge to expand services, the medical center is envisioning the development of a 21st Century health care campus, which will provide medical care from birth to end of life, emphasize disease prevention and promote active healthy lifestyles.

In partnership with Ecumen Senior Care Services, the expansion of an existing nursing home will include:

- Independent Senior Living
- Respite Care Center
- Adult Day Care Services
- Senior Activities Center
- Assisted Living Complex.

Working with Wild River YMCA, the campus complex also plans to have soccer and baseball fields, recreational activities and programming for all ages, a fitness center, a day care center and swimming pool. The design incorporates walking and biking paths connecting the Campus to Osceola, housing developments and environmentally friendly facilities and green space.

A Social Housing and Care Model

The philosophy of Green House is to provide excellent health care without making health care the central focus. The Green House concept seeks to reform traditional nursing home structures to actively engage residents and ward off loneliness, boredom and helplessness.

Green Houses transform physical space from the traditional nursing home design. For example, the ranch style Green House in Tupelo, Mississippi includes a communal dining table and open kitchen shared by nine residents. Resident care is conducted by Certified Nursing Assistants who perform and participate in all tasks related to the residents' care from cooking, cleaning and laundry to assistance with medications and daily tasks. Nurses visit the residents in their home to provide additional medical needs.

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A recent study by Rosalie A. Kane, a professor at the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health, compares the quality of life for residents and staff members in Green Houses with two traditional nursing homes. Early results show differences that significantly favor Green Houses over other locations.

Beyond the Traditional Senior Center

Food is the chief lure of Mather Café Plus in northwest Chicago. Mather Lifeways has created attractive storefront venues that have become "hang-outs" for older people who are not interested in attending a traditional senior center. The cafés offer reasonably priced, varied menus and opportunities to take advantage of programs and services that older adults find interesting and/or vital to their independence, including:

- Exercise programs
- Computer classes and other education opportunities
- Nurse and social worker services.

The café menus, services and daily programs are based on feedback provided by older community members.

To identify safe and accessible café locations, Mather staff examined where older people in these neighborhoods go and how they get there. Mather has since opened an additional "Café Without Walls" in a church in another community, offering lunch and a lecture or another activity once a month.

Future objectives include:

- Integrating a health care and community outreach component into the cafés
- Engaging older people in teaching classes and staffing the cafés
- Using the cafés as a base to serve homebound community members.

Safety and Independence at Home

Initiated in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1981, the Living At Home/Block Nurse Program (LAH/BNP) offers support and services to any person over 65 living in the community regardless of ability to pay. It uses and coordinates existing agencies/services within the community that support an elders' desires to live in their own home. Volunteers provide many of the social and support services free of charge including:

- socialization and respite support
- simple home repairs, lawn and garden services
- assistance with paperwork
- transportation.

Professional nurses and trained staff work collaboratively with home care and public health agencies to provide health screenings, blood pressure/glucose monitoring, medication management, and health maintenance referrals/reminders. Skilled health care services are coordinated with a partner nursing agency or community provider.

An LAH/BNP is started by a community organization of interested residents who receive technical and sometimes financial start-up assistance from the Elderberry Institute. Local fundraising, in-kind contributions, and volunteers sustain the program. There are 17 programs in Minneapolis-St. Paul and 24 Greater Minnesota programs serving 928 elders.