

**OUR MISSION**

Dignity Alliance Massachusetts is dedicated to transformative change to ensure the dignity of older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers. We are committed to advancing new ways of providing long-term services, support, living options, and care, while respecting choice and self-determination. Through education, legislation, regulatory reform, and legal strategies, this mission will become reality throughout the Commonwealth.

**OUR TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE GOALS**

**Goal # 1. Building More Resilient and Higher Quality Skilled Nursing Facilities that are Person-Centered and Respectful of the Dignity of Every Resident as well as Increasing Oversight, Accountability, and Transparency of Providers.**

**Objectives:**

* Protect skilled nursing facility residents for spread of COVID-19, other communicable diseases, and resulting isolation and neglect
* Resident-centered care with single occupancy rooms, full-time infection prevention, falls prevention, abuse prevention, strengthened family councils,
* Support redesign of nursing homes preferring small (maximum 12 residents) facilities.
* Access to palliative care and palliative care clinicians
* Improved transitions of care between nursing homes and hospitals and return to community
* Support increased nursing services for residents demonstrated to improve quality and safety. – 24/7 RN coverage, 4.1 HPRD (Hours per Resident Day) of nursing care and oppose including unlicensed or uncertified personnel in calculations
* Medical loss ratio rebates for payments calculated by taking the amount spent on medical claims and qualified health quality initiatives and dividing it by the premiums collected, minus certain federal and state taxes and fees
* Minimize use of psychotropic medications
* Safe visitation policies in all nursing facilities
* Nursing facilities to be the last option among choices for long-term care.
* Strengthen oversight and enforcement through full annual surveys with public reporting of complaints and findings even during pandemic with appropriate attention to safety protocols
* Rescind waivers of regulations and reporting during public health emergencies detrimental to residents
* Improvements to the response to complaints and deficiencies in skilled nursing facilities.
* Strengthen vetting of new owners and management companies to ensure qualification
* Non-profit or public ownership of nursing facilities over for-profit ownership
* Support transparency and accountability concerning ownership and management,

 including finances

* Enhance Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program advocacy

**Goal # 2. Safeguard the rights and expand the opportunities of persons living in community settings, including independent living, congregate care, facilities, and other housing alternatives, to provide greater independence, informed choice, and integration in the community.**

**Objectives:**

* Safe visitation policies throughout all types of congregate living residences similar to those required of nursing facilities
* Evidence-based falls prevention programs.
* Complaint resolution program for independent living and public elderly housing.
* Support basic health services for assisted living residents
* Strengthen rights of residents living with dementia in memory care units at assisted living residences
* Require assisted living residences to provide special diets (e.g., Kosher, diabetic, gluten-free)
* Improvements in care and treatment for older, frail inmates of correctional institutions.

**Goal #3. Expanding Home and Community-Based Programs, Services and Supports, Provide Accommodations and Ensure Integrated Opportunities, so that all persons can remain in their home and home communities.**

**Objectives:**

* Adoption of a Community First provision in the 1115 Medicaid Waiver scheduled for renewal in 2022.
* Age-friendly, ADA-compliant communities with affordable, accessible public transportation.
* An end to ageism and ableism in every community in the Commonwealth.
* Accessible, affordable, integrated housing to assist people to remain in their homes and communities.
* Fully including older adults and people with disabilities in work and community spheres such as voting, serving on boards and commissions, and positions of leadership.
* Policies for older adults and people with disabilities must recognize the those living in rural areas or in underserved neighborhoods in urban areas may lack broadband, access to technology, access to health providers, etc.

**Goal #4. Protecting and Supporting All Caregivers of Older Adults and People with Disabilities whether Career, Volunteer, or Family.**

**Objectives:**

* Living wage and enhanced benefits for caregivers.
* Improved caregiver training in areas such as infection prevention, resident abuse prevention, and communication skills
* Require more than 75 hours certified nurse assistant (CAN) training
* Broadest possible education in geriatrics for all health care professionals and staff.
* Behavioral health and wellness programs for long-term care staff.
* Minimize multi-facility employment by care staff
* Educate staff on the importance of vaccinations to protect selves and residents

**Goal #5. Strengthening Accessible, Universally-Designed Emergency Procedures and Responses.**

**Objectives:**

* Enhanced emergency plans in coordination with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency.
* Establish mutual aid agreements with all congregate care facilities
* Underwrite membership of all certified long term service providers in Mass Mutual Aide Association, entitling them to educational conferences, annual emergency training
* Provide adequate supplies of testing, personal protective equipment (PPE), and vaccinations for individuals living in the community and home care aides along with residents and staff of skilled nursing facilities, assisted and independent living residences.
* Promoting an emergency plan and an emergency supply kit for all older adults and people with disabilities who live independently, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

These goals been endorsed by twenty-seven participants of Dignity Alliance Massachusetts including the following:

Center for Public Representation

COP Amputee Association, Inc. – COPAA

Disability Resource Center, Inc.

Easterseals Massachusetts

Greater Boston Chapter of the United Spinal Association

Massachusetts Advocates for Nursing Home Reform, Alison Weingarten, Executive Director and Arlene Germain, Policy Director

Mystic Valley Elder Services

Judi Fonsh, MSW

Lachlan Forrow, MD

Wynn Abigail Gerhard

Pamela Goodwin, Stop Bullying Association

Bill Henning, Boston Center for Independent Living

Paul J. Lanzikos

James A. Lomastro, PhD

Mike Kennedy, Center for Independent Living

Richard T. Moore

Sandra Allyssa Novack, MBA, MSW

Paul Spooner, MetroWest Center for Independent Living