



The Tuesday Digest

Issue # 65

November 23, 2021

The Tuesday Digest is information compiled by Dignity Alliance Massachusetts concerning long-term services, support, living options, and care issued each Tuesday.

*May require registration before accessing article.

Quotes of the Week

The following bulleted quotes are excerpted from the essay, *I'm 87, Triple Vaxxed and Living My Life Again*, psychotherapist and author Katharine Etsy, published in the **New York Times** on November 17, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/87TripleVaxxedLivingLife>

- ❖ *“But every day as I venture out, there’s a drumbeat in mind, a constant accompaniment: ‘Is this too risky for me?’”*
- ❖ *“But if the risk of getting sick with Covid-19 is holding me back, there’s something even stronger drawing me out: the fear of not making the most of my remaining time, my “one wild and precious life,” as the poet Mary Oliver described it.”*
- ❖ *“Time speeds up as you age. One 90-year-old friend put it this way: “What do I have to lose?” Those of us in our 80s and older are used to having death for a neighbor.”*
- ❖ *“People my age are resilient; after all, we were children during World War II.”*
- ❖ *“In March 2020, my boyfriend and I were told that we could not keep going back and forth between our two retirement-community apartments. We decided in a few minutes that he would move in with me. That hasty decision meant we lived pleasantly together through the long months of quarantine, reading books, and playing word games.”*
- ❖ *“Some adult children of 80-somethings have become bossy and even tyrannical in their concern over their parents’ safety.”*

❖ *“Living into your 80s was not very common until relatively recently. But today, people my age are doing all sorts of things — hiking the Appalachian Trail, falling in love, writing poetry for the first time, or helping to resettle Afghan refugees. Being in your 80s doesn’t mean you have to focus on survival. It is a time to enjoy a full life. And that’s what I’m ready to do.”*

“There is something so profound about realizing that you do not struggle alone.”

Veteran caregiver Diane Hupko, *Giving Back Helps Veteran Caregiver Connect with Military Caregivers*, **Health.mil**, November 10, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/MilitaryCaregiver>

“[(s)everal breakthrough cases are] magnifying underlying health disparities.”

Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health researcher Thomas Tsai, *Covid-19 Breakthrough Hospitalizations Concentrated Among Most Vulnerable*, ***Wall Street Journal**, November 22, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/CovidBreakthruHospitalization>

“Sometimes I wonder why I’m left out here at 105. I miss my husband so much. I keep thinking I’m ready to go where he is. The last great wonder of life is what happens afterwards, and I’m anxious to find out. But people keep telling me that I inspire them. I help them to stay healthy. That’s the goal for my life. I’m staying alive to be an inspiration for a few people.”

Julia Hawkins, 105-year-old sprinter, *She is 105 and runs the 100 meters. How Julia Hawkins stays physically and mentally fit*, ***Washington Post**, November 17, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/Is105RunsThe100>

“The twilight of an October afternoon on a makeshift baseball diamond as a white horsehide sphere shattered my fragile vision was the last clear thing I ever saw.”

Ed Lucas, in “Seeing Home: The Ed Lucas Story: A Blind Broadcaster’s Story of Overcoming Life’s Obstacles”, *Ed Lucas, Blind Baseball Chronicler, Is Dead at 82*, ***New York Times**, November 16, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/BlindBaseballChronicler>

	<p><i>“There is insufficient reasonably trustworthy evidence that, had these two dementia units not been merged, the medical condition of any of these five veterans would have been materially different. Therefore, because the evidence does not support a finding of probable cause to believe Mr. [Bennett] Walsh, [former Superintendent of the Holyoke Soldiers’ Home] or [Dr. David] Clinton, [former Medical Director of the Holyoke Soldiers’ Home] committed any crime, I must dismiss the indictments against both.”</i></p> <p>Hampden Superior Court Judge Edward J. McDonough, Jr. in a 22-page decision, <i>Judge dismisses all criminal neglect charges against former leaders of the Holyoke Soldiers’ Home</i>, *Boston Globe, November 22, 2021, https://tinyurl.com/JudgeDismissesCharges</p> <p><i>We have lots of epidemiological evidence that just a little bit of activity, like 10 minutes a day or an hour a week, can lower your relative risk of mortality considerably.</i></p> <p><i>The ‘active grandparent hypothesis’: New research explores how we’ve evolved to move more and live longer</i>, STAT News, November 22, 2021, https://tinyurl.com/ActiveGrandparentHypothesis</p>
Inspiration	<p>1. *Washington Post November 17, 2021 <i>She is 105 and runs the 100 meters. How Julia Hawkins stays physically and mentally fit.</i></p> <p>At the Louisiana Senior Games on Nov. 6, 105-year-old Julia Hawkins of Baton Rouge became the oldest woman to run the 100 meters in official competition. Clocking in at 1 minute 3 seconds, she was the only competitor in the race for people 105 and older. . . Hawkins’s record followed a previous breakthrough performance in 2019, when she won gold medals in Albuquerque in both the 50-meter and 100-meter dashes at age 103. https://tinyurl.com/Is105RunsThe100</p>
Essay	<p>2. New York Times (free access) November 17, 2021 <i>I’m 87, Triple Vaxxed and Living My Life Again</i></p> <p>By Katharine Esty, a psychotherapist and the author of “Eightysomethings: A Practical Guide to Letting Go, Aging Well and Finding Unexpected Happiness.”</p> <p>Another Covid winter looms, but this moment of the pandemic feels hopeful. At age 87, I’m becoming reacquainted with the social life I had put on pause for many months. I’m going out to restaurants and museums, attending church, and visiting my grandchildren who live in a neighboring town. I’ve always seen myself as a risk-taker and an optimist. But every day as I venture out, there’s a drumbeat in mind, a constant accompaniment: “Is this too risky for me?”</p> <p>But if the risk of getting sick with Covid-19 is holding me back, there’s something even stronger drawing me out: the fear of not making the most of my remaining</p>

	<p>time, my “one wild and precious life,” as the poet Mary Oliver described it. . . . Because the pandemic forced me and my peers to be so sheltered, daily life became, ironically, stress-free and, for some of us, boring. In March 2020, my boyfriend and I were told that we could not keep going back and forth between our two retirement-community apartments. We decided in a few minutes that he would move in with me. That hasty decision meant we lived pleasantly together through the long months of quarantine, reading books, and playing word games. . . . Being in your 80s doesn’t mean you have to focus on survival. It is a time to enjoy a full life. And that’s what I’m ready to do.</p> <p>https://tinyurl.com/87TripleVaxedLivingLife</p>
<p>Reports</p>	<p>3. Journal of the American Geriatric Society May 24, 2021 <i>COVID-19 had little financial impact on publicly traded nursing home companies</i> The pandemic has been devastating in terms of high nursing home resident and staff infections and high resident death rates. In response, Congress and the federal and state governments responded with a large infusion of funds and loans to assist nursing homes during the crises. Despite statements suggesting severe financial problems for the nursing home industry, the data on publicly traded companies do not show insolvencies, bankruptcies, and severe losses of overall industry revenues. Genesis and Five Star Senior Living companies, exceptions to the rule, require more in-depth analysis to understand the role that their pre-pandemic financial problems played in restructuring or divestiture decisions. Nursing home revenues in 2020 continued at about the same levels except in four companies, and the federal and state direct grants, loans, and deferral of taxes may very well have offset most of the losses. Net income and cash-related metrics were generally favorable. Legislators, advocates, and the public need, and are entitled to, specific financial information from both public and nonpublic nursing home corporations along with data concerning how the relief funds were used by the nursing home industry. Without transparency and objective, scientific data, it is not possible to determine whether additional government funding is needed to support the nursing home industry.</p> <p>https://tinyurl.com/LittleFinancialImpact</p>
<p>Lives Well Lived</p>	<p>4. Sunday Today November 21, 2021 <i>Ed Lucas, legendary sports journalist who was blind, dies at age 82</i> Ed Lucas was 12 years old when a baseball accident left him completely blind in 1951, but he did not let that ruin his love for the game. Lucas went on to become a legendary sports journalist covering the New York Yankees and stunning his peers by his ability to know where a ball was hit based on the sound of the bat.</p> <p>https://tinyurl.com/EdLucasLegendaryJournalist</p> <p>5. *New York Times November 16, 2021 <i>Ed Lucas, Blind Baseball Chronicler, Is Dead at 82</i> Sightless since 12, he became a baseball columnist and a radio reporter. He had a unique ability to know where a ball was hit by the sound of the crack of the bat.</p> <p>https://tinyurl.com/BlindBaseballChronicler</p>
<p>Biden / federal proposals / policies</p>	<p>6. Washington Post November 19, 2021</p>

How the House spending bill would expand health care benefits

The bottom line: The legislation would help older Americans and people with disabilities covered through Medicare, consumers who buy health plans through the ACA insurance marketplaces and low-income people in a dozen states that have not expanded Medicaid under the ACA.

Empowering Medicare to negotiate drug prices: In a late-breaking compromise, Democrats agreed that the government insurance plan would be able to negotiate with manufacturers to lower prices for a limited class of as many as 10 expensive drugs, including medicines for cancer patients, taking effect in 2025.

Capping spending on drugs: The bill would institute an annual \$2,000 cap on how much seniors in Medicare's prescription drug program pay out of pocket for their drugs.

Expanding Medicare to cover hearing benefits: Audiologists and other hearing specialists would qualify for Medicare reimbursement, and the program also would cover the cost of hearing aids for seniors.

Expanding Affordable Care Act insurance subsidies: Under the changes, people well into the middle class can qualify for the subsidies for the first time in the form of tax credits.

Helping those in the Medicaid gap: For years, many Democrats have tried to figure out a way to help low-income people in 12 states whose leaders have held out against expanding the safety-net insurance program.

<https://tinyurl.com/HouseSpendingBill>

7. National Academy for State Health Policy

September 13, 2021

Understanding the Impact of ARPA Subsidies on State-Based Marketplace Plans

What did ARPA do? ARPA provided a [two-year enhancement of premium tax credits \(PTCs\)](#) for individuals who qualify to purchase coverage through health insurance marketplaces. The enhancement increases the amount of PTCs available at all income levels and eliminates the earnings limit to qualify for PTCs, formerly set at 400 percent of federal poverty level (FPL) or \$51,520/ year. The enhancements cap enrollees' monthly premium payments at 8.5 percent of enrollees income. PTC enhancements (or subsidies) are currently available for the 2021 and 2022 plan years.

What is the impact of ARPA on affordability? Although ARPA was just enacted in March 2021, state-based marketplaces rapidly implemented changes to their systems, operations, policies, and marketing to ensure consumers received the law's benefits. Initial data illustrates a significant impact on consumer affordability.

What should follow ARPA's two-year provision? The pandemic is predicted to have reverberating effects on both the health care system and the economy for years to come. When the public emergency ends, millions of Medicaid individuals and families may be disenrolled from the program. Ensuring access to alternative affordable coverage through the marketplaces will be critical for many of these low-income individuals. Given the initial findings of the significant increase in affordability and stability for consumers enrolled in state-based marketplaces, a permanent extension of ARPA subsidies would ensure consistent affordability for existing and new enrollees.

<https://tinyurl.com/ImpactARPASubsidies>

8. Urban Institute

September 10, 2021

Is a Dental Benefit Needed in Medicare?

	<p>The Issue Traditional Medicare coverage excludes dental coverage despite research that shows the necessity of dental care increasing with age. Among adults, spending on dental services reaches its highest levels between the ages of 65 and 79. While some Medicare enrollees have supplemental dental coverage, only about 27 percent of Medicare enrollees' total dental costs are currently covered by insurance.</p> <p>Key Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals age 65 and older pay 58 to 75 percent of their total dental care costs out of pocket, a higher share than younger age groups. • Medicare enrollees with low incomes are less likely to see a dentist than those with high incomes—28.7 percent of individuals with incomes below the federal poverty level accessed dental care, compared to 69.7 percent of individuals with incomes 4x the federal poverty level. • Utilization of dental care is lower among Medicare enrollees who are Black, Hispanic, and of other races (35–40%) compared to White enrollees (52.2%). <p>Conclusion Dental health impacts overall health and Medicare enrollees could substantially benefit from expanding coverage to dental services. https://tinyurl.com/DentalBenefitMedicare</p>
Webinars / Online sessions	<p>9. Washington Post Live Tuesday, November 30, 2021, 1:30 p.m. <i>How Disability Drives Innovation with Sinéad Burke, Wesley Hamilton, and Jeff Mansfield</i> Society was created for individuals with specific physical abilities. Some disability advocates would argue that this reality has bred ingenuity and adaptability among disabled people that drives innovative, technological change. Join Washington Post Live on Tuesday, Nov. 30 at 1:30 p.m. for a conversation that explores how disability drives innovation featuring founder and CEO of Tilting the Lens Sinéad Burke, entrepreneur Wesley Hamilton and architect Jeffrey Mansfield. Free registration: https://tinyurl.com/WPDisabilityInAmerica</p> <p>10. Stanford Center on Longevity Tuesday, December 7 through Thursday, December 9, 2021, 12:00 to 3:00 p.m. <i>The 2021 Century Summit</i> In 2020, the Longevity Project convened the inaugural Century Summit. The virtual conference brought together leaders in business, media, policy, and research to discuss the implications of the 100-year life. Approximately 2,000 people participated in the event, which included conversations with luminaries such as: Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH); Senator Bob Casey (D-PA); Senator Tim Scott (R-SC); Academy Award-winning actor F. Murray Abraham; Victor Dzau, President of the National Academy of Medicine; and dozens of other prominent leaders. The 2021 Century Summit, to be held virtually on December 7th, 8th and 9th will once again bring together leaders across economics, research, medicine, and government to discuss the impact of people living longer lives. Convened in collaboration with the Stanford Center on Longevity, the Century Summit will offer leaders an opportunity to present new visions on how society can restructure work, reorganize our cities, enhance lifelong learning, create new financial security, and promote greater health and vitality in the new age of longevity. Each day will offer new insights and opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of the implications of the longer life:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tuesday, December 7th, 12:00 to 3:00 p.m.: Rethinking Care</i> • <i>Wednesday, December 8th, 12:00 to 3:00 p.m.: The Intergenerational Compact</i> • <i>Thursday, December 12:00 to 3:00 p.m.: Reinventing the Second Half of Life</i> <p>All registered attendees will receive a link to the livestream platform a few days before the start of the Century Summit. No software download will be necessary. The link to the livestream platform is not available at this time but will be posted in the Online Event Page and distributed via a separate email communication from Eventbrite about 48 hours before the start of the event.</p> <p>Free registration at: https://tinyurl.com/Stanford21stCenturySummit</p>
Previously posted webinars and online sessions	<p>Previously posted webinars and online sessions can be viewed at: https://dignityalliancema.org/webinars-and-online-sessions/</p>
Veteran Services / Holyoke Soldiers' Home	<p>11. *Boston Globe November 22, 2021 <i>Judge dismisses all criminal neglect charges against former leaders of the Holyoke Soldiers' Home</i> A Hampden Superior Court judge has dismissed all criminal charges against two former top officials of the Holyoke Soldiers' Home, where at least 76 veterans died from COVID-19, saying there is no "reasonably trustworthy evidence" that their actions harmed veterans. . . "There is insufficient reasonably trustworthy evidence that, had these two dementia units not been merged, the medical condition of any of these five veterans would have been materially different," wrote [Hampden Superior Court Judge Edward J. McDonough, Jr.] in a 22-page decision. "Therefore, because the evidence does not support a finding of probable cause to believe Mr. Walsh or Mr. Clinton committed any crime, I must dismiss the indictments against both." https://tinyurl.com/JudgeDismissesCharges</p> <p>12. WWLP.com November 22, 2021 <i>Charges dismissed for former superintendent of Holyoke Soldiers' Home</i> The charges against the former superintendent of the Holyoke Soldiers' Home were dismissed on Monday. Walsh was facing five counts each of criminal neglect and five counts each of causing or permitting serious bodily injury to an elder. The charges are based on five veterans who were allegedly moved into dining room when the outbreak began. https://tinyurl.com/HolyokeChargesDismissed</p> <p>13. Health.mil November 10, 2021 <i>MHS Reaches 6 Million Doses of Vaccine Against COVID</i> Pentagon spokesperson John Kirby said Nov. 1 that "as of today, 97% of the active-duty force has had at least one dose. This would include 99% of active-duty sailors, and with active airmen closely behind it, around 97%, and the Marine Corps is at 93% with one dose, and the Army also is in the 90th percentile." https://tinyurl.com/MHS6MillionDoses</p> <p>14. Health.mil November 10, 2021 <i>Giving Back Helps Veteran Caregiver Connect with Military Caregivers</i> Military caregivers play a huge part in the recovery process of our nation's wounded, ill, and injured service members. Ensuring caregivers are supported in their efforts is vital to the success of the process. https://tinyurl.com/MilitaryCaregiver</p>

Workforce / Caregiving	<p>15. Health.mil November 10, 2021 <i>Giving Back Helps Veteran Caregiver Connect with Military Caregivers</i> Military caregivers play a huge part in the recovery process of our nation's wounded, ill, and injured service members. Ensuring caregivers are supported in their efforts is vital to the success of the process. https://tinyurl.com/MilitaryCaregiver</p>
Covid-19	<p>16. *Wall Street Journal November 22, 2021 <i>Covid-19 Breakthrough Hospitalizations Concentrated Among Most Vulnerable</i> [P]eople with diabetes, chronic lung disease, kidney disease and compromised immune systems were at risk of serious outcomes from breakthrough cases. . . Breakthrough deaths are hitting older people the hardest, amplifying a well-worn pandemic pattern. . . [A]bout 80% of breakthrough deaths among the vaccinated are in people ages 65 and older. https://tinyurl.com/CovidBreakthruHospitalization</p>
Longevity	<p>17. STAT News November 22, 2021 <i>The 'active grandparent hypothesis': New research explores how we've evolved to move more and live longer</i> There are some hypotheses. The first hypothesis is that in humans, physical activity evolved to help extend health span. Prior to medicine, health span equaled life span. Today, when we get sick in our 50s or 60s from diabetes or heart disease or whatever ails us, we go to the doctor, but that didn't exist until recently. Our general hypothesis is that we evolved all kinds of responses to physical activity that improve health span over the long term, not just when you're young, but when you're old. And that those responses are largely due to energy allocation. Until recently, energy was limited, people couldn't go to the 7-Eleven and grab 200 calories. People had to be very physically active, which takes energy. . . The other hypothesis is that physical activity is also important for health because it's stressful. If I were to go for a run right now, my mitochondria would start pumping out reactive oxygen species, I'd be putting little micro cracks in my bone, I'd be glycosylating proteins. But of course, physical activity isn't bad for us. It's good for us. And the reason it's good for us is that our bodies mount a whole series of responses to those stresses that are beneficial. . . We have lots of epidemiological evidence that just a little bit of activity, like 10 minutes a day or an hour a week, can lower your relative risk of mortality considerably. https://tinyurl.com/ActiveGrandparentHypothesis</p> <p>18. *Washington Post November 17, 2021 <i>She is 105 and runs the 100 meters. How Julia Hawkins stays physically and mentally fit.</i> At the Louisiana Senior Games on Nov. 6, 105-year-old Julia Hawkins of Baton Rouge became the oldest woman to run the 100 meters in official competition. Clocking in at 1 minute 3 seconds, she was the only competitor in the race for people 105 and older. . . Hawkins's record followed a previous breakthrough performance in 2019, when she won gold medals in Albuquerque in both the 50-meter and 100-meter dashes at age 103. https://tinyurl.com/Is105RunsThe100</p>

	*May require registration before accessing article.		
Dignity Alliance Massachusetts Legislative Endorsements	Information about the legislative bills which have been endorsed by Dignity Alliance Massachusetts, including the text of the bills, can be viewed at: https://tinyurl.com/DignityLegislativeEndorsements Questions or comments can be directed to Legislative Work Group Chair Richard (Dick) Moore at rmoore8473@charter.net .		
Previously recommended websites	The comprehensive list of recommended websites has migrated to the Dignity Alliance MA website: https://dignityalliancema.org/resources/ . Only new recommendations will be listed in <i>The Tuesday Digest</i> .		
Previously posted funding opportunities	For open funding opportunities previously posted in <i>The Tuesday Digest</i> please see https://dignityalliancema.org/funding-opportunities/ .		
Nursing Home Closures	Heathwood Healthcare 188 Florence St. Chestnut Hill, MA 02467 Scheduled to be closed by January 5, 2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice of Intent to Close (Word) • Draft of Relocation Plan (Word) Closure Notices and Relocation Plans available at: https://tinyurl.com/MANursingHomeClosures		
Websites of Dignity Alliance Massachusetts Members	See: https://dignityalliancema.org/about/organizations/		
Access to Dignity Alliance social media	Email: info@DignityAllianceMA.org Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/DignityAllianceMA/ Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/dignityalliance/ LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/dignity-alliance-massachusetts Twitter: https://twitter.com/dignity_ma?s=21 Website: www.DignityAllianceMA.org		
Participation opportunities with Dignity Alliance Massachusetts Most workgroups meet bi-weekly via Zoom. Please contact workgroup lead for more information	Workgroup	Workgroup lead	Email
	General Membership	Bill Henning Paul Lanzikos	bhenning@bostoncil.org paul.lanzikos@gmail.com
	Behavioral Health	Frank Baskin	baskinfrank19@gmail.com
	Communications	Pricilla O'Reilly Samantha VanSchoick	prisoreilly@gmail.com svanschoick@cil.org
	Facilities (Nursing homes, rest homes, assisted living)	Arlene Germain	agermain@manhr.org
	Home and Community Based Services	Meg Coffin	mcoffin@centerlw.org
	Housing	Shaya French	sfrench@bostoncil.org
	Legislative	Richard Moore	rmoore8743@charter.net
	Topical Conversations	Lachan Forrow	lforrow@bidmc.harvard.edu
	Veteran Services	James Lomastro	jimlomastro@comcast.net
<i>The Tuesday Digest</i>	For a free weekly subscription to <i>The Tuesday Digest</i> : https://dignityalliancema.org/contact/sign-up-for-emails/		
Note of thanks	Thanks to the contributors to this issue of <i>The Tuesday Digest</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judi Fonsh • Sandy Novack 		

	<p>Special thanks to Sue Rorke and Paul Spooner with the MetroWest Center for Independent Living for their assistance with the website and MailChimp versions of <i>The Tuesday Digest</i>.</p> <p><i>If you have submissions for inclusion in The Tuesday Digest or have questions or comments, please submit them to paul.lanzikos@gmail.com.</i></p>
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Dignity Alliance Massachusetts is a broad-based coalition of organizations and individuals pursuing fundamental changes in the provision of long-term services, support, and care for older adults and persons with disabilities.

Our guiding principle is the assurance of dignity for those receiving the services as well as for those providing them.

The information presented in "The Tuesday Digest" is obtained from publicly available sources and does not necessarily represent positions held by Dignity Alliance Massachusetts.

Previous issues of The Tuesday Digest are available at: <https://dignityalliancema.org/the-tuesday-digest/>

For more information about Dignity Alliance Massachusetts, please visit www.DignityAllianceMA.org.