

March is National Social Work Month and for more than 45 years, **Senior Outreach & Caregiver Services** programs have broken barriers for older adults and their caregivers in the Metro area, throughout the state, and beyond. With a Title III Older Americans Act grant as initial funding, the program began providing case management services to older adults in the communities of Mound, Minnetrista, and Spring Park.

Our licensed Social Workers use a **person-centered approach** to help older adults assess their strengths and connect them with a personalized combination of resources tailored to each person's needs, preferences, and finances. As circumstances change, Social Workers continue to act as advocates and adjust services as needed. Thanks to the expertise of our Social Work team, these care coordination and counseling services (now referred to as **Senior Outreach**) extend throughout the 43 cities and 549 square miles of suburban Hennepin County.

## SOCIAL WORK BREAKS BARRIERS

In 2000, program staff partnered with a small group of professionals from other senior-serving agencies to develop and design a **groundbreaking Caregiver Coaching service** that became a model in Minnesota

and throughout the country – what one visitor from U.S. Health and Human Services referred to as “the gold standard.” Caregiver Coaching has been nationally recognized for its innovative, effective approach, receiving the National Family Caregiving Award from the National Alliance for Caregiving and MetLife Foundation.

***Our program is also the only family caregiver coaching and counseling service covered by the Elderly Waiver (S5115) program.*** We also have contracts with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, HealthPartners, Medica, and UCare, to provide this service to the families of their Minnesota Senior Health Options (MSHO) members.

**Caregiver Support Groups** provide an opportunity to share challenges, frustrations, successes, and laughter with others who understand. As one new group member commented, “I can’t believe how much I learned in just one meeting – and to know that I’m not alone!” Four new groups were added last year, for a total of 17 groups in five counties (Carver, Hennepin, Scott, Sherburne, and Wright).

In 2010, Senior Community Services pioneered **CareNextion**, an online tool that lets caregivers create a care team and coordinate care from anywhere in the world. CareNextion is a great complement to the array of in-person services available and the program was recently recognized with the Caregiver Friendly Award from Today’s Caregiver.

It is a pleasure to celebrate Senior Community Services’ team of licensed Social Workers who comprise the agency’s Senior Outreach & Caregiver Services program. Each one is a knowledgeable, experienced, and compassionate professional who brings unique gifts to the team and to their clients. You will learn more about each of them throughout this month.



Adele Mehta, LGSW  
Director

**Celebrating National Social Work Month 2023**