



## **Birchwood Cottages Recognized for Achievement in Quality**

Owatonna, MN – (September 20, 2023) – Birchwood Cottages was a recipient of the first annual Steps to Excellence Awards at the LeadingAge Minnesota Annual Meeting & Leadership Forum held at Grandview Lodge, Nisswa. Birchwood Cottages was honored for achieving all three levels of the program focused on organizational excellence.

“These awards serve as a testament to the dedication to continuous improvement and the unwavering commitment to excellence that makes these organizations great. The Steps to Excellence Awards are more than accolades; they are a celebration of the journey these organizations have undertaken to strive for excellence in their missions of service to older adults,” said Barbara Klick, LeadingAge Minnesota Board Chair, as she presented the award to Birchwood Cottages. Andrea Rupe, Vice President of Business Operations, Laura Kaiser, Executive Director, and David Lewis, Executive Director, accepted the award on behalf of Birchwood Cottages.

Steps to Excellence is a new program within the Performance Excellence in Aging Services initiative that was created by LeadingAge Minnesota in 2017 to help aging services providers innovate and improve the quality services and supports they provide to older adults. The continuous learning and development program is centered on the core values and criteria of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, which focuses on seven areas of achievement and improvement: leadership, strategy, customers, measurement, workforce, operations, and results.

To achieve the first level of Steps to Excellence, Birchwood Cottages focused on developing effective, systematic approaches to key operational processes. In Step 2, performance results were examined, and in the last step the focus was on completing an organization profile to gain insights into key needs, opportunities, and constraints to be considered for current and future success.

“Our mission is to provide quality services to seniors living with memory loss. To achieve that we must be nimble and innovative in how we achieve that mission. The Steps to Excellence program gives us the tools and insight to re-evaluate what we are currently doing and collaborate as a team on where we can make improvements. With that collaboration, we are continually re-evaluating ourselves and raising our own bar so we continue to hold ourselves accountable to providing the best services to those we serve,” said by Andrea Rupe, Vice President of Business Operations for Birchwood Cottages.

For more information, contact Andrea Rupe, Vice President of Business Operations, 507.594.8273 or [andrear@birchwoodcottagesmn.com](mailto:andrear@birchwoodcottagesmn.com).

### **About Birchwood Cottages**

Birchwood Cottages provides specialized care to those living with Alzheimer’s Disease and other related dementias in a comfortable and welcoming homelike setting. Locally owned and managed, our communities offer the safety, security and peace of mind for families and their loved ones. Amenities include private and semi-private apartments, homemade meals, beautiful sunrooms, courtyard with walking paths, and state-of-the-art technology for resident safety.

### **About LeadingAge Minnesota**

Driven to transform and enhance the experience of aging, LeadingAge Minnesota is the state’s largest association of organizations serving older adults. Together with more than 58,000 caregivers, our members provide quality care, services, and support to nearly 54,000 older adults in independent living, assisted living, adult day, home care and skilled nursing.

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