



THE MISSION:

Metro Meals on Wheels with our program partners leads the effort to ensure that individuals in our community receive nutritious meals and the human connection they need to enable them to live independently.

Health Care and Human Services Finance Division

February 25, 2010
MMOW Testimony Handout
Patrick Rowan
Executive Director

Metro Meals on Wheels is an association of 40 MOW providers in the Twin Cities area. Member programs deliver meals to over 4,000 clients each weekday, utilizing the generosity of more than 14,000 volunteers each year and leveraging public dollars with corporate, volunteer, individual, and community support to ensure that seniors and people living with disabilities can remain living healthy and independently in their own homes. Remaining in their own homes – for even six months- can save families and the State of Minnesota thousands of dollars by avoiding the cost of a nursing home. The daily check-in provided by a MOW volunteers gives the client and their families the peace of mind that somebody is looking out for them.

The demand for home delivered meals is increasing at the same time the cost to provide this valuable service continues to rise. We are at the cusp of the age wave and MOW is on the front line. Programs have an aging volunteer force, many of whom will be clients themselves soon.

By 2050 there will be twice as many people over the age of 65 in MN. It is projected that there will be 173% increase in the number of people over the age of 85. This new generation of seniors will be more diverse and require a greater variety of services and choice. These factors will add pressure to organizations like MOW that that provide services to the elderly.

This is the time to invest in infrastructure and innovation not cut support for programs that are cost effective and save the state critical funds. The governor's proposed budget may save a couple of dollars today, but will leave the state reeling in the future.

MMOW, with our program partners, is working to diversify funding sources, establish new delivery and administrative models, increase and diversify our volunteer base, and collaborate with other services to be more effective, efficient and sustainable.

This hasn't been easy. The governor's proposed budget cuts of 2.5% for waived services will have a significant effect on programs' ability to provide quality service. As you know, these cuts come on top of 2.58% cuts last year and depend on \$387 million in FMAP funding that is unlikely to come before the MN legislature will have to pass a budget. HHS alone cannot absorb another \$387 in cuts or many of the poorest and most vulnerable people in our communities will go without vital services.

MMOW supports a balanced approach to meeting the demands of the current budget deficit. Cuts that focus primarily on services to the elderly, sick and poor will cost the state in the long run. Other aspects of state funding need to help shoulder the burden and revenue generation must be part of the equation.

Metro Meals on Wheels

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