



Minnesota Association of Senior Nutrition Services

March 7, 2023

To Whom it May Concern,

On behalf of the members of the Minnesota Association of Senior Nutrition Services, we write in **support of the Meals for Seniors legislation requesting \$20 million this biennium to meet the minimum nutritional needs for older adults in our state.**

Members of our association are an essential part of the existing system for providing community-based services and support to older adults in Minnesota. Members are feeling the challenge of meeting increasing needs with dwindling resources. We provide consistent nutrition to homebound elderly, who otherwise could not have it. The meals address the general hunger of the frail and elderly in our neighborhoods, often preventing early admission to a nursing facility and hospital readmissions.

For homebound older adults, meal delivery provides a safety check. When we are unable to reach a client, a welfare check is conducted by the local police department.

In 2021, the Minnesota nutrition providers served 3.4 million meals to 53,659 older adults. Of those older adults, 69% were homebound older adults, 23% were 85+ years old, 45% were living alone, 7% were minority, and 62% were under 200% of the Poverty Level.

We support the legislation that prioritizes a larger and more substantial investment in our nutrition services for older adults in our state. For more than 50 years, Minnesota nutrition providers have been essential to addressing hunger, malnutrition, and advancing the overall health and well-being of thousands of older adults in our state. We want to draw attention to the urgency for increased funding and the immediate challenges of local senior nutrition programs and older adults, a population among the greatest impacted by the pandemic and high inflation.

Many of the programs served more home-delivered meal clients than before the pandemic and are facing a growing waiting list for services. For local programs, stagnant funding and rising demand, coupled with higher food and gas prices, among other factors, have made it difficult to reach those in need of services or to sustain the current service. These factors are reflected in the decline of service numbers and clients served in 2022.

Minnesota nutrition providers are on the frontline combating the risk of malnutrition for our older adults and we urgently need your support for the basic need of food.

Respectfully submitted,

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