



# STATE OF MINNESOTA

## Office of Governor Mark Dayton

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

November 30, 2017

Mr. Will Philips  
Minnesota State Director  
AARP  
30 E 7th St #1200  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Mr. Philips:

As our State's largest organization for seniors, I am writing to request your leadership to convene a time-limited work group to provide guidance on steps the state should take to improve the health and safety of Minnesota seniors who are cared for in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. I am deeply disturbed by the recent reports of maltreatment, neglect, and abuse taking place in these businesses that families have entrusted for the care of their loved ones. I am committed to proposing legislation next year based on your recommendations, so we can improve oversight of senior care and strengthen the rights of residents and families.

I believe that the perspectives of seniors and families should be at the center of the discussion, as we consider changes to our current system. That is why I am asking AARP to convene and lead this work group to provide recommendations to ensure that Minnesota laws protect our seniors. I ask that you also engage the expertise of other consumer-focused senior organizations in the work group process, including Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid, the Alzheimer's Association of Minnesota, the Elder Justice Center, and Elder Voice Family Advocates. While the challenges we face are far-reaching, it would be helpful to receive recommendations that focus on the needs of seniors who are cared for in nursing home and assisted living settings, including:

- **Protecting the rights of residents and families and connect them to resources;**
  - Review the current state and federal regulatory, licensing, compliance, and enforcement requirements, and recommend changes if these requirements are insufficient to deter potential abuse and protect seniors and families from retaliation from providers.
  - Clarify and strengthen the statutory definitions of memory care, assisted living, and housing with services so consumers and families can make informed decisions on proper placement for seniors.
  - Recommend changes to current law to ensure that family members are informed about how to report suspected abuse and neglect, including the Minnesota Vulnerable Adults Reporting Center and the Ombudsman for Long Term Care.

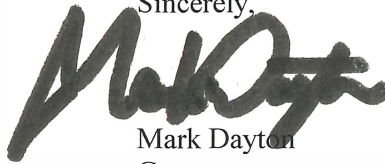
- **Improving communication with family members and law enforcement about allegations of abuse.**
  - Recommend changes to current law to remove barriers and improve communication with family members when there is alleged abuse, including the complaints and investigations processes within the Office of Health Facility Complaints and self-reports from providers.
  - Recommend changes to current law ensure proper reporting to law enforcement about potential abuse.

The Minnesota Legislature will reconvene on February 20, 2018. Thus, it would be helpful, if you could provide your recommendations by Friday, January 26, 2018.

Thank you in advance for your leadership in this effort. If you have any questions regarding my request, please contact either me, at 651-201-3437, or Merone Melekin, at 651-201-3420.

My best regards.

Sincerely,



Mark Dayton  
Governor

Cc: Ron Elwood, Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid  
Sue Spalding, Alzheimer's Association-Minnesota, North Dakota Chapter  
Kristine Sundberg, Elder Voice Family Advocates  
Amanda Vickstrom, Minnesota Elder Justice Center