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Goals, Activities and Accomplishments of the On-Site Services Coordination Projects:

A Report to the Minnesota Legislature

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2000 Minn. Laws Chap. 488
Art. 9 Sec. 14 Subd. 8

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Minn. Stat. 256.9731 Subd. 8 cycle.

I. Cost to Prepare the Report

Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 3.197 requires that the cost of preparing a report to legislature be reported at its beginning. Approximately \$350 in staff salaries was spent to prepare this report.

II. Introduction

This report is required by Minnesota Statute 256.9731, Subdivision 8:

Report. The commissioner shall collect data on a quarterly basis on the number of persons served and other factors relating to the goals, activities, and accomplishments of the projects. The commissioner shall provide this data in summary form to the legislature in annual reports, due January 1, 2001, and each January 1 thereafter. The annual reports must also include recommendations based on project findings.

III. Background

The state has provided funding for on-site service coordinators through congregate housing services projects to help low-income older persons who live in subsidized housing receive services they need to maintain maximum independence. The coordinator assists tenants who request help by working with providers to ensure the various components of a service plan remain connected. Coordinators follow up, support and advocate as necessary. These coordination services have only been available to residents of congregate, subsidized settings with common areas for activities and meals. This limited the number of low-income older persons who could be helped.

In 1999, the Department of Human Service convened the Housing Innovations Work Group to look at new and more efficient ways of serving the growing population of older persons in their communities and towns. This work group consisted of representatives of counties, Seniors' Agenda for Independent Living (SAIL) projects, private nonprofit organizations, and the various state agencies and boards involved in housing, health, and human services. The group worked together to identify regulatory and other barriers to expanding and developing new, affordable "housing with services" models in communities. The group identified the location limits in the congregate housing service program as one of these barriers.

In the 2000 legislative session, the Legislature expanded the scope of the congregate housing services program to permit on-site coordinators to also provide services to older persons who live in apartments, both subsidized and market rate, and single-family residences in neighborhoods with existing senior housing or high percentages of older persons. This change will increase the number of older persons who can be supported in their own homes, allowing them to remain independent and to delay or prevent placement in a nursing facility.

IV. Report

In fiscal years 2001 and 2002 the on-site coordination services projects grant funds (\$60,000 is appropriated for each year of the biennium) are being used in coordination with a Bush Foundation grant of approximately \$1,000,000 to demonstrate new, affordable housing with supportive services models. The Housing Innovations Work Group proposed cost effective, "virtual" assisted living projects. "Virtual" assisted living delivers up to 24 hour supervision and oversight, supportive services, individualized home care aide tasks, and individualized home management tasks in an older person's own home from a base in the community that may be a nursing facility, an existing housing with services site, or a community center. "Virtual" assisted living may be provided in a single apartment building, several apartment buildings, single family residences, and/or any cost effective combination of settings. Assisted living has traditionally provided services in a more limited set of residential settings.

The projects will also include new service models for rural, immigrant, minority, or American Indian communities and may also include the conversion of an existing nursing facility or other senior building into affordable housing with services program.

The Bush Foundation grant, which was awarded to the Department of Human Services in July 2000, will be used in at least six projects located in both rural and urban areas. The successful applicants for the project funds will demonstrate community collaborations with other volunteer supported services funded by Title III of the Older Americans Act, the county or counties the project will serve, and other collaborative efforts such as Seniors Agenda for Independent Living (SAIL) projects in their area. The Department of Human Services Division of Aging and Adult Services is providing technical assistance in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Health and the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency.

The projects that are selected will document their experiences so that their successes can be replicated and they will participate in a conference on affordable housing with services at the end of the grant period.

The request for project proposals was published August 28, 2000. Applications for consideration were due December 1, 2000. Projects will be selected for contract negotiations by January 1, 2001.

The projects will report on their progress and the number of persons they serve quarterly. In addition Robert and Rosalie Kane of the University of Minnesota will evaluate the projects at the end of the first and second grant years.

V. Recommendations

The commissioner recommends continued funding to demonstrate the new models, collect information for further improvements in the current system, and to identify opportunities to more efficiently serve low-income, older Minnesotans.