

CATHY WURZER: It's *Minnesota Now*. I'm Cathy Wurzer. A new medical study says older adults are getting long COVID at twice the rate of younger people. We'll get the details. And, what's being done to address Minnesota's alarming rise in traffic deaths? We'll find out.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

It's the last day of Pride month. We'll hear how LGBTQ folks face unique challenges when it comes to aging. Sometimes, people are actually going back in the closet to find care. The overturning of Roe has put a new emphasis on the Equal Rights Amendment. We'll talk about the future of the ERA.

And of course, I'll check in on the Minnesota sports scene with Wally Longfellow and Eric Nelson. All of that, plus the Minnesota Music Minute and the Song of the Day. And it comes your way right after the news.

LAKSHMI SINGH: Live from NPR News in Washington, I'm Lakshmi Singh. For the first time, a Black woman sits on the US Supreme Court.

KETANJI BROWN JACKSON: I will faithfully and impartially.

STEPHEN BREYER: Discharge and perform.

KETANJI BROWN JACKSON: Discharge and perform.

STEPHEN BREYER: All the duties.

KETANJI BROWN JACKSON: All the duties.

STEPHEN BREYER: Incumbent upon me.

KETANJI BROWN JACKSON: Incumbent upon me.

LAKSHMI SINGH: Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson taking the judicial oath a short time ago before her mentor, Justice Stephen Breyer. He is now officially retired. Moments earlier, Chief Justice John Roberts delivered the constitutional oath.

Jackson's arrival does not change the ideological makeup of a court where the conservative supermajorities issued profound and highly controversial rulings this month, most notable the end of *Roe v Wade*. President Biden, wrapping up at the NATO summit in Madrid, Spain, told reporters he would support suspending the Senate filibuster rule to make it possible for Democrats in Congress to pass a bill protecting the right to privacy. NPR's Tamara Keith reports Biden has been reluctant to tamper with the institution of the Senate.

TAMARA KEITH: Asked what measures he will take to protect abortion rights in the US after the Supreme Court's *Dobbs* decision, Biden said the most effective thing would be to enshrine a right to privacy into law. But there aren't enough Democrats in the Senate to overcome a Republican filibuster, making such legislation impossible without changing the rules.

JOE BIDEN: If the filibuster gets in the way, it's like voting rights-- we provide an exception for this-- the required exception of the filibuster for this action to deal with the Supreme Court decision.

TAMARA KEITH: For now, there also aren't enough Democrats in the Senate willing to suspend the filibuster. As he frequently has, Biden called on Americans to elect more Democrats in November. Tamara Keith, NPR News, Madrid, Spain.

LAKSHMI SINGH: The US Supreme Court has agreed to hear a case next term that could radically reshape future elections for president and Congress. NPR's Hansi Lo Wang reports the case is focused on how much power state legislatures have over how federal elections are run.

HANSI LO WANG: This case was sparked by new voting maps of North Carolina's congressional districts. Depending on how the Supreme Court rules, it could append elections across the country. The outcome hinges on whether the court accepts a controversial legal theory that claims the US Constitution gives state legislatures the power to determine how congressional and presidential elections are run, without any checks and balances from state constitutions or state courts.

Many legal scholars warn this theory is a radical departure from the Supreme Court's record of deferring to state courts on how state laws should be interpreted. But three conservative justices have signaled they're likely to side with the theory. Hansi Lo Wang, NPR News, Washington.

LAKSHMI SINGH: The Dow Jones Industrial average is down more than 100 points at 30,917. This is NPR News.

CREW: Support for NPR comes from NPR stations. Other contributors include Fisher Investments. Fisher Investments is a fiduciary, which means they always put clients' interests first. Fisher Investments, clearly different money management. Investing in securities involves the risk of loss.

CATHY WURZER: Around Minnesota right now, skies are mostly sunny. It's getting a little warmer and stickier. Highs today 70s in the north, near 90 in the south. At noon in Rochester, it's sunny and 76. It's 83 in St. Cloud and by the aerial lift bridge at the Duluth Harbor, it's 81 and sunny.

I'm Cathy Wurzer with Minnesota news headlines. Today's the deadline for hundreds of Minnesota National Guard members to either get vaccinated for COVID or possibly be ousted from the military. According to the Minnesota National Guard, about 3% of the guard have refused vaccinations. That's about 600 soldiers. Nationally, about 14,000 National Guard members have refused the COVID vaccines.

The Defense Department ordered all members of the military to be vaccinated in the summer of 2021. Federal prosecutors are asking for long prison sentences for the officers involved in the killing of George Floyd, although longer for some. Tim Nelson explains.

TIM NELSON: Thomas Lane, J Alexander Kueng, and Tou Thao were convicted of violating Floyd's civil rights in a federal jury trial in February. New filings by prosecutors detailed pre-sentence investigations for all three, laying out suggested prison terms for the judge in the case. The memos say that Lane, who has pleaded guilty to separate state manslaughter charges, should get between 63 and 78 months in prison.

The memo cites evidence that Lane expressed concern and asked his colleagues to roll Floyd over as they pinned him to the ground during a 2020 arrest. Floyd died as they knelt on him. The memo says Kueng and Thao should get, quote, "significantly higher sentences," but says they should be less than what's been given to Derek Chauvin, who is serving a 22-year state sentence for Floyd's murder. Chauvin is awaiting a sentencing of up to 25 years after pleading guilty to federal charges. I'm Tim Nelson.

CATHY WURZER: Beginning tomorrow, Minnesota's federal district court will have a new chief judge. Judge Patrick Schultz takes over for the current chief judge, John Tunheim, who has completed his seven-year term as of today. Schultz was appointed to the court by President George W. Bush back in 2006. A native of Duluth, Schultz clerked for the late US Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia.

This is *Minnesota Now* on NPR News. I'm Cathy Wurzer. Throughout my career, I've always been interested in stories related to aging and the challenges and joys that face elders. One little-studied area of aging deals with individuals who are transgender. Old age has come to the first generation of trans people who physically or socially transitioned in this country.

Now, getting old is hard for everyone, and there are some unique challenges for transgender elders. Since June is pride month, we wanted to cast a light on these issues. Dr. Abel Knochel at the University of Minnesota-Duluth conducted the first study of its kind on aging in the transgender community in Minnesota. It's called the Minnesota Trans Aging Project Community Report.

They also formed a trans elders social group for some of the participants in their study. One of those participants, Anne Hodson. Anne is a transgender advocate and educator. Anne and Dr. Abel, welcome to *Minnesota Now*.

ABEL KNOCHLER: Thanks for having us.

SUBJECT: Thank you.

CATHY WURZER: I'm so glad you're with us. Doctor, I'm going to begin with you. As a result of your study, does aging present unique challenges to transgender people?

ABEL KNOCHLER: Absolutely, Cathy.

CATHY WURZER: Are there medically necessary care related issues to gender transition that occurs in older age?

ABEL I think there are some things that are related to physical transitioning. For example, there may be preventive care screenings around things like cancer, where there may be differences between a person's legal gender and the parts of their body. So there are things like that that come up. A bigger piece, though, that we found and focused on is just whether trans and non-binary people are willing to go and see providers and what their experiences are once they get there.

In the study, we found that a lot of providers don't have the education or awareness. And some of that is just about how to engage in a relational way with transgender and non-binary patients. And a bigger part is about knowing what kind of care or services they may need. And so transgender and non-binary people in the study, and other research shows, are often in this place of needing to educate their providers in order to then be able to access the care they need.

CATHY Anne, that has to be exhausting. What's your personal experience?

WURZER:

SUBJECT: I've been fortunate to continue to live at home. I am not old enough yet that I feel like I need to go into a care facility. But I certainly have some concerns about that experience if it comes up. For a lot of transgender people, there's a greater likelihood of aging alone, because there's oftentimes less family support. I feel fortunate that I do have a reasonable amount of support.

CATHY Dr. Abel, can I go back to for just a moment? I was surprised to learn that transgender non-binary folks report higher rates of disability, depression, anxiety, general poor health. Does that ring true to you? And if so, why?

WURZER:

ABEL Yeah. There are some bits of studies starting to come out. And a big piece of it, Cathy, is the result of oppression over the course of a lifetime. They find that if you've dealt with oppression, not just transgender and non-binary people, but any group that's marginalized, it has impacts on your physical and mental well-being. And if you take someone who's older, then you're talking about the cumulative effects of that oppression over a lifetime.

CATHY There's obviously a fair amount of homophobia, transphobia, lack of awareness of LGBTQ issues, especially trans identities, in this world. But I'm wondering, do you find in the LGBTQ world there's also a fair amount of ageism and a lack of awareness about aging?

WURZER:

ABEL Yes. When transgender and non-binary people are coming out in midlife or older adulthood and then accessing the support systems that are out there or the bits of community, they're finding a much younger group. And maybe some of what they're facing is ageism, and some of it is a generation gap. So I think that that makes it a bit challenging to come into some of the trans and non-binary spaces that exist.

CATHY Anne, what do you think of that?

WURZER:

SUBJECT: It seems like there is a growing number of people that are coming out as transgender-- in part, I think, because the definition of transgender has broadened from what it was in years past. And the self declaration of transgender and non-binary identities are on the increase. What that means for me is a greater sense of hope that people are going to have a better understanding of this and that, as I get older, there will be more and more younger people that are going to understand what it is my identity is about.

CATHY WURZER: So, Dr. Abel, I want to turn it back to you for just a moment. Anne was very eloquent talking about some issues around long-term care. And you've noted, Abel, that long-term care is a specific issue that trans and non-binary folks need to think about when aging. Tell us a little bit more about that.

ABEL KNOCHLER: In the two studies that we've done as part of the Minnesota Transgender Aging Project, when we talked about aging into care, and, in particular, institutionalized long-term care, people's fears were palpable. And their responses around it were fairly stark.

And that happens around any group of older adults when they're contemplating going into institutionalized long-term care. But it's exacerbated by gender identity. And some of the things Anne said certainly came up. There's also this piece about trans and non-binary older adults.

The ones who have made it to older adulthood or are the survivors, and the determined ones with hard-won identities, who have educated and also advocated in order to be able to build and live a life as themselves. And so when they're contemplating aging into a place where they are too fragile to be able to advocate for themselves in the same ways, and may not have the same support systems around them to do it, they get scared.

CATHY WURZER: What needs to be done? What has to happen within the system, then, where we train more people to advocate on behalf of trans and non-binary older adults?

ABEL KNOCHLER: One thing that is a bit distinct in Minnesota is for a good decade, providers of aging services have had access to training. There's a program called Training to Serve that provides training all over the state. It started in the Twin Cities metro, but it's gotten all around the state.

And basically, trains providers about how to understand and work in a way that is respectful and welcoming with LGBTQ older adults, and is deliberate about including and educating providers around gender identity. And so there is training that is provided in the state and that providers have access to. And a number of providers have received that training.

And so that's a good start. But along with getting that training, it's repeating that training every time there's staff turnover. It's going in and examining policies and practices and setting a standard for what's expected of staff, of volunteers, and even of residents or participants in aging programs about how they will interact with transgender and non-binary people.

CATHY WURZER: In my introduction, I mentioned that there is a social group for trans elders that has been in existence for a few years. And I know, Anne, you're part of this group. What does it mean to you to have a group of fellow elders to meet with on a regular basis?

SUBJECT: Oh, it's actually quite wonderful because it offers a sense of community that is free of concern from judgment or wondering if someone's being critical of you because of your gender identity, even if they don't outwardly express it. And so there's an ability to kind of relax, and be your full self, and bring your whole self to that social setting.

CATHY WURZER: May I ask, what do you talk about, just generally speaking, in the group?

SUBJECT: We talk about everything. And surprisingly, not very much always about transgender identities. It's more a sense of just getting to be yourself. And the transgender identities are part of that. But it's also something we can almost ignore.

CATHY WURZER: This is a final question to Dr. Abel. And of course, in my intro, I also mentioned that you were one of the first to do research. But as we move along here and the population of transgender and non-binary people grow, I'm wondering, what needs to be done? What kind of research do you want to see moving forward?

ABEL KNOCHLER: The biggest need is to find the many, many trans and non-binary older adults who are hidden-- folks who came out a few decades ago were expected to disappear, to transition themselves so that they could pass as cisgender in society, and then to do so, and to consider being transgender a very temporary state that they were in.

And so there are people who are aging into care now who have been hidden for decades and decades. And we don't know how to find them. There are other folks who are hidden out of fear. Anne had mentioned people may revert their identity as much as they can if they're aging into dependence. And so being able to find this whole group of people who have been hidden for so long and understand what their life has been like and what they want and need as they're aging into dependence is quite important.

CATHY WURZER: We have a number of listeners who would be very interested in the social club. So, Dr. Abel, how can they join? What's the information?

ABEL KNOCHLER: Oh, that's great. We're hoping that some people will hear this who want to be a part of the group. So these days, it is meeting once a month by Zoom. That's been kind of a pandemic thing. It meets on the first Friday in the early afternoon.

And we've talked about some different potential social gatherings outside of that. But if anybody is interested in it, they're welcome to contact and I'd be happy to give them the link and have them join us the first Friday in July.

CATHY WURZER: I appreciate your time, both of you. Thank you so very much.

SUBJECT: Thank you, Cathy.

ABEL KNOCHLER: Thank you, Cathy.

CATHY WURZER: Dr. Abel Knochel is an associate professor at the University of Minnesota-Duluth and the author of the Minnesota Trans Aging Project Community Report. Anne Hudson is a transgender advocate and educator.

Well, while we're talking about older adults, there's an interesting new study with Minnesota connections that looks at long COVID in adults 65-plus. And it finds that 32% of older adults in the US who survived COVID infections had symptoms of long COVID up to four months after infection-- symptoms like memory fog, fatigue, and heart, lung, and kidney problems.

Joining us right now is Dr. Ken Cohen. He's the co-author of the study and the Executive Director of Translational Research for Optum Care, which is based in the Twin Cities. Doctor, are you with us?

KEN COHEN: I am. Apologies for our earlier snafu. It's great to be with you, Cathy.

CATHY
WURZER: Likewise. Thank you for joining us. Technology is great when it works. The suite of symptoms for long COVID is confounding-- trouble with memory, and speech, and fatigue, as I mentioned, and heart, lung, and kidney problems, among other things. These can also be symptoms of so many other ailments. Is long COVID overlooked as the cause?

KEN COHEN: That's potentially the case. And when we did this study, we looked at over 80,000 individuals that had COVID and specifically teased out, what were the COVID-specific symptoms? And then we compared them to over 88,000 individuals that had not had COVID. So we do believe that the symptoms that we identified are specific to long COVID.

CATHY
WURZER: Why do older adults have such a high rate of long COVID symptoms?

KEN COHEN: Interestingly, if you look at the severity of COVID infection, it does vary with age, with older adults having more severe disease. And it also varies with other health-related problems so that individuals with hypertension, diabetes, obesity, underlying heart or lung disease also have worse clinical courses with COVID. And those diseases are all more prevalent as individuals get older. So it's easy to understand why an older population might have a higher prevalence of long COVID.

CATHY
WURZER: Can long-COVID exacerbate existing conditions? Say, if someone has high blood pressure or maybe the beginning of cognitive decline, might that make it worse?

KEN COHEN: Our study didn't specifically look at that. But other studies have. And if you do look at individuals, for example, that have COPD or emphysema who develop COVID, they clearly have a worse respiratory outcome. And, similarly, patients that have underlying heart failure will have a worse outcome. So I do believe that when there are significant underlying medical problems, those can be worsened by acute COVID infection.

CATHY
WURZER: I'm curious about the cognitive impairment that seems to be a part of the equation for many older long COVID patients-- and for that matter, some younger patients too. Do we know how that happens?

KEN COHEN: We don't. It is possible that that might be an artifact of the study. And what I mean by that is that some individuals with early Alzheimer's disease may be unrecognized by both the patient and the family. And when they come under a bright light of being seen by the medical community for acute COVID infection, it may be then clinically apparent and first shared with patient and family.

So it could be an artifact. But that being the case, we did definitely notice a higher prevalence of both memory difficulties and new onset dementia in the senior population. And interestingly, we also broke this population down to those individuals between age 65 and 75 and those individuals older than 75. And although problems with memory and new onset dementia were higher in the senior group in general, clearly, there was a higher risk in that older population than in the 65 to the 75-year-olds.

CATHY
WURZER: Interesting. Say, why is Optum interested in this?

KEN COHEN: There are over half a billion cases now worldwide, and we know over 200 million cases in the US at this point. If even a small fraction of those individuals wind up with long COVID, then this will pose an enormous problem to the health care system, and also to employers. So it's of interest to Optum to try to identify exactly what are the conditions that are specific to long COVID. And then once those are understood, we can begin to tease them out one by one and look at how best to evaluate and treat them, since, at the end of the day, the goal is to have everybody recover from COVID.

CATHY WURZER: By the way, this is a pretty extensive study-- what was the big takeaway for you? What was the big surprise?

KEN COHEN: I think the most important takeaway was the fact that the incidence of long COVID symptoms was so much higher than it was in the commercial population. We did a similar study in to 18 to 64-year-old population, and the incidence in seniors is over twice as high.

So that was one striking finding. The other striking finding is that once patients are hospitalized for COVID, then the likelihood of long COVID becomes markedly elevated relative to the group that wasn't hospitalized. So we have very clear data now that the worse the initial infection, the higher the likelihood of long COVID.

So a very important point since there are still unvaccinated individuals out there. And if we can reduce the severity of initial infection across the population, we can, by inference, reduce the likelihood of long COVID.

CATHY WURZER: So a good argument for vaccination, especially for older folks.

KEN COHEN: Absolutely.

CATHY WURZER: Dr. Cohen, I appreciate your time. Thank you for putting up with our technical difficulties. It was nice talking with you.

KEN COHEN: Glad to be with you, and hope you have a wonderful afternoon.

CATHY WURZER: You too. Thank you so much. That was Dr. Ken Cohen, the co-author of a study on long COVID in older adults. He's also the Executive Director of Translational Research for Optum Care based in the Twin Cities.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

(SINGING) What's your name? The way your body moves, it drives me insane. Whoa, whoa, whoa oh.

CATHY WURZER: It's the Minnesota Music Minute. Today, we've got a tune with a groove. I love it. It's *Hey Girl* by Sonny Knight and the Lakers. Knight is a Twin Cities soul legend who is known for being a powerhouse as a singer and performer. He passed away in 2017, but he's remembered by many for his energy and the joy his music brought to the Twin Cities music scene.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

(SINGING) Tell me, would you use me? I don't know how far to go. If I should give you some play, tell me. baby.

CREW: Support for NPR comes from the Technological Leadership Institute at the U of M, offering graduate programs, short courses, and certificates to help working tech professionals step up into leadership roles. Online at TLI.UMN.edu. Tech leaders start here.

CATHY 12:27, time for the news with Steven John. Steven.

WURZER:

STEVEN JOHN: Thanks, Cathy. Beginning tomorrow, Minnesota's federal district court will have a new chief judge. Judge Patrick Schultz takes over for the current chief Judge John Tunheim, who has completed his seven-year term as of today. Schultz was appointed to the court by President George W. Bush in 2006. A native of Duluth, Schultz clerked for late US Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia.

Ketanji Brown Jackson has been sworn in to the Supreme Court, shattering a glass ceiling as the first Black woman on the nation's highest court. The 51-year-old Jackson is the court's 116th justice and took the place today of the Justice she once worked for. Justice Stephen Breyer's retirement took effect at noon Eastern time.

President Joe Biden says he would support an exception to the Senate filibuster to protect access to abortion after the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v Wade*. The Democratic President said today there should be an exception to the filibuster for this action to deal with the Supreme Court decision. Biden's remarks may cheer abortion rights supporters, but it's unlikely to change the outcome in Washington.

At least two Democratic senators do not want to change the filibuster rule, closing off such an avenue to address abortion. Biden spoke from Madrid, where he was attending a NATO summit. Authorities in California say cooler, more humid weather aided the battle against a Sierra Nevada wildfire that has forced evacuation of several hundred people from their homes and injured seven firefighters.

Forestry and fire protection officials said the Raices fire did not grow overnight, remaining at 904 acres, while containment increased to 12%. The wildfire began with a structure fire on Tuesday. Warmer and more humid for Minnesota, at least in the south today. There's a chance of showers and thunderstorms in the southeast, highs in the 70s north, to around 90 in the south. At last report in the Twin Cities, 84 degrees. It's 12:29.

CATHY Thank you very much, Steven. There are some people already starting the long 4th of July holiday, pointing the car north to the cabin, perhaps, despite sky high gas prices. Triple AAA estimates that nearly 48 million people will travel someplace for the holiday. If you're driving, be careful.

WURZER:

There are rising numbers of traffic fatalities in Minnesota. As of May 24, there have been 124 traffic fatalities in the state. Last year, more people died on Minnesota roads than in any of the past 15 years. Mike Hanson is here to break down the data with us. He's the Director for the Office of Traffic Safety with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. Director, welcome. How are you doing?

MIKE HANSON: I'm doing great, Cathy. And thanks so much for taking a few minutes to visit with me today.

CATHY Well, it's great to have you on the air here. The figures though are pretty sobering. 501 people died in traffic crashes last year. And that was in line with this larger national trend. What is going on?

WURZER:

MIKE HANSON: Well, Cathy, to describe 2021 in terms of traffic safety for Minnesota, and for our country as a whole, horrific is the only word that I can come up with that comes close. And yeah, we are seeing this not only in Minnesota, but across the country with the increases in the high risk driving behaviors.

And there is one cause, really, that, above everything else, is leading that increase in the fatalities that we've seen. And that is speed, and excessive speed, at that, and really excessive speed, in many cases.

CATHY I have to be honest with you, I do have a bit of a lead foot. However, I will say those who are passing me, wow.

WURZER: I'm just surprised. It's almost like you're left in the dust. What do you think is going on when it comes to the increases in speeding and some of this riskier behavior on the road?

MIKE HANSON: Well, I think that there's a lot of things at work here, Cathy. And there's a lot of people who are a lot smarter than me that will study this for years to try and identify it, but, really, the roots of this go back to early-2020. And it really is tied kind of to the onset of the pandemic.

And as everything started to shut down, and as people started to work from home, and travel became limited, our roads became less congested. But people also felt a sense of frustration in not being able to go anywhere. And unfortunately, this was manifested in the significant, almost immediate, increase in the really aggressive driving that was taking place on Minnesota roads-- less congestion, more lane space to use and abuse.

And a certain segment of the population really took advantage of and abused that. Unfortunately, as we came out of the pandemic and as we continue to come out of the pandemic, our traffic levels are back to pre-pandemic levels. But the behaviors and the habits that some drivers got into during that lull in the traffic have continued, and, in some cases, have even increased. And that is the real gene that we need to figure out how to put back in the bottle.

CATHY How's it going when it comes to the state patrol doing their heat-- I don't know what to call it-- their heat project where they go out on various roads and they saturate that road for speeding and other infractions? Is that working?

MIKE HANSON: Certainly. And that is the bit of good news I can share with you, Cathy. As bad as 2021 was, we're off to a, I'm not going to say a good start, I'm going to say we are improving in 2022. We're about 40 fatalities behind where we were at the same time last year. But we are still well above that five-year trend and well above what we saw in 2020 and even 2019.

So we have a lot of work to do. But working with our enforcement partners at the state patrol through the HEAT program, through their Project 2022 program, and some of the other initiatives that Colonel Langer has initiated with the state patrol, and working through our office and with over 300 other law enforcement agencies across the state, we are really concentrating on trying to take back Minnesota roads for the safe users, because that's really where we're at right now.

Those who are abusing our roads are putting every one of us in danger. And there's no reason that somebody should be afraid to get in the car to make that trip up to the cabin this weekend. But certain drivers are making that a reality for many Minnesotans.

I visited with a young lady not too long ago who shared with me that she was afraid on her afternoon commute to go from her workplace to her home because of what she sees each and every day. And that should not be what happens on our roads. We need to remember as drivers, everybody out there is somebody's mom, dad, brother, sister, coworker, somebody's kids. And our transportation system relies on cooperation, and, really, being nice to each other out there, and not treating that as your personal playground.

CATHY WURZER: So I don't want to leave this unsaid-- we've been talking about, of course, folks behind the wheel. But there are a lot of urban crashes, pedestrian fatalities, which I know are also seeing big increases. And I also understand your office has been holding planning workshops around the state-- you had one in Duluth recently. What are some solutions being talked about, not only when it comes to speeding and what's happening on highways, but also just crosswalks, and pedestrian fatalities, and motorcycle fatalities?

MIKE HANSON: You're right. The vulnerable road user population, and that's our pedestrians, our bicyclists, or motorcyclists, or anybody who's using something other than a car to get from point A to point B-- and we are seeing significant increases in their involvement in the fatality crashes. And let me just put it this way, Cathy-- when it comes to pedestrians, people think that five miles an hour over the limit doesn't make a difference.

Let me put it this way-- at 20 miles an hour, if a car hits a pedestrian, 9 times out of 10 that pedestrian may be hurt but they'll probably live. At 25 miles an hour, that pedestrian gets hit, roughly half the time they will live and half the time they will not. At 30 miles an hour, 8 to 9 times out of 10 that pedestrian will be killed as a result of that collision.

So even a little bit over that limit makes a big difference. And we are working hard through our messaging, and through working with our enforcement partners, and working with our engineering partners, and Towards Zero Deaths Initiative across the state to really change the way we look at how we drive and how we interact on our roads.

CATHY WURZER: We have about a minute left. What does that look like when it comes to reality? What is something that I might see, say, in Duluth?

MIKE HANSON: Well, you're going to see an increased enforcement presence across the state-- not only this weekend into the 4th of July week, and then, really, through the rest of the summer. We're working with our enforcement partners to increase the visibility and get people to really focus on that driving task.

You're also going to hear some strong messaging coming out from our office and through the TCD program and through our other partners as well. And we're working very hard on the local level with our Safe Roads coalitions to really change attitudes on the local level, which is where, really, our key successes will come from.

CATHY WURZER: All right. I appreciate your time, Mike Hanson. Thank you so much.

MIKE HANSON: Cathy, thank you so much, and I wish everybody a safe weekend and safe travels. Let's have a fatality-free 4th this year. That would be really great.

CATHY WURZER: That would be great. Thank you. Mike Hanson is the Director of the Office of Traffic Safety with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

[GUITAR PLAYING]

CREW: Support comes from the Walker, inviting you to enjoy performance, poetry, tours, and more as the sun shines over the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden. Take a vacation without changing location, and dive into artful activities. More at WalkerArt.org.

CATHY WURZER: You may remember the push decades ago for an Equal Rights Amendment to the US Constitution, establishing that women are fully equal citizens under the law. As a matter of fact, it was on this date June 30, 1982, when the ERA expired, having failed to reach the required amount of states to ratify the proposed amendment.

There's now renewed interest in the ERA after the Supreme Court's decision striking down *Roe v Wade*. For more on that and what the future holds for the ERA, we're joined right now by former DFL state representative Betty Folliard, who is the founder of Minnesota ERA. Good to talk with you again.

BETTY FOLLIARD: Cathy, so nice to talk to you.

CATHY WURZER: Thanks for joining us. I think many people believe the ERA is the law of the land. President Biden wants Congress to pass a resolution recognizing that the ERA has been properly ratified and is part of the Constitution. And this has been a pretty messy, complicated journey for the Amendment. Now, if enshrined in the US Constitution, what would the ERA do?

BETTY FOLLIARD: So it would institutionalize our rights to equal citizenship. That's what's key here. Because what we knew it was coming and what many people learned last Friday is that our rights can be taken away when they're in law. Laws are fickle. They come and go with the prevailing political winds.

And what we need is to embed our constitutional rights in the founding document, in the supreme document of the United States. First of all, it's going to give us standing in the courts to prevent laws that are unequal to be carried out. And it's going to affect a lot of different things-- family leave, and pay inequity, pregnancy discrimination, sexual violence, et cetera.

But what we've seen this past week is reproductive rights being pulled back. And it will give us equal standing in the law to ensure that we have the full range of reproductive rights, including abortion.

CATHY WURZER: By the way, I've noticed that the Minnesota Constitution doesn't have an Equal Rights Amendment, which may surprise some people. And your group's been working session after session to get it passed. What's the holdup there?

BETTY FOLLIARD: Yes. We've been over there for eight years now with ERA Minnesota. And for those who don't know ERA Minnesota, we are a coalition of thousands of individuals and allied organizations fighting to embed the Equal Rights Amendment in both our state and our federal constitutions.

So the holdup there right now is the makeup of the Senate. And it's kind of the same problem that we have at the federal level. We've got some very conservative people in our Minnesota Senate, and they will not address this issue.

And so that's why elections are so darn important. We have got to take this election as seriously as any election in our lifetime and put people in office who support equality. We say elect equality this election.

CATHY
WURZER: By the way, how does the ERA become more relevant now that *Roe* has been overturned? Do abortion opponents see the ERA as kind of a stalking horse that would result in bans on state laws that prohibit a woman's decision to have an abortion?

BETTY
FOLLIARD: Oh, yes. It's amazing how all of a sudden, the ERA is front and center. Because the Supreme Court's overturning *Roe v Wade* set us back not 50 years, but back to 1849. And people realized that. This makes the ERA even more important now than it ever was.

The ability to determine our own decisions about whether to have a child or not have a child has been taken away from so many women. Now, in Minnesota, as you know, we still have protections which is going to make Minnesota all of a sudden a focal area for how we deal with the issue. And we need to be fighting back as hard as we can.

And by the way, I wanted to mention to you that we are in coalition with a wonderful group of people who are organizing a major rally on July 17. It's going to be starting at the St. Paul Community and Technical College, and then we're going to march from the college to the Capitol July 17. That's a Sunday morning at 11:00 AM. This is the big one, Cathy. We're going to have at least 50,000 people there. We're going--

CATHY
WURZER: Before we go-- 50,000 people, OK.

BETTY
FOLLIARD: Make it clear that we want bodily autonomy.

CATHY
WURZER: Say, before we go-- we've got about 30 seconds here-- what are you going to be watching for in the next weeks and months?

BETTY
FOLLIARD: Well, we're working on this. We are working on the national Equal Rights Amendment. People should call the president and tell the archivist to remove the Trump memo that is stopping the Equal Rights Amendment, because we have reached the 38-state requirements, reaching all the constitutional requirements to embed the Equal Rights Amendment into the US Constitution.

CATHY
WURZER: All right. I appreciate the conversation. Thank you so much.

BETTY
FOLLIARD: Thank you, Cathy. Appreciate it.

CATHY
WURZER: Former DFL State Representative Betty Folliard. She's the founder of Minnesota IRA.

[VIOLIN PLAYING]

Well, it's summertime, and the boys of summer, the Twins, find themselves in first place. The Vikes are getting ready for training camp. And there are a lot of other things happening in the Minnesota sports scene. We're going to run them down with our sports guys Wally Langfellow and Eric Nelson.

Wally is the founder of *Minnesota Score* magazine and the co-host of *10,000 Takes* sports talk show on radio and TV. Eric is the other co-host of said show and is the Vikings reporter for CBS Radio's *Eye on the NFL*. All right, guys, we've got to talk about the Twins, right?

So they are wrapping up the series in Cleveland. Wally, weren't you a big fan of Cleveland's baseball team at one point? So it must be hard for you to watch this series.

WALLY

LANGFELLOW:

Well, it's kind of a no-win, no-lose situation. And yes, I grew up in Cleveland. So I have been following them closely for years. And they're the youngest team in baseball. And they're hanging in. I don't think people expected them to be in second place right now, but they are.

And so they've given the Twins-- they came into Minnesota last week and won two out of three here and actually went into first place for a day. So I think that they've given people reason to keep an eye on them. They're very young, as I mentioned.

And we'll see how it shakes out. You don't win the pennant or a division race in June, but you certainly can lose it. And so that was the significance of this five-game series. But the big news, of course, earlier this week is what's going to happen at the end of the day today for the Twins, and that's pitching coach Wes Johnson stepping away.

He took a job with LSU, so he'll become their pitching coach. So he's going from the majors to Division I college baseball, which is kind of ironic because you always think, well, Major League Baseball has got to be paying the best, right? Well, no, he'll make about \$750,000 a year at LSU, where he was making about \$380 for the Minnesota Twins.

So he gets a pay raise and he goes from 162 games a year, which is Major League Baseball, to about 60, which is college baseball. So all good for Wes.

I know that he really enjoyed working with the Twins pitchers, and they loved him. But at the same time, I think it was a personal move, and it's good for his family, and it's good for Wes, and that's what the Twins players and management is saying right now. Good for Wes.

ERIC NELSON:

Well, and the other thing, Cathy, it's extremely rare for a coach to leave midseason on his own. Getting fired is one thing, but he's walking away because he's got a better offer. But he's also leaving a first place team. The Minnesota Twins are on top.

Now, the AL Central, it's fairly mediocre. As they say in real estate, it's all about location, location, location. Same thing in baseball. The Twins play in a division that does not have a lot of stud teams. The Chicago White Sox were expected to win the AL Central, and they really have bottomed out so far.

They may make a run, but right now, they are basically right around .500. But there are a lot of bright spots for the Twins. The All-Star Game is next month at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles. Byron Buxton-- will he make his first ever trip to the Midsummer Classic?

I think it could happen. He slugged his 20th home run, a personal high, the other night against Cleveland. So a lot of people want to see Byron in the All-Star Game, he's an electric player with so much ability. And he's exciting to watch. And Minnesota also has, Cathy, Louis Arraez, the leading hitter in the American League.

He's so good that guys like Rod Carew and Ichiro like watching him play. So I think you might see Buxton and Arraez, two guys from Minnesota, part of that galaxy of stars, at the All-Star Game in SoCal next month.

CATHY OK, we got to talk about the Vikings, you know? Our favorite topic, the Vikings training camps, plural. But when
WURZER: we think about Vikings training camp, I always think about the summer camps in Mankato. So is this the actual summer training camp they're going to have?

WALLY It is. And now, of course, it's all in Eagan at the TCL Performance Center. Obviously, the Mankato thing is gone.
LANGFELLOW: And so are fans' abilities to go and watch practice for free. Now, they announce their training camp schedule on Tuesday.

And here you go-- it starts on Saturday, July 30. It will feature eight padded practices fans can attend for \$5 for adults, free for children. So it's a nominal fee, but it is a fee. For non-padded practices, which will be free for everyone-- and hold your hat, two premiere practices which you have to pay \$10 for adults, \$5 for kids ages 17 and under.

The other premiere session is the annual night practice at TCO Stadium. That's on Monday, August 8. The team will make available 4,000 digital tickets per practice and 7,000 available for that night practice. And you have to go to their website to do it.

You know what? To go to pay to watch practice, I don't know. I think you really got to be a die hard to do that. But there are people who do it and who enjoy it. Count me as not one of them.

ERIC NELSON: Yeah. And oh, my, Cathy, how things have changed from the days of Mankato, where the Vikings trained for over 40 years. And once upon a time, there was a thing known as the Cheese League. It was the upper Midwest version of spring training.

You had the Green Bay Packers training over in Wisconsin. You had the New Orleans Saints down in La Crosse. The Kansas City Chiefs were at UW-River Falls, that fine institution that produced you and Wally. And the Chicago Bears were in Platteville.

So if you were a football freak like I am, you could drive around the upper Midwest and see five teams in five days. That's long gone. Most NFL teams now train at their facility. And the practices that used to be free, well, as Wally laid that out, that's a day that is long gone by.

And for those of us in the media, our access is not the same. We used to eat lunch and dinner with these guys. I can remember Wally walking out of training camp in Mankato with a pie.

WALLY You had one too.
LANGFELLOW:

[LAUGHTER]

CATHY Wow. Talk about getting up close and personal with your sources.

WURZER:

ERIC NELSON: Very true.

WALLY Well, speaking of the Vikings, a former Viking is in the headlines. And hold your hats on this one if you haven't
LANGFELLOW: seen the note on this one-- earlier this week, it was announced that Adrian Peterson, the former Viking great running back, can make the argument one of the top two or three running backs in Vikings history, signed a contract to fight fellow NFL former running back Le'Veon Bell in an exhibition heavyweight boxing match at Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles on July 31.

My guess, and I think it's an educated guess based on some folks that I've talked to, AP needs the money. He's got lots of bills to pay off. And instead of borrowing it from some of his former teammates and friends around the NFL, he's going to go earn it by stepping into the ring and maybe getting his block knocked off.

CATHY Oh my goodness. And isn't he, what, 37, 38 years old or something like that? Oh, that's too bad. So let's end on a
WURZER: high note, shall we? I think Gable Steveson is such an interesting guy. And, Eric, he has now been awarded yet another big honor.

ERIC NELSON: Yeah, and we're talking about a guy who's one of the greatest athletes in the history of the U of M. Just named the Big Ten athlete of the year, Gable won Olympic gold. He was 18 and 0 last season for the Gophers, winning another national title.

He finished 85 and 2 at Minnesota. He won his last 52 matches. And he's the fifth Gopher to win this award. The last guy to do it was Cole Conrad, another wrestler back in 2007. But Gable Steveson is on his way to pro wrestling and a lot of other things that will garner him a ton of money.

And he may even come back with the Gophers this season and grapple again. He's got another year of eligibility. This is one of your Mount Rushmore athletes, I think, in the history of sports in Dinkytown. He is that good.

CATHY Yeah, he is. He is. And he was, I think, at WrestleMania earlier this year. April.

WURZER:

ERIC NELSON: Yeah.

CATHY Made his debut.

WURZER:

ERIC NELSON: What they ought to do is put Gable in that match with Le'Veon and AP and make it a trifecta. A cage match. Last man standing in Los Angeles.

CATHY No. Yikes. You guys. All right, it's been a pleasure, as always. I hope you have a good 4th of July weekend.

WURZER:

WALLY Same to you.

LANGFELLOW:

ERIC NELSON: Thanks, Cathy.

CATHY
WURZER:

That's Wally Langfellow and Eric Nelson, our sports guys. Their *10,000 Takes* sport show is on radio and TV. Say, before we go, I would be remiss if I did not mention that one of the most recognizable voices on Minnesota radio, and for that matter, on national airwaves, is retiring.

KQRS radio's Tom Bernard announced this morning he is retiring at the end of the year. He's outspoken and controversial, but he's been one of the most successful morning show hosts in the country for decades. Bernard is a Minneapolis native who started his career in 1971.

He's in the National Radio Hall of Fame and the Minnesota Broadcasting Hall of Fame at the Paddock Museum. And his is the voice on countless commercials. Bernard is 71 years old. He said this morning on his show, I guess they call it that next chapter thing and it's time to move on. Congratulations to Tom.

It's time for us to move on to our senior producer is Melissa Townsend. Our producers are Gretchen Brown, Simone Casares, and Ellen Finn. Our technical director is Maurie Jensen. Thanks for listening to *Minnesota Now*. If you missed something this week, remember we have a podcast, which you can get wherever you get your podcasts.

And then also drop us a line, will you, and let us know what you think of the program *Minnesota Now* at npr.org. We like hearing from you. And you have sent along some great ideas for music, and interviews, and show ideas. We appreciate it.

I hope you have a good and safe 4th of July holiday weekend. Thanks for listening. Take care.

CREW: Support for *Minnesota Now* comes from TruStone Financial Credit Union, dedicated to giving back to the community since 1939. Full service banking is available at 23 locations and online at trustone.org. TruStone is an equal housing opportunity lender insured by NCUA.

In the Twin Cities right now, mostly sunny skies creeping up in temperature, 85 degrees, a little more humidity out there. We're going to top out at 93 today-- 93. And then things get a little better. Overnight, 62 degrees will be our overnight low.

Tomorrow, not as warm-- sunny with a high of 82 degrees. How about the weekend? Let's see here-- Saturday 30% chance of showers and thunderstorms, highs in the low-80s on Saturday, chance of rain Saturday night. Sunday slight chance of showers in the afternoon with a high of 85. The 4th of July, 40% chance for rain, with highs in the low-80s. It's 1:00.