Statewide Health Improvement Partnership

Helping Minnesota’s seniors live longer, healthier lives

Minnesota’s senior population is expected to grow rapidly over the next 20 years. The Minnesota State Demographer anticipates the state’s 65+ population will increase by 41 percent from 2010 to 2020, resulting in about 970,000 older adults. By 2030, the 65+ population will surge to 1.26 million.¹

Alzheimer’s Disease and Other Dementias

The growth in Minnesota’s older population also means a growth in Minnesotans living with Alzheimer’s and other dementias. By 2025, nearly 120,000 Minnesotans are expected to be diagnosed with Alzheimer’s, a 32 percent increase from 2016.²

Alzheimer’s and other dementias have a major impact on public programs, families, communities, public health and health care. For example, 2016 estimates indicate that Minnesota’s 240,000 caregivers provided 280 million hours of unpaid care.²

SHIP takes action

Research indicates that an approach to reduce the risk of cognitive decline and dementia are by maintaining healthy lifestyles.³ SHIP’s local public health staff are working statewide to implement these healthy lifestyle strategies and create supportive environments, including:

- 303 communities are improving healthy eating opportunities for seniors.
- 224 communities are reducing tobacco use and secondhand exposure for seniors.
- 173 communities are improving active living opportunities for seniors (2016-2018).

In addition, SHIP works with health care organizations and employers to address dementia. From 2016-2018, that work included:

- 13 health care organizations are screening for dementia and connecting patients to community-based support.
- 19 employers are participating in dementia-related trainings.

SHIP also supports community-based organizations. In 2018, 15 local public health partners collaborated with 31 Alzheimer’s/dementia coalitions to advocate for dementia-friendly communities and educate communities members about dementia and available resources.

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<th>Historical and Projected Population Age 65 &amp; Older in Minnesota (in Millions of People)</th>
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Historical and Projected Population Age 65 & Older in Minnesota (in Millions of People)

Historical and Projected Population Age 65 & Older in Minnesota (in Millions of People)
Local SHIP examples

- **Olmsted County** is working with Rochester ACT on Alzheimer’s to help create a dementia friendly community. Efforts include assisting with Dementia Friends trainings, the Resounding Voices chorus and Memory Cafés. Dementia Friends trainings – provided to community members and local businesses – teach people what it is like to live with dementia. Resounding Voices is a choral group in Rochester for those experiencing mild memory impairment or dementia and their caregivers. Memory Cafés are planned social outings to help reduce isolation.

- **Cass County** is piloting “Cycling Without Age,” which is aimed at reducing the effects of dementia by taking seniors at risk on bicycle rides around the community. SHIP staff will train a group of volunteer bicycle pilots and establish captains to lead teams of volunteers who will drive rickshaw bicycles. SHIP in Cass County is also supporting Memory Cafés in Pine River and Walker.

- **Horizon SHIP** is collaborating with the Douglas County Library and other community partners to create a dementia friendly community. A Memory Loss Resource Center has been created at the library where memory maker kits for caregivers are available for check out. The kits include interactive activities to spark memories, create conversation and provide positive and engaging interactions between people with memory loss and their caregiver.

- **Chisago County SHIP** staff began working with ACT on Alzheimer’s North Branch in 2014, a grassroots community driven effort to assist all parts of our community to adopt dementia friendly practices. The goal is to create welcoming environments to help people with dementia to continue being active in their community. One of the efforts was to train law enforcement and first responders to effectively support people with dementia.

- **Washington County** continues to partner with FamilyMeans and health care providers to strengthen community linkages for people living with dementia, their families and caregivers. Efforts include developing an online assessment tool for individuals and caregivers to assess concerns, access reliable information, prepare for the future and find local resources. SHIP staff also support active living and fall prevention programs for older adults through instructor trainings, coordination and promotion of classes.

- **A Healthier Southwest** is supporting creation of Dementia Cafés at Slayton Public Library and Fulda Public Library. Efforts include providing activity kits for people with dementia and their caregivers; resources such as videos and reading material; and monthly support groups.

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