Minnesota Board on Aging awards grants to support people with Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia

November 4, 2021

Just in time for National Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Month, 11 Minnesota organizations will be able to work to increase awareness of Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias, promote early diagnosis and connect caregivers to resources, thanks to grants from the Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA).

The MBA is granting a total of $729,172.

“Dementia is not a normal part of aging,” said Susan Mezzenga, chair of the Minnesota Board on Aging. “But the number of those with Alzheimer’s and other types of dementia is on the rise. Increasing awareness so people get diagnosed earlier is key.”

Nearly 100,000 Minnesotans over age 65 have Alzheimer’s disease. That number is projected to increase to 120,000 by 2025. Alzheimer’s poses an array of challenges — emotional, medical, financial and social — to family members of those with the disease. Seventy percent of people with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias are cared for in their homes, with 75% of that care given by family, friends and neighbors.

The MBA Dementia Grant recipients for State Fiscal Year 2022 are:

- **SEWA-AIFW, Inc.**, Minneapolis, $74,562, to work in the South Asian community in the Twin Cities metro area to increase awareness, promote early identification and connect caregiving family, friends and neighbors.
- **Lao Advancement Organization of America, Inc.**, Minneapolis, $42,615, to increase the knowledge and ability of Lao community members to recognize dementia and access resources; and, for caregivers to maintain their own health and wellbeing while caring for a person living with dementia.
- **Amherst H. Wilder Foundation**, St. Paul, $43,955, to increase cognitive testing and connect family and friend caregivers to meaningful education, resources, and additional services.
- **Action for East African People**, Bloomington, $97,408, to provide dementia services to immigrant communities, increasing awareness and promoting early identification.
- **Family Pathways, North Branch**, $43,666, to increase community and individual awareness while connecting caregivers and families of persons living with a dementia to education and resources. They will offer in-person and virtual dementia-friends sessions, lunch and learn sessions and more.
- **Central Minnesota Dementia Community Action Network**, Sauk Rapids, $150,000, to establish a community-based Dementia Resource Center (DRC), as stated in the BOLD Infrastructure for Alzheimer’s Act of Congress that directs the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to “establish Alzheimer’s and related dementias public health centers of excellence.”
- Northwoods Caregivers, Bemidji, $115,436, for Northwoods Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers Program (NC) to leverage work from previous dementia grants to support outreach for Native Americans and LGBTQ+. It will build upon a growing relationship with Red Lake, White Earth, Leech Lake and Bois Forte nations, to offer dementia outreach, education and caregiver support to previously underserved and high-risk communities.

- Winona Friendship Center, Winona, $22,922, to continue to work toward becoming a Dementia-Friendly Community. They will work to address known gaps, while increasing awareness within the Winona community.

- North East Seniors for Better Living, St. Paul, $14,927, to distribute educational literature about dementia in their community, provide an education series as well as providing individual personal support to persons living with dementia and their caregivers.

- Steele County Historical Society, Owatonna, $15,081, to provide education, services and resources for persons living with dementia and their caregivers to increase awareness and connect family, friends and neighbors to supports and meaningful activities. Their History Partners Memory Cafe program will provide socialization in a safe environment through companionship while preventing isolation.

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