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Minnesota Department of Human Services
Testimony for AoA OAA Reauthorization
February 25, 2010
Alexandria, Virginia

Good afternoon. My name is Loren Colman and I am assistant commissioner for the Continuing Care Administration of the Minnesota Department of Human Services. Earlier you heard from my colleague, Jean Wood, executive director of the Minnesota Board on Aging. While my state department is not the state unit on aging, the Board is administratively placed with us. One of our partnerships carries out what we call our Transform 2010 vision with both the Minnesota Department of Health and the Minnesota Board on Aging. Together, our vision is to make Minnesota a place where the baby boom generation and following generations can age gracefully, productively and well.

Of primary concern to us as we go forward is the sustainability of programs for aging people into the future. The Minnesota “age wave” will usher in a permanent shift in the age of our state’s population. By 2030, more than 20 percent of the state’s population will be over age 65. The number will double, rising to 1.3 million.

Our Transform 2010 project has identified five themes as we go forward:

- Redefining work and retirement, encouraging individuals to continue working in both paid and nonpaid roles.
- Supporting caregivers of all ages in order to slow the decline of family caregiving.
- Fostering communities for a lifetime, making them good places to grow up and grow old.
- Improving health and long-term care.
- Maximizing the use of technology.

As we have met and continue to meet these challenges, our partnership continues to support evidence-based work in supporting caregivers and in supporting our efforts to prevent falls. The Board and the Department are providing leadership around the efforts to develop communities for a lifetime. It has been very rewarding for our partnership to also work with the Area Agencies on Aging to enhance and carry out these programs. Work with Alzheimer's programs and maximizing the use of technology has combined to serve the needs of our aging and disabled citizens and helps them contribute as long as possible. Also contributing to these enhanced efforts is the Senior LinkAge Line, providing resources and referrals to Minnesotans with aging issues and questions, and our Minnesotahelp.info Web site, which does the same online.

I want to thank the Administration on Aging for its support in helping us carry out these programs in Minnesota and for the support from the Older Americans Act. As we go forward, I would like to emphasize that there is much pressure on Area Agencies on Aging to fund support services now and into the future.

I encourage you to consider Jean Wood's earlier message to combine services into one fund so the Board and Area Agencies on Aging can apply funds where they are most needed. And I again thank you for the support and the funds we have received to continue providing necessary services to aging Minnesotans.