

DHS welcomes state's ranking as healthiest state for seniors

Written by
Friday, 07 June 2013 11:09

A report released this week recognizes the direction Minnesota has moved over many years to support older citizens' access to health care services and long-term services and supports, Human Services Commissioner Lucinda Jesson said.

The ranking of Minnesota as the healthiest state for seniors also paves for the way for improvements for seniors just enacted by the 2013 Legislature, she said.

"Minnesota has long been a national leader in improving outcomes for older people and offering them opportunities to remain at home and in their communities as they age," Jesson said of the United Health Foundation's America's Health Rankings® Senior Report for 2013. "Our newest initiative, Reform 2020, is on track to continue this strong tradition by providing even better service and more opportunities to keep seniors healthy and active."

Reform 2020 is the state's bipartisan initiative to transform the state's public health care programs to better meet the challenges of rising health care costs and a growing aging population while still providing people the services they need to lead fulfilling lives. The initiative includes strategies for better service design, care coordination and integration and ways to make it easier for people to understand and access services and supports."

The Reform 2020 initiative includes such features as more help for people to return to their homes after nursing home stays, a report card to provide information to consumers on long-term services and supports and a critical access study to determine where there are gaps in home and community-based services. Also approved were additional supports for in-home services that help seniors remain in their communities.

Jesson noted that the United Health Foundation's report follows the 2011 report by AARP, the Commonwealth Fund and the Scan Foundation that found Minnesota leads the nation in long-term care for older adults and people with disabilities. That report found that as many as 200,000 people could be kept out of nursing homes each year if other states emulated Minnesota's offerings of long-term care information and home-care options.

More information about Reform 2020 is available on the DHS website.