

# SE MN Area Agency on Aging

## Summer Newsletter 2021

Happy 4th of July!



*Helping older adults and their families age successfully*



**Southeastern Minnesota  
AREA AGENCY on AGING**

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Take Time to Celebrate – As the events of this past-year plus start to fade into the rearview mirror – it really hits home how important celebrations are (big & small)! Acknowledging milestones and traditions should take center stage instead of letting them slip by without notice. I absolutely love to hear stories about family traditions that have been passed on from previous generations and about new ones that will push forward to generations to come.

We have so many reasons to celebrate and here are just a few:

As a nation, we recognize the impact that the murder of George Floyd has had on putting the spotlight on equity, inclusion & social justice. We take time to vision forward to the tributes and positive changes to come.

As a state we applaud and celebrate the efforts of all who advocated to move the MN Age Friendly initiative to a state-wide platform, boosting forward education around ageism and momentum to build robust aging services among an aging nation.

As a community we celebrate the tradition of honoring and preserving local landmarks such as the ear of corn water tower and most importantly the efforts of both public and private sectors to embrace the Listen, Learn and Act initiative to promote community inclusion.

As a AAA, we look forward to celebrating in October, 40 years of service to the southeastern region of MN. SEMAAA's fall newsletter will look back at some of the great memories and a snapshot of the future!

As for me, personally, I was so happy to celebrate my Mom's 88<sup>th</sup> birthday with her. Pictured - Joanne with a special guest, "Frank the Bear," that rascal has popped up at several Zoom meetings and celebrations!

Finding Ways to Engage at Every Age,

*Laurie*  
Executive Director



## Partnership Highlight– Semcac

Semcac has senior and caregiver advocates in 4 counties. The Dodge and Steele County advocacy program is covered by Melissa Almer. The Fillmore and Houston County position is currently open, following the exit of Paige Martin-Stanley. The goal of the advocacy program is to help individuals access the appropriate resources and services to maintain independence, as well as provide support to caregivers.

Advocates assist individuals in completing paperwork to access county services such as waived services, SLMB, SNAP, and any benefit they may be eligible for. Additionally; advocates can assist clients in accessing Energy Assistance, telephone programs, home repair loans, and other programs which may fit their needs. Assistance can be provided in the home or in the office, based on the client's needs.

Melissa comes to Semcac after years of community work. Initially as a certified sign language interpreter; she has worked as a program consultant/advocate for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division of DHS. Melissa's education includes work in business communication and cross cultural communication. She is trained as a medical sign language interpreter and worked for two years with Metropolitan Medical Center and Hennepin County Medical Center.

When asked what she enjoys most about her position as an advocate, Melissa responded, "As an advocate, I have always had an interest in working with people who were elderly. I am drawn to help people who want assistance and will roll up my sleeves to get the job done. It gives me great satisfaction to use the skills honed over years of work experience to keep someone in their home or make the transition to assisted living or other services when it is needed."



Recently Melissa assisted a woman after the death of her husband. While her family was supportive to her emotional needs, they did not know where to start regarding finances and other government programs. The woman's husband had been her representative payee on her social security benefits due to her disability. When he died that payment stopped immediately and she was without income. Melissa and the consumer worked together to remove the representative payee from her account. Together they were able to get her the additional social security benefit due to her and she did not lose her housing in the process. They were also able to help the consumer obtain SNAP and SLMB benefits (food support and a Medicare Savings program).

Melissa's advocacy and determination in working together with the client and county staff really helped this individual get through a challenging time. Melissa and the individual continue to meet once or twice a month to go over paperwork. This helps assure stability in her benefits and overall living situation. This story is a great example of what advocates can do to guide people through tough times and help them access the services they need.

Although they may be a small crew, the SEMAAA finance team plays such a large role in SEMAAA's success. A huge thanks goes out to them for working with the COVID-19 relief dollars along with all of their daily duties. We took the time to ask 10 random questions with this most excellent group. Cheers to an outstanding team!

### **10 Random Questions – SEMAAA's Finance Team**

1. **How Many years of experience do you have in the nonprofit and/or finance world?** 17, 34, 38 for a collective total of 89.
2. **What is your preferred way to make an egg?** Hard boiled & Scrambled X 2
3. **What do you like most about working with SEMAAA grantees?**  
Seeing the difference they make in the lives of seniors; Providing technical assistance; All of the interesting personalities.
4. **If you were to purchase a classic car, what would it be?**  
Ford Mustang, Corvette and don't know – not a car person.
5. **Describe the SEMAAA Finance team in 5 words or less:**  
Helpful, supportive, fun, dedicated & smart! The department with little free time; Hard working & quick thinking.
6. **What is your favorite way to spend your free time?**  
Outside doing anything; Reading; Feet in the pool, dog in lap.
7. **What makes you happy about working with services that benefit older adults?** We are making a difference; so gratifying; knowing what I can look forward to when I get "older".
8. **What is your favorite movie or Book?**  
It's a wonderful life; Shrek; Grease
9. **Do you prefer to watch an animated movie or a documentary?**  
Animated flick x 2 and documentary for sure x1
10. **What is your dream job?**  
Playing in the pit orchestra at Chanhassen; Run a Doggie Daycare; Grant Manager at SEMAAA (of course)!



Finance Team from left:  
Patti Schad, Kim Voth, Laurie Marreel

## Notice

### Request for Public Review and Comment on Proposal for Title III Cost Sharing, Program Development & Coordination Funding

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In accordance with the Older Americans Act, the Southeastern Minnesota Area Agency on Aging (SEMAAA) is allowed to submit a proposal to the Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA) to use Title III funds for the purpose of providing supportive health promotion, and caregiver support services, and will employ a cost sharing strategy for allowable services to expand potential of Title III funding to support older individuals and their families in the southeastern 11 county region of Minnesota. The Area Agency on Aging is required to solicit the views of older individuals, providers, and other stakeholders on the implementation of its cost sharing strategy for review and comment. SEMAAA is proposing to use approximately \$97,000 in Title III E – National Family Caregiver Support funds to pay for caregiver activities/services, \$275,000 in Title III-B funds to pay for supportive services, and \$45,000 in Title III-D funds to pay for health promotion/disease prevention programs in 2022 which are subject to cost sharing requirements.

SEMAAA is allowed to submit a proposal to the MN Board on Aging (MBA) to transfer Title III-B (Supportive Services) funds to the Area Plan Administration for Program Development and Coordination Activities that will have an impact on enhanced services for older adults in southeastern MN. The Area Agency on Aging is required to make the details of such proposals available to the general public for review and comment. SEMAAA is proposing to use \$116,270 in Title II-B funds to support Program Development and Coordination Activities during 2022 as a cost of Area Plan Administration. The MBA policy allows up to 25% of these funds to be used for his purpose. The proposed amount represents 25% of the SEMAAA's new Title III-B direct service allotment.

**Virtual Public Hearing** – Individuals may also give oral testimony at the Public Hearing to be held via Zoom on July 30, at 11:00am. Send RSVP to [laurie@semaaa.org](mailto:laurie@semaaa.org) by July 28, 2021, to register your attendance and, if desired, your intent to speak at the hearing.

**Written Comments** – Written comments are encouraged and will be accepted until July 30, 2021. Please send written comments via email to [laurie@semaaa.org](mailto:laurie@semaaa.org) or by mail to:

SEMAAA  
Attn: Laurie Brownell  
2720 Superior Drive NW, Suite 102  
Rochester, MN 55904

# Medicare Preventative Benefits

Medicare Part B covers many preventive services. These are the services that you receive to prevent illness and keep you healthy. With Original Medicare, you pay nothing when you see a provider who accepts Medicare. With a Medicare Advantage plan, you must see an in-network provider for the services that are covered with zero cost sharing. In most cases, plans are required to cover your care without charging deductibles, co-payments, or coinsurance.

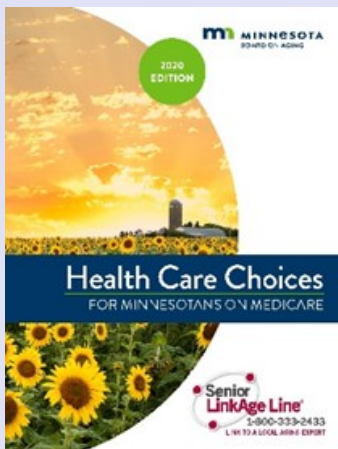
The Welcome to Medicare preventive visit is a one-time appointment you can choose to receive during the first 12 months of your Part B enrollment. This is not a head to toe physical, but an attempt to create a personalized prevention plan.

The Annual Wellness Visit is a yearly appointment with your primary care provider to create or update a personalized prevention plan, which may help prevent illness based on your current health and risk factors.

Other Preventative Services include vaccinations and immunizations such as flu shots, pneumonia, hepatitis B and COVID-19 vaccinations. The tetanus shot is covered if you have an incident and need the added protection, and the booster shot is generally covered by Part D.

Screening tests and labs for many services are also covered by Medicare Part B. These conditions include Hepatitis C, Diabetes, Glaucoma, Depression, Cardiovascular Disease and more.

Under certain circumstances, you may be charged for services you receive related to your preventive services. For example, during the preventive care visit, your provider discovers and needs to investigate or treat a new or existing problem. This type of care becomes diagnostic, meaning you are being treated for certain symptoms or risk factors. You could also be charged for an office visit if you meet with your provider before or after receiving your preventive care.



For more information, please contact the

***Senior LinkAge Line® at 1-800-333-2433.***

The Health Care Choices for Minnesotans on Medicare booklet also has excellent information on these services. That booklet can be viewed online at [www.mnhealthcarechoices.com](http://www.mnhealthcarechoices.com)



SENIOR LINKAGE LINE



## Planning and Paying for Long-Term Care

Join us on Thursday July 15th from 6-7:30 PM

Long-term care is the personal care and household help you need as you grow older or have a chronic illness or disability. Medicare and your health insurance do not pay for most of long-term care. This presentation will provide you with information on why and how to plan and pay for your future long-term care needs.

[Eventbrite Registration Link](#)

## HEALTHY, POSTMENOPAUSAL WOMEN NEEDED FOR AGING RESEARCH

Mayo Clinic is seeking healthy women volunteers, ages 70 and older, to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to learn if new study medications can help reduce aging cell abundance and to study their effects in people.

Additionally, we are testing whether intermittent treatment with these medications reduces markers of biological age and improves bone health and potentially the risk of osteoporosis.

### YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IF:

- You are at least 70 years old, a female, and healthy.

Study participation will last for about 5 months and includes 8 visits. We will ask you to complete blood draws, bone density testing, questionnaires, and other tests to determine eligibility. Remuneration will be offered.

For more information, contact a member of the study team at 507-538-6023 or by email:

[volkman.tammie@mayo.edu](mailto:volkman.tammie@mayo.edu)





# PEARLS Program to Encourage Active Rewarding Lives

PEARLS Coaches are available to work with you one-on-one to help you address your depressive symptoms and create a plan to become more engaged with family, friends and activities you enjoy. Sessions can be held over the phone, on a computer or in person. Contact any of these agencies to get connected and learn more about this evidence-based program.

**Elder Network– 507-285-5272**  
**Family Service Rochester– 507-287-2010**  
**WellConnect– [www.wellconnectsemn.org](http://www.wellconnectsemn.org)**

## They depend on you.... Give yourself the tools to succeed.



## Powerful Tools for Caregivers

This 6-week workshop will help anyone caring for an older friend or a relative, whether it's at home, in a nursing home or across the country. Donations are appreciated. Powerful Tools for Caregiving is an evidence-based program that helps you develop a wealth of tools to:

- reduce stress
- change negative self-talk
- communicate more effectively
- recognize the messages in emotions

**Tuesday's July 20th– August 24th**

10-11:30am

Elder Network office

1130 1/2 7th St NW Suite 205, Rochester

Please RSVP by July 13th as class size is limited.

Transportation and respite care is available with advanced notice.

For more information, call

**507-285-5272**







MINNESOTANS  
AGES 60-PLUS:

We invite you  
to an interview

Participants will receive a  
**\$50 gift card**  
to Target or Walmart.

### Age-Friendly Minnesota wants your input!

We invite you to share your experiences to help inform Age-Friendly Minnesota, a collaborative, statewide effort to make our systems and communities work better for older residents.

**These confidential phone interviews last 45-60 minutes.** We are especially interested in older adults who are people of color, Indigenous, immigrants, refugees, lower-income, rural, LGBT, veterans, have disabilities, or represent other groups often underrepresented.

To participate, call  
**612-460-7670**  
for inquiries and scheduling.

Or call **612-461-8638**  
directly to be interviewed.

**Please call during the  
following times:**

Mon.-Fri: regular business hours  
Mon., Tues., Wed.: 5-7pm  
Saturday: 12-4pm

Interviews can be conducted in  
English, Spanish, Somali, and Hmong.

Interviews end on July 15, 2021

Age Friendly efforts continue  
across the state and in SE MN.  
Read the newly released  
Age-Friendly Olmsted County  
Community Assessment  
Findings Report.



## Dementia Friendly Spotlight



SE MN has many communities, organizations and partnerships working on creating or renewing programming that supports individuals with dementia and their caregivers. While the pandemic has slowed some of these efforts they are gaining momentum once again and communities are re-energized and ready to launch many of these great programs. Here are a few highlights and opportunities for this year.

### Highlights from SE MN

**Resounding Voices Choir**— Recruitment has begun for the summer practice sessions. Here's what choir member Joe Lobl had to say about his experience. "I have enjoyed singing in Resounding Voices as a volunteer for the past three years. It is a joy singing together and getting to know each other better during our social time and weekly sharing. We have also had a lot of fun performing concerts at the end of each session, which always include singalongs with the audience. I am glad to have made new friends and also given back to the community with our concerts by participating in Resounding Voices!" If you'd like to get involved email Karen Rorie to learn more: [karen@resoundingvoices.org](mailto:karen@resoundingvoices.org). Check out their virtual [Spring concert](#).

**Mayo Clinic Conference on Brain Health & Dementia-A Brighter Path Forward** Formerly called "Meeting of the Minds", this conference will be held at the Mayo Civic Center on October 29th. Event is free thanks to support from the Alzheimer's Association and AARP and will be in-person with a live stream option for those unable to attend. [Registration link](#).

**The Remember Project Dementia Awareness Tour**—hosted in Pine Island by SEMAAA was a great success! Over 320 people joined our local team, or joined a statewide professional development event. Participants viewed at least one of the three theatrical videos via Zoom and provided feedback that they increased their understanding of dementia and joined in conversation about how we can locally help families living with dementia live their best lives. About 100 of the individuals attending an event live in the Pine Island or surrounding area; over 250 people were from the 11 county service area in Southeastern Minnesota served by SEMAAA. We ARE a more dementia-friendly community because of this opportunity.

Watch for more details regarding what we learned from The Remember Project and how you can join your friends and neighbors to support all community care partners in the Pine Island area. A big thank you to Olmsted Medical Center and the Pine Island Fire Department Relief Association as well as the Zone 5 Lions, Rod Steele-Edina Realty, Pat and Jerry Johnson, and several local individuals who financially supported this effort! Also thank you to the MN State Arts Board and Trellis for helping fund this initiative.

## **Farewell Jen, You will be missed!**

Jen Mclaughlin has been a vibrant part of SEMAAA since 2012 with most of that time being with the Return to Community Team. Her laughter, positivity, unique catch phrases and powerful fun-loving spirit have shined and left their mark on our SEMAAA family.



We are so excited that Jen will continue to collaborate with the RTC team and others in her new role of supporting older adults and their families in Fillmore, Mower, Dodge and parts of Olmsted county. Jen will continue to use her exceptional advocacy skills and maintain a strong connection to SEMAAA and the rest of the aging network in our area. We wish you all the best!

## **Staff & Board Wish Karen All the Best in her Retirement!**



Karen Toussel joined the SEMAAA team as our Administrative Assistant in 1997 and almost 24 years later she is ready to retire & travel the world by RV.

We asked Karen what she will miss most about SEMAAA? Her response: "Definitely the people – all the enjoyable moments with coworkers and the friendships I have developed over the years."

What are you looking forward to most in retirement? "Traveling with my husband Michael and my dog Bella." Karen will be retiring August 6th and has trips planned to Florida and South Dakota.

SEMAAA board and staff are grateful for your decades of support and dedication to aging services. We will sure miss your great sense of humor, wonderful vacation pictures and all of the fun stories that went with them!

Send Karen a note, give her a call or stop by to wish her well in her retirement.

[karen@semaaa.org](mailto:karen@semaaa.org)

## SLL Success Story

*“A SEMAAA team member had a caregiver (Greg) call about his mother who has cognitive impairment, as he had recently become her emergency guardian. Greg was totally confused as to how her insurance worked, what Medicare covered, what part D was, and what she had for active coverage.*

*With proof of guardianship, the staff person contacted SHIP to find out the plan details, and they helped educate Greg on the parts of Medicare. They also talked about how the coverage works, his intention of moving her to memory care and they took care of the verification code process. They also helped him search MNHelp.info for potential placement options, and they talked about senior moving assistance programs to help with downsizing. Greg's mother has a large home with a lot to get rid of and he was totally overwhelmed with how to manage that process.*

*Greg was so relieved to learn about the Senior LinkAge Line and all the available resources. He was very thankful for the assistance SLL gave him.”*



SLL team member Tambi Lokken

### **2021 SEMAAA BOARD**

Jenelle Cummings—Chair, Mower  
Jean Eaton—Vice Chair, Freeborn  
Brad Lohrbach—Treasurer, Dodge  
Mike Hancock—Secretary, Member at Large  
Marti Riley—Olmsted  
Lloyd Swalve—Fillmore  
Dave Vandergon—Goodhue  
Karen Hanson—Winona  
Jim Hanesworth—Houston  
Marie Hlava—Member at Large  
Dr. Dwight Jennings—Member at Large  
Margaret Cook—Member at Large  
Rita Fox—Wabasha  
Valerie Knutson—Steele

### **Get on board!**

SEMAAA is currently accepting applications for a new board member for Rice County.

Please contact Laurie Brownell for an application:

[laurie@semaaa.org](mailto:laurie@semaaa.org)

### **2021 SEMAAA STAFF**

- **Laurie Brownell** – Executive Director
- **Karen Toussel** – Administrative Assistant
- **Kim Voth** – Grant Manager/Financial Officer
- **Laurie Marreel** – Grants Administrator
- **Patti Schad** – Finance Assistant
- **Jacob Flint**– Data/Administrative Assistant
- **Annie Avery** – Senior LinkAge Line® Coordinator
- **Jerry Roberts** – Senior LinkAge Line® Specialist
- **Starla Inman** – Senior LinkAge Line® Specialist
- **Chad Wojchik** – Senior LinkAge Line® Specialist
- **Jone Trapp** – Senior LinkAge Line® Specialist
- **Tambi Lokken** – Senior LinkAge Line® Specialist
- **Laurie Magnus** – Senior LinkAge Line® Specialist
- **Dan Conway** – Lead Eldercare Development Program
- **Chersten Keillor** – Eldercare Development Program
- **Lori Wacek** – Community Living Coordinator
- **Jen McLaughlin** – Community Living Case Aide
- **Emily Krowiorz** – Community Living Specialist
- **Sarah Benson** – Community Living Specialist
- **Chris Johnson** – Community Living Specialist
- **Sara Kohrs** – Community Living Specialist
- **Jay Hall** – Community Living Specialist
- **Camille Bruns** – Preadmission Screening Specialist
- **Pam Speltz** – Preadmission Screening Specialist
- **Katie Shimek** – Preadmission Screening Specialist
- **Nicole Cummings** – Preadmission Screening Specialist