



January 19, 2012

Dr. Peterson and Members of the N.A.P.A. Advisory Council:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Framework for the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease. The Minnesota Board on Aging believes the work of the N.A.P.A. Council presents a once in a lifetime opportunity to build a comprehensive national plan to address Alzheimer's disease which has such a devastating impact on individuals with the disease and their families as well as on health and community care systems throughout the country.

Minnesota has an extensive history of work in Alzheimer's disease ranging from the work of such notable researchers as Dr. Ronald Peterson, Director of the Mayo Alzheimer's Disease Research Center to the Minnesota legislatively mandated Alzheimer's Disease Working Group, which recently developed a statewide plan to address Alzheimer's disease. The Minnesota legislature has provided extensive funding to explore innovative models to provide community supports and services to people with Alzheimer's disease and their family caregivers through Community Service/Service Development funding in conjunction with Alzheimer's Disease Support Services Program (A.D.S.S.P.) funding through the U.S. Administration on Aging.

The Minnesota Board on Aging recommends that the N.A.P.A. Council look at the accomplishments of A.D.S.S.P. for guidance in the development of the national plan. A.D.S.S.P. has provided grants to states to build core expertise in the area of Alzheimer's disease at the state and local level and within both community and health care systems. Over the last twelve years, Minnesota has gratefully used this resource to embed Alzheimer's capability within public resources such as the statewide Senior Linkage Line® and the Minnesota Long Term Care Assessment process. The development of an early identification initiative with partnering clinics and hospitals and engage in one of the first translations of the evidence-based New York University Caregiver Intervention that has a documented impact on the delay in nursing home placement by persons with Alzheimer's disease.

We urge you to call for restoration of A.D.S.S.P. funding that was reduced by 65% for 2012. It does not make sense to so severely reduce a program that exemplifies so many of the objectives of N.A.P.A. until a program that can more effectively achieve these objectives is ready to go. We encourage you to call for an analysis of the lessons learned from A.D.S.S.P. to inform the design of a new program that builds upon its achievements. Finally, we urge you to call for adequate federal funding to meet the new program objectives. N.A.P.A. provides a unique opportunity to take the best of what we've learned and embed it within community and health care systems to provide the support and education needed anywhere people with Alzheimer's and their caregivers live while it also works towards the cure we all hope for.

The Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA) is the gateway to services for Minnesota seniors and their families. MBA administers funds from the Older Americans Act that provides a spectrum of services to seniors, including Senior LinkAge Line®, Insurance Counseling and more. Established in 1956, the MBA is one of the pioneers in the field of aging policy, information and assistance. It works closely with its Area Agencies on Aging, which are located throughout the state, to provide services that seniors need. The Minnesota Board on Aging's 25 members are appointed by the governor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J Wood".

Jean K. Wood  
Executive Director