

Gubernatorial Candidate Questionnaire

NAMI Minnesota, Mental Health Association of Minnesota, Mental Health Minnesota Consumer/Survivor Network of Minnesota, Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health, Mature Voices Minnesota, NASW-MN, Minnesota Council of Child Caring Agencies, Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Centers, Minnesota Psychological Association and Minnesota Psychiatric Society created a questionnaire which we sent out to all candidates for governor of the state of Minnesota. We have received responses from eight of the candidates so far and will post additional responses when they become available. Our organizations do not endorse any candidate for governor.

1. How will you balance the budget?

Margaret Anderson Kelliher (Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party)

Minnesota has more than a budget problem – we face a jobs deficit. Almost 204,000 Minnesotans are out of work and tens of thousands more are underemployed, working harder and earning less. I would build my budget based on Minnesota's values by focusing on the needed funding for great schools, comprehensive affordable health care for all Minnesotans and the infrastructure for sustainable job growth. In order to account for the revenue shortfall in the budget, I will rely on 40% Revenue, 30% in temporary tools to ensure long-term fiscal stability and 30% in budget savings (in the places where outcomes are not being achieved).

Mark Dayton (Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party)

I will make the richest Minnesotans pay their fair share of taxes and invest those revenues into increased funding for education and eliminating the budget deficit. Currently, the richest Minnesotans pay much smaller shares of their income in state and local taxes than low- and middle-income Minnesotans.

Without the revenues necessary to back up good intentions, funding commitments are just political rhetoric. If I'm Governor, we will have the resources necessary to invest in Minnesota's essential public services—including mental health care.

Linda Eno (Resource Party)

Budgets are managed the same as at home. Hold your expenses in line with your income. Eliminate wasteful spending and replace with accountability and efficiencies. Live within your means and do not mortgage your future to spend freely and feel good today. Taxes are dollars not percentages. Small businesses are the route to more tax dollars.

Tom Horner (Independence Party)

Four principles that are important to me in any discussion about the budget:

First, it took a long time to dig the hole as deep as it is today. It will take time to dig our way out. The projected shortfall is nearly \$6 billion. We need to make structural reforms, not just short-term budget cuts or tax increases.

Second, we have to address the relationship between the state government and all other units of government. The current relationship is premised on the notion that economic and government growth would always be the norm. That no longer is a valid premise. The state continues to push costs, responsibility and mandates down to other levels of government, then strip their ability to pay for these obligations, manage them efficiently or redesign the programs around desired outcomes. If the next governor doesn't focus on this challenge of defining the roles of state and local governments, it will be very difficult to succeed in other budget areas, including human services, education and infrastructure.

Third, Minnesota needs to make investments for the future. Some of these are in programs that will produce better outcomes in critical areas (for example, early childhood education) and some are in program redesign, investing resources now to save major costs and improve outcomes later (for example, moving older adult services from a system based largely in publicly subsidized nursing home care to a broader system of personal responsibility and aging in place).

And, finally, I don't pretend to have all the solutions. The following outlines principles and some specific areas. But I've also said that the value of an independent-thinking governor is the ability to draw good ideas from all sources and to bring diverse people to the table. I also believe -- having heard in "off the record" conversations from both Democratic and Republican legislators -- that there is a growing readiness to tackle the difficult choices and take the tough votes if legislators believe they will have leadership and political cover from the governor. My commitment is to provide the leadership, engage Minnesotans in honest conversations about the difficult choices and be the lightning rod for the political hits. If that means I'm a one-term governor, so be it if the pay-off is Minnesota is on a better course. Running for governor is not a stepping stone in my career; it is a capstone to a Minnesota life in public policy, community service and business.

My ideas:

Tax reform

Over time, we need to look at comprehensive tax reform, including reductions in corporate income tax and capital gains. I support the recommendations made last year by the Governor's 21st Century Tax Reform Commission. These tax reductions, though, have to be integrated with revenue increases and immediate reform, including the following:

- Lower the rate on the sales tax, broaden the base and put in place protections for low-income Minnesota to reduce the regressivity of the sales tax. The sales tax provides a far more stable source of revenue for the state than income taxes and is a much better fit for today's economy.
- Increase the tobacco tax. There is no good policy that supports cheap cigarettes. Short term, it produces revenue and discourages smoking. Long-term, it contributes to controlling health costs.
- Evaluate all tax expenditures to determine the value they provide to Minnesota and the disparities they create in the distribution of taxes. Doing so would bring greater transparency to our tax system and could address the fairness issue much more directly and effectively than an increase in the income tax.

Redesign and Investments

Several thoughtful proposals -- including the Association of Minnesota Counties and the Bottom Line Project -- have proposed long-term redesign of government services that would both save money and produce better outcomes.

- AMC estimates as much as \$275 million in cost savings from collaboration on road maintenance, law enforcement and other areas. Longer-term redesign could be a \$1 billion savings to state and local governments and, more importantly, put accountability closer to those who own government -- taxpayers -- and have much greater transparency in how governments tax and what taxpayers receive. This challenge -- how and who delivers services, who taxes, and who is accountable -- is a critical area of innovation for Minnesota.
- Ultra-high-speed broadband is an essential infrastructure for the future, opening the door to new thinking about schools (sharing content and teaching in new and engaging ways), the delivery of health care and economic development. But the infrastructure is expensive. Minnesota should allow the use of bonding for technology, saving money in current budgets while taking on debt that is responsible.
- The Bottom Line Project estimates \$750 million in savings through better purchasing of health care by the state. While the Bottom Line estimates that these savings may take a few years to fully realize, moving to the Medicaid option as the next governor will have the opportunity to do, could accelerate the savings. Minnesota could use the federal reform as the platform to more quickly and aggressively reform how we purchase health care, what we are purchasing and greater accountability demanded of everyone.
- Begin now to create incentives that will promote and require greater personal responsibility for the cost of older adult services, including nursing home care, and will create broader community-based services to help people age in place rather than require nursing home care.

Reducing the Budget

The immediate budget crisis can't be solved without new revenue, spending cuts and long-term budget reform. Places to start include the following:

- Approve Racino. Minnesotans who want to gamble should have the security of doing so in publicly-regulated casinos.
- Transition away from JOBZ, ethanol and other subsidies that have outlived their usefulness.
- Begin the serious and urgent task of restructuring public pensions.
- Eliminate county aid and replace it with a local option sales tax. On this proposal -- and the one that follows -- I would commit to working with the League of Cities and AMC, among other groups -- to make sure we get it right.
- Re-do the 40-year-old formula for LGA, assuring that money is used by those communities that truly are unable to fund access to core services, then require that the resources be used only for core services. Along with this change, repeal levy limits.

Put a sunset on all mandates imposed by the state government on local governments.

Ole Savior (Republican Party)

Filing a lawsuit against the oil companies for \$5 billion for each state will balance the budget. This is what we did with the cigarette companies in 1998.

\$2 billion more from tourism by opening the Minnesota State Fair year round. We are currently getting \$200 million revenue in 2 weeks, expanding to year round would increase that revenue.

Building a new Vikings Stadium we would use Canterbury Downs Racino 50%, the Vikings 25%, and the NFL 25%. This would solve the problem of the Vikings leaving Minnesota without any cost to the people.

Ken Pentel (Ecology Democracy Party)

We want to establish a Minnesota currency that would distribute vouchers equivalent to the state deficit. These vouchers would be redeemable in state taxes. Also, there are a variety of other ways to create revenue, such as: going back to the 1977 tax rates in MN, establishing a water use tax (1 cent on a gallon then appointment \$2 billion would be raised), a pollution tax (estimated \$1 billion raised) and increase the luxury tax and much more. Through these revenue streams, we will more than balance the budget. We will stop borrowing money with interest.

Phil Ratte' (Independence Party)

I would tell the legislature that I will sign no bills until I receive an acceptable budget bill. A temporary two year increase in taxes on the wealthiest Minnesotans to raise half of the deficit and an across the board reduction in ALL State Expenditures to eliminate the other half of the deficit.

Chris Wright (Grassroots Party)

Let's not forget that it was Republican Tim Pawlenty and Democrat Roger Moe that opposed Governor Jesse Ventura's fix to our state's STRUCTURAL BUDGET DEFICIT after the 9-11 economic depression and deliberately postponed this nasty fiscal reckoning thereafter because they were both running for governor. Why would anyone trust a Republican or a Democrat to solve this problem when they've failed to solve it for 8 long years?

Like Governor Ventura, I would propose progressive taxes on the wealthiest corporations and citizens. I would propose spending cuts.

Let's legalize hemp for all its uses and end the drug war. If we could regulate distribution through prohibition then it would be unprofitable for gangsters to terrorize our neighborhoods. But it has been profitable to terrorize our neighborhoods for a century because your politicians insist on gangster distribution. Why not regulate distribution just like liquor? Let's raise revenue, lower our taxes for police and prisons, and bring about public safety for our distressed neighborhoods.

Let's make Minnesota energy independent and bridge the fossil fuel age to the renewable fuel age through biomass gasification, wind and solar.

Using a refining process known as biomass gasification we can produce a substitute for natural gas, coal and gasoline in a carbon neutral fashion simultaneously cleaning the land, air and water using carbon feedstocks like hemp, switchgrass, municipal waste, and sewage sludge.

Let's build hydrogen hydride storage stations to transform intermittent electrical power sources, like wind and solar, into constant power sources that can also supply a hydrogen fuel cell vehicle thus making Minnesota first in energy independence.

All of these ideas will raise revenues, lower taxes, create jobs, and balance the budget.

2. What are your views on Minnesota's mental health services and system for adults? For children?

Margaret Anderson Kelliher (Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party)

As Governor, I will ensure that our mental health system is strong and inclusive to all Minnesotans who need services. In 2007, I was instrumental in mental health reforms that are now being implemented in order to improve access to ongoing preventative care. It is important to note that treatment for mental illness is effective and that 70-90% of individuals have reduced symptoms when treated. Providing the needed mental health coverage to the Minnesotans who need those services will prevent costly hospital visits and increased law enforcement expenses. Minnesota has more work to do reforming the delivery of services, adequately funding care in our hospitals and clinics and improving payment for primary care providers.

Mark Dayton (Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party)

Mental health services are essential to maintaining a healthy population. Expert estimates suggest that more than a quarter of the adult population has a diagnosable disorder. For children, mental health care is crucial to ensure healthy development. In the past, Minnesota has been a leader in recognizing the importance of mental health care, but there is still much progress that needs to be made. As Governor, I will work with the Minnesota State Advisory Council on Mental Health to ensure that Minnesotans receive the care they need.

I am appalled that Governor Pawlenty and the 2010 Legislature deeply cut County Mental Health Grants, grants for children's mental health care, and initiatives to help people with mental illness find jobs and affordable housing in this difficult recession. As Governor, I will work to reverse those cuts and support mental health care.

Linda Eno (Resource Party)

I am complimentary of our present mental health services for both adults and children.

Tom Horner (Independence Party)

Whether for adults or children, Minnesota should invest in increased training and technical assistance for mental health professionals. The state agencies tasked with prevention and intervention should focus on resource development, facilitation services, and interagency cooperation. Agencies should build strong relationships with county-level and community-based agencies and organizations, and colleges/universities. This should include distance learning opportunities for current professionals and those wishing to enter the mental health fields.

Ole Savior (Republican Party)

We need to improve care and facilities and we need to have better funding for it.

Ken Pentel (Ecology Democracy Party)

I would be interested in targeting the causes of mental health problems and help fully fund the services necessary to alleviate the barriers to obtaining mental health service, including early screening. We need to immerse children in nature as a way to alleviate many of the stresses and pressures they feel from the commercial and technological world. I feel that our disconnection from our natural environment is a primary reason for the mental stress many people feel in our culture. We want to transition away from a non-nutritious diet to a healthy, organic one, with local food suppliers for lunch programs in our schools. I would encourage young people to grow their food onsite, as well as getting in touch with local educational farm projects to understand the cycle of healthy food production which could lead to a better understanding of the food chain and their role in it. I was blessed on the campaign trail recently with meeting a 6 year old autistic child who has blossomed with his experiences in gardening and working his own stand at the local farmer's market. The experience has stimulated his mental capacities towards a lifestyle of self-sufficiency.

Phil Ratte' (Independence Party)

Use of deadly Prescription Petro Poisons for any condition other than trauma should be made illegal.

The Father of Medicine, Hippocrates, said thousands of years ago, "Let your food be your medicine and your medicine be your food."

Thomas Edison said, "The Doctors of the future will be nutritionists or the Nutritionists of the future will be the doctors.

In early 2003, I provided 4 "Naturacal" products costing less than \$200 retail to a woman who was 7 mortgage payments behind due to 3 years of medical treatment for MS, an incurable autoimmune disease. In less than 3 months she was "CURED" and remains "CURED" 7 years later. She has helped over 21,000 people "CURE" themselves of 133 disease conditions some of which are considered mental conditions.

Chris Wright (Grassroots Party)

I'm in support of The Minnesota Health Act, (S.F. 118/H.F. 135), a single-payer health care that favors private delivery, free choice of hospital, doctor, dental care, and mental health care.

I'll see that the Department of Human Services is accountable to the mental health needs of adults and children.

3. What is your position on expanding Medicaid to single adults at or below 75% of the federal poverty guidelines?

Margaret Anderson Kelliher (Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party)

My first act as Governor will be to sign an executive order expanding health care coverage to an additional 20,000 Minnesotans. The early adoption of medical assistance will also cover the current General Assistance Medical Assistance population and provide those individuals with the access to care they need close to where they live. As part of the negotiations at the end of session, I ensured that the next Governor has the ability to opt-in to early medical assistance by

executive order. By the end of my first term, I will ensure that all Minnesotans have quality, affordable health care.

Mark Dayton (Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party)

I fully support covering single adults at or below 75% of the poverty line by “opting-in” to the early Medicaid funding from the federal government. Year after year, health care for low-income Minnesotans has been under attack. The early opt-in offers an opportunity to bring \$1.4 billion of new Federal money into Minnesota, providing better coverage and higher quality care while providing much-needed financial stability to hospitals, other providers and their communities.

Linda Eno (Resource Party)

Expansion of Medicaid to single adults at or below poverty level would be too expensive and difficult to manage.

Tom Horner (Independence Party)

Minnesota should expand access to health care by accepting the Medicaid option that will allow the state to leverage federal dollars to provide coverage for more people.

Ole Savior (Republican Party)

Yes, I agree to expand it and whatever else is necessary to improve the people’s lives through better healthcare.

Ken Pentel (Ecology Democracy Party)

I'm in favor and have been an ongoing advocate of a universal - single payer health care system in MN. Invest in those of who are hurting the most first.

Phil Ratte' (Independence Party)

Good idea if it is not used for Prescription Petro Poison except for trauma care.

Chris Wright (Grassroots Party)

As I stated above, I support the Minnesota Health Act, meaning, I want to expand state Medicaid to all state residents including the poor and indigent.

4. What are your views on supported housing and employment for adults with mental illnesses?

Margaret Anderson Kelliher (Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party)

We need to break down the silos of care within our system of delivering services. Low-income housing, employment services, training, child care services and mental health services should be coordinated in order to create better outcomes for individuals. Project for Pride in Living has developed a dynamic approach that brings needed services into housing facilities providing a more holistic approach. As Governor, I will work to create better results for Minnesotans by having coordinated approaches to care.

Mark Dayton (Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party)

The budget cuts by Governor Pawlenty and the 2010 Legislature to the Centers for Independent Living, Group Residential Housing, and Extended Employment for People with a Serious Mental Illness were terribly wrong. They are critical to ensure that men and women with mental illnesses are able to have homes and jobs.

As Governor, I will restore those cuts and work with NAMI-MN and others to ensure greater support for people with mental illnesses in their pursuits of jobs and affordable housing.

Linda Eno (Resource Party)

Tom Horner (Independence Party)

We know that less than a 1/3 of adults with mental illnesses work despite the fact that surveys show nearly all want to. There are challenges in supporting this desire to work, both individual and societal. But, we know that despite the challenges, employment support has been shown to play a vital role in assisting adults with mental illnesses function and survive in society. Similarly, providing access to safe and affordable supported housing can create pathways to full community participation for individuals with mental illness.

Minnesota needs to continue to assist adults with mental illnesses with supported housing and employment. Agencies overseeing the support services should increase coordination and decrease overlap. Any support plan needs to include the non-profits and service groups that provide so much of this assistance. Minnesotans should demand efficiency and accountability in all state support services, mental health programs are no different.

Ole Savior (Republican Party)

I support the overall system that we have and I think we can do an even better job. I support financing and helping the disadvantaged to integrate into society, thus improving their lives.

Ken Pentel (Ecology Democracy Party)

All Minnesotans should be able to live independently, as much as possible. We want resources for training that is relevant to the needs of the clients. As governor, I would meet with the mental health organizations to learn more about all the needs and level of services needed in our state.

Phil Ratte' (Independence Party)

I will promote and sign legislation to provide such supported housing and employment. If fact, if you wish I will provide you with a Legal Affidavit, signed, dated, notarized, and sworn to under threat of perjury.

Chris Wright (Grassroots Party)

The purpose of government is to promote the public health, safety, and the general welfare. Necessary housing and employment assistance should be provided for all needy residents and especially for individuals with mental illness.

5. What would you do to attract and retain more mental health professionals in Minnesota?

Margaret Anderson Kelliher (Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party)

As Governor, I will direct our colleges and universities to better anticipate, recruit and train the needed mental health professionals for Minnesotans. We must ensure we have a workforce ready to meet the needs of the 21st Century, which is why I included collaboration with our colleges and universities into my comprehensive jobs plan.

This past session, I fought against Governor Pawlenty's attempts to cut medical education spending and won. As Governor, I will begin to close the disparity gap for mental health professionals in rural areas because all Minnesotans deserve access to quality mental health services.

Mark Dayton (Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party)

It is essential that the state provide funding security and sufficiency for health care providers. With new federal money from the early MA opt-in, I will ensure that providers are more fairly reimbursed for the care they provide, so that they can hire more mental health providers rather than reducing staff and cutting services.

Linda Eno (Resource Party)

Attracting mental health professionals to Minnesota would depend on career growth opportunities and quality of life. Minnesota is a great place to live, work, play and raise a family. Just look at the many caring associations that are here in Minnesota to improve lives.

Tom Horner (Independence Party)

Minnesota needs to increase education opportunities to encourage more qualified people to enter the mental health profession. A state-wide broadband network will increase access to education opportunities for those in greater Minnesota while allowing current professionals the ability to connect with colleagues, data centers and hospitals across the country. Updating licensing requirements to allow for distance learning programs will allow those training to be mental health professionals to study anywhere and remain in the communities that need them the most.

Ole Savior (Republican Party)

Funding is the main issue and having a plan to bring in more money would help to bring in more professionals.

Ken Pentel (Ecology Democracy Party)

I would establish a universal-single payer healthcare system that would bring more patients to the necessary facilities, thus increasing the need for more mental health professionals. As I had advocate in 1998 with my run for governor, I want to establish free higher education in MN so the burden of debt does not deter person from participating in this vital field.

Phil Ratte' (Independence Party)

Eliminate the emphasis on Allopathic Prescription Poison for anything other than trauma care in the training and the practice of Mental Health Care. We will then attract the "Best and the Brightest" from all over the world.

Chris Wright (Grassroots Party)

What attracts and retains professionals in any profession is compensation. It's often hard to retain doctors and mental health professionals in rural areas too. Through state educational grants and incentives it might be possible to get professionals to serve in rural communities. Perhaps recruiting foreign-born professionals may help as well.

Minnesota has an underserved population of 1,390,786 or 26% living in Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA's) as compared to the national average of 18.7% in 2008.

There are legislative reports and recommendations at the Department of Human Services that deserve implementation such as changes in regulatory policy, reimbursement and training.

6. What is your position on school-based mental health services?

Margaret Anderson Kelliher (Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party)

We need to ensure that our teachers, school aides, nurses, school administrators and principals are responsive to the children's mental health needs of students. I know that students living with mental illness account for approximately 50% of high school dropouts and suspensions. School professionals are on the front line of assessing mental health needs. I will partner with our teacher training programs to make certain they are preparing teachers to assist students with mental health issues and direct them to appropriate care. In addition, I will work with our Department of Education so our students have access to needed health services in our schools.

Mark Dayton (Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party)

School based mental health services are crucial to helping students with their current problems and preventing even more serious problems from developing. Without those supportive services, students are far more likely to drop out or fail to reach their full academic and social potentials. Tragically, those professional services have fallen victim to Governor Pawlenty's and the Legislature's funding cuts in education. As a result, Minnesota has one of the poorest ratios of school counselors to students in the country. That is why I have pledged to increase state funding for public education every year I am Governor. No excuses. No exceptions.

Linda Eno (Resource Party)

School-based mental health services is a good idea. Early identification of needs is proactive and good business.

Tom Horner (Independence Party)

We know that school-based mental health services work. Children referred to them nearly always attend, opposed to external programs that provide barriers for families and make it hard for a child to receive proper care. Minnesota should continue to support school-based mental health programs while partnering with the local universities and health care centers to provide training and assistance.

Ole Savior (Republican Party)

Special education improvements are necessary, more teachers, more professional health workers and better care.

Ken Pentel (Ecology Democratic Party)

Early detection is very important. My difficult experiences in junior high offered me the professional services of a school counselor that helped me deal with problems related to my home environment that was interfering with my ability to achieve. Children need a holistic learning environment to develop as mentally healthy adults and I will assure the resources are there.

Phil Ratte' (Independence Party)

I will promote and sign legislation to provide a FREE breakfast for any student who has not had breakfast. It will consist of a smoothy with live raw fruits and veggies and a whole grain bagel with no additives or preservatives. Pop and candy machines will be made illegal in all private and public schools. Snacks will be spring water and raw fruit. Lunch will be prepared from scratch with no additives or preservatives. A large raw fruit and raw salad bar will also be available.

An alternative High School in Appleton, Wisconsin, that instituted this program eliminated all behavior issues and students headed for the Reformatory or worse are not headed to college.

Chris Wright (Grassroots Party)

I support a Guaranteed Right to Education cradle to college and propose the following constitutional amendment.

“Any person shall have a right to primary education free of charge. Provisions on compulsory education shall be prescribed by the legislature.

In a manner more precisely prescribed by the legislature, public authorities shall secure for everyone an equal opportunity to obtain education other than primary education which accords with their abilities and special needs and to develop themselves without hindrance due to lack of means.

The freedom of science, the arts and higher education shall be guaranteed.”

Of course, that would include school-based mental health services, especially the clause that says, “equal opportunity to obtain education...which accords with their special abilities and special needs.”