

Domain 7: Community Support and Health Services

Access to homecare services, clinics, and programs to promote wellness and active aging; availability of services throughout the community, including businesses, designed to promote good health and independence.

Good mental and physical health are critical to quality of life. A community that provides access to excellent healthcare services, healthy food options, needed supports throughout life, and services that promote and support healthy behaviors will contribute to residents' well-being. Isolation, dementia, mental health, and language barriers all should be considered when taking stock of community support and health services. Any one of these is a potential threat to well-being. Unfortunately, these issues can work together to take a toll on overall health.

Maple Grove is fortunate to have ready access to high-quality care and services. The city is home to Maple Grove Hospital as well as numerous clinics, including specialty care services that complement the hospital's services. Care continues outside of the hospital with community paramedics, and police and fire departments that are connected to residents through outreach and programs designed to help older adults. Specialty businesses also help people who need extra assistance with in-home care, home maintenance and repairs, meals, support groups and fitness opportunities.

However, lack of awareness of available services and how to access them was a common theme in the assessment. Supportive services can't help if people don't know about or have the capacity to access them. Understanding the breadth and scope of services available, and having those resources available to residents when they need them most, is necessary to good community health.

What We Heard

Community Services

- There is a reported lack of services available for yard work and light household chores—changing high light bulbs, minor repairs, etc. There is a need for affordable “handy man” type services or other ways to help older adults living in their own homes meet such needs. There is desire for neighbor-to-neighbor support, but people also need more information about trustworthy, affordable service providers who could help with such tasks.
- Residents want more and better delivery services:
 - From grocery stores, restaurants, etc. In some cases existing services have limitations (e.g., Cub will only deliver store-brand items and usually not things that are on sale).
 - A pharmacy service that delivers and sets up medications.
- Specific ideas included:
 - A Bone Builders group (an evidence-based exercise program for older women).
 - More in-store services or assistance, such as Byerly's packing your groceries.
 - More older adult deals or discounts—e.g., cheaper movie tickets on certain days.

- The police department is interested in starting TRIAD, a national program that connects law enforcement, older adults and community organizations to reduce victimization of older adults and improve service delivery to older people.
- The fire department offers a free public service of installing smoke detectors in people's homes. They often observe older adults living alone who have no one to help them with relatively minor tasks, and therefore ask the firefighters to assist them with some of these tasks while they are in the home to install the smoke alarms.
- Russian-speaking residents regularly leave the community to gather with others of Russian descent at adult day centers in other suburbs. Those centers help people grocery shop, go to the bank, and provide translation and other assistance.

Health Services

- Residents appreciate the proximity and quality of health care services in Maple Grove.
- *General concerns:*
 - There is a need/desire for geriatricians or general practitioners with special interest in/knowledge of older adults.
 - The costs of medications are very high and can be difficult to manage.
- *Health literacy:* People need help navigating all aspects of the healthcare system, which can be very complex.
 - There is some lack of understanding of the types of care available at Maple Grove Hospital because it is a community hospital and not a trauma center.
 - People want more preventative health care rather than just sick care.
 - The North Memorial community paramedic program is becoming a force in the realm of health literacy by helping people connect to the resources they actually need rather than calling on emergency services like 9-1-1 for help. For older adults, community paramedics can help facilitate solutions to problems like moving a washing machine from the basement to the main floor, which could help an individual remain in their home for several more years.
- *Mental Health:*
 - There is a concerning lack of mental health support or services.
 - The police department has observed a need for greater mental health services among older adults and has invested additional resources to this issue.
- *Transportation:* Access and availability to healthcare is good, but getting there is the challenge.
 - Transportation services are limited and have long wait times.
 - For those who doctor out of the community and do not drive, it can be especially difficult to travel to those appointments.
- *Dementia:* This is a growing public health issue affecting families and service providers and communities.
 - The police department and community paramedic program regularly help people living with dementia.
 - ACT on Alzheimer's is an initiative that helps communities become "dementia friendly." Age-Friendly Maple Grove is interested in researching this as a future opportunity to be considered.
- *Isolation* is a major issue with serious implications for a person's physical and emotional well-being. This applies to caregivers, as well. People need help maintaining meaningful community and social connections. (As noted earlier, this assessment struggled to reach isolated older adults, but the importance of this issue was stressed by service providers who observe it.)

- *Nutrition:* Home care providers for older adults note that good nutrition is a challenge for older people. Their ability to cook healthy meals and prepare fresh food can be limited. There is a need for more affordable, healthy prepared meal solutions.
- *Falls:* The number of falls—and resulting emergency room visits—among older people is growing. Nationally, the number of fall-induced concussions and other brain injuries among older adults reached record levels in 2013. Falls are a frequent source of ER visits locally as well. There is a need for greater education about fall prevention among older adults and perhaps among medical professionals for thoroughly evaluating older people after falls.
- *Language barriers:* People who speak no or little English face extra challenges and frustrations. Translators are provided through insurance, but it can take 45-50 minutes to get an interpreter on the phone. Simply scheduling an appointment can take 90 minutes. There is also a need for interpretation of things like lab and test results. Significant gaps exist in this arena.

Action Items: Community Support and Health Services

7.1 Improve “health literacy” of older adults by helping them connect to appropriate services				
Key Activities		Potential Partner(s)	Indicators	Completion Date
a.	Learn landscape of resources currently available to help older adults coordinate care and services and navigate the health care system. Disseminate information learned to key stakeholders and use it to inform next steps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Memorial Community Paramedics • Maple Grove Hospital • Hospital social workers • Clinic connectors • Other local healthcare providers 	Report on current resources; includes recommendations.	Year 2
7.2 Provide resources that help older adults improve or maintain their health.				
Key Activities		Potential Partner(s)	Indicators	Completion Date
a.	Offer and/or facilitate access to evidence-based programs that improve older adults’ health by addressing fall prevention and management of chronic conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MG Senior Center • Maple Grove Hospital • Hennepin County Public Health • MAAA (Juniper project) 	Number of programs and participants. (Some programs have particular metrics to meet.)	Year 1
b.	Identify existing mental health resources for older adults (including local/in-person as well as tele-health services/programs) and raise awareness of these supports to ensure they are utilized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAMI • MN Departments of Health and Human Services • M Health 	Inventory of mental health resources and recommendations for how to expand their utilization.	Year 3

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAAA/Senior Linkage Line 		
7.3 Increase options for and availability of nutritious food and meals.				
<i>Key Activities</i>		<i>Potential Partner(s)</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>
a.	Identify new ways of providing older adults with healthful food and prepared meals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CROSS/Meals on Wheels • Grocers • Restaurants • Home health care providers • MG Farmers Market • U of MN Extension • North Memorial Community Paramedics 	Number of programs, classes and/or new services offered.	Year 3
7.4 Partner with the business community to address improvements in attracting and serving older customers.				
<i>Key Activities</i>		<i>Potential Partner(s)</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>
a.	[An audit of age-friendly services/promotions will be included in the audit detailed under Goal 1.1.]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MG Economic Development • Chamber of Commerce • Arbor Lakes Business Association 	Audit report created; results shared and used to inform strategy.	Year 1
b.	Engage local businesses in understanding economic potential of older customers and coordinate on the establishment of age-friendly business practices (Part of this will be included as part of retail audit in items 1.1 and 7.4.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local businesses • MG Economic Development • Arbor Lakes Business Association • Chamber of Commerce 	Number of information sheets distributed to businesses; number of businesses adopting age-friendly practices.	Year 1 and 2
7.5 Strengthen Maple Grove Police and Fire Departments' service of older residents.				
<i>Key Activities</i>		<i>Potential Partner(s)</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>
a.	Facilitate and help advance the efforts of Maple Grove's police and fire departments as well as North Memorial Ambulance as they work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MG Fire Department • MG Police Department 	Identified opportunities for collaboration, cross-pollination	Year 1

	to better understand and serve older adults in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Memorial Ambulance 	and mutual support.	
7.6 Enhance supports for people with dementia and their caregivers.				
<i>Key Activities</i>		<i>Potential Partner(s)</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>
a.	Identify quality resources for people with dementia and their caregivers and increase awareness of these resources to ensure they are being utilized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MG Senior Center • Home health care providers • Alzheimer’s Association • Senior Community Services • MAAA • Chamber of Commerce • Health care providers 	Documentation of compiled resources and estimated number of people reached.	Year 1
b.	Offer Dementia Friends training to community members, city staff, business leaders, and others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Center • Chamber of Commerce • Community groups (e.g., MG Lions, MG Rotary, others) • MG Library 	Number of classes and participants.	Year 2
c.	Investigate opportunities for developing program(s) for people with dementia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MG Senior Center • MG Parks and Rec Department • Assisted living or senior housing communities • Adult day centers • Other agencies 	Identified opportunities to create/expand dementia programming. Provide research and recommendations to Parks and Recreation.	Year 3

