



The Dignity Digest

Issue # 69

December 24, 2021

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

*May require registration before accessing article.

Quotes of the Week

“[S]ooner or later, each of us is obliged, at least for a spell, to identify ourselves as citizens of . . . the kingdom of the sick.”

Susan Sontag as quoted in *The Land of the Well* (print title), ***Boston Globe Magazine**, December 17, 2021 (updated), <https://tinyurl.com/LandOfTheWell>

“But how do you know you won’t die before me?”

Sam Thomas, diagnosed with terminal acute myeloid leukemia during the pandemic, *The Land of the Well* (print title), ***Boston Globe Magazine**, December 17, 2021 (updated), <https://tinyurl.com/LandOfTheWell>

“I’ve had protesters throw apples and water bottles at me but that doesn’t compare to the challenge of giving someone a bed bath.”

Pfc. Shina Vang, Minnesota National Guard member mobilized to work in nursing homes throughout the state, *National Guard Empties Bedpans and Clips Toenails at Nursing Homes*, ***New York Times**, December 22, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/NationalGuardNursingHomes>

“Look how far we haven’t come. Or how far we have yet to go.”

Gregg Mozgala, an actor with cerebral palsy and the founder and artistic director of the Apothetae, commenting on the lack of involvement of disabled performers and others in the performing arts, *‘The Music Man’ Once Had a Disabled Character. Then He Was Erased.*, **New York Times (free access)**, December 16, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/MusicManDisabledCharacter>

More fundamentally, is the provision of care itself an act of service or a transaction? The term “care” is used promiscuously in our economy: from “Care Bears” to “hospice care.” At its core, however, to care for someone is to bestow one’s concern, time, and skills on another who is

weakened and vulnerable. It has a foundational component of personal sacrifice and selflessness. Care is delivered with a respect for the relationship of the caregiver to the care receiver, and awareness of eventual reciprocity: sooner or later we will all be care receivers.

Care Is an Action, Not a Transaction, Milbank Memorial Fund, December 17, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/CareIsAnAction>

“We want to help our patients live well and die well, according to their goals. As a geriatrician, I love providing more care while decreasing the total cost of care.”

Anthony Zizza, MD, senior medical director, Landmark Health, an in-home medical practice, Landmark Health: Providing Comprehensive In-Home Care to Older Adults, The Playbook (Milbank Memorial Fund), December 9, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/LandmarkHealth>

“Banks have pulled out of so many communities, we now have banking deserts just as we have food deserts. . . A public bank has a fiduciary responsibility, but they have it to the customers. They are looking out for what’s in the best interest of the people who own the bank—the people of the state.”

New York state Sen. James Sanders Jr. (D-Queens), Your State Could Decide to Open a Bank, PEW Stateline, December 14, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/StateOpenPublicBank>

Improving older adults’ independence in the home and community will save Medicare and Medicaid dollars; strengthen communities, families, and public health infrastructure; and improve health equity. Mechanisms already exist for states to adopt interventions to accomplish these goals including CAPABLE in their Medicaid programs.

It’s Time to Promote Aging in Community: Opportunities for States, Milbank Memorial Fund, December 17, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/PromoteAgingInTheCommunity>

And, so round and round the circle of the seasons go, the shifts in weather and the shifts of mind. Though what never changes is my absolute knowing that when the going gets

tough, I can get out there and walk through any tunnels and into the light. This foggy December morning, I walked through a sputtering of cold rain. The shiver I felt was one that brought on a huge smile, and the sense I always get when I am moving swiftly under towering trees — that I am ready for anything.

Beat Any Blues by Walking Through the Seasons of Life, The Ethel from AARP, December 20, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/BeatAnyBlues>

It is no longer possible to ignore the harms that result from the de-prioritization of primary care. Reversing these trends will require payer, clinician, and community collaborations and investments.

Payers Can Advance Equity by Strengthening Primary Care, Milbank Memorial Fund, December 15, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/AdvanceEquityPrimaryCare>

[Massachusetts Governor Charlie] Baker is surrounded by voices of reason, but so far has not been swayed. He says people “should be wearing masks,” but he doesn’t want to mandate them.

Editorial, Baker needs to lead on mask mandate, Salem News, December 20, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/BakerNeedToLead>

“Older people were next. We are older. I am 99 and will turn 100 on December 14. My husband, Roger, is 97, and up until October, we still lived in our own home in Beverly. We were excited about getting the COVID-19 vaccine and getting back to our lives, with family members dropping by.”

*Mary Sue Wonson, Amazing Grace at 99 (print title), *Boston Globe Magazine, November 24, 2021 (updated), <https://tinyurl.com/AmazingGraceAt99>*

Aging isn’t for sissies, as Bette Davis said, and I’m grateful to be healthy “for my age,” as 15-year-old-looking doctors remind me. No matter how liberated we are about aging, it’s still a challenge to accept our bodies and minds, which were once more agile and robust.

Candy Shulman, Think a Senior Discount Is the Only Perk Associated with Aging?, The Ethel from AARP, December 20, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/PerkAssociatedWithAging>

“It’s okay for you to be angry with God,” one nurse, who was a nun, told me. “I’m angry with God today.”

Tracy Grant, *The Truth About Caregiving: Your Determination Isn’t Enough*, ***Washington Post Magazine**, October 26, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/TruthAboutCaregiving>

“The website is not accurate. All covid test out of stock.”

Sign on CVS store door, *Walgreens and CVS struggle against ‘unprecedented’ holiday demand for home tests amid omicron surge*, **Washington Post** (free access), December 21, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/WalgreensCVSStruggleTests>

“There’s no question that it appears we’re in a canoe that is about to go over a significant waterfall.”

Bruce Farber, chief of infectious diseases at Northwell Health, a New York health-care system that includes 22 hospitals, *FDA authorizes Pfizer’s anti-covid pill as omicron surges*, ***Washington Post**, December 22, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/FDAAuthorizedAntoCovidPill>

“We have seen how surges in Covid-19 infections can overwhelm hospitals, and influenza infections could further stress health care systems. If both viruses continue to circulate and increase in activity, the situation could get worse.”

Sonja Olsen, an epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *The Flu Makes an Unwelcome Comeback as Omicron Surge*, ***New York Times**, December 22, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/FluUnwelcomeComeback>

“Why is it that an ice storm knocking out electricity for people with houses is considered an emergency worthy of providing emergency shelter, but people without houses living in tents in the cold is not considered an emergency? Our community is saying it is an emergency when people who have houses don’t have electricity, but it isn’t an emergency when people don’t have a house.”

Cate Woolner, organizer of rally regarding reuse of Farren Care Center, Turner Falls, *Homeless relief advocates to rally outside Farren on Christmas Eve*, **Greenfield Recorder**, December 21, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/RallyOutsideFarren>

“Restricting the ability to interact, there’s a price to pay for

	<p><i>all that. Somebody said if we're not careful, we're going to trade one epidemic for another, and in many ways, I think we are."</i></p> <p>Eli Capilouto, president of the University of Kentucky, <i>Another Surge in the Virus Has Colleges Fearing a Mental Health Crisis</i>, *New York Times, December 22, 2021, https://tinyurl.com/CollegesMentalHealthCrisis</p> <p><i>"I believe it's necessary to go beyond advisories and recommendations and apply a uniform, consistent approach to stopping the spread and saving lives. I am calling on the administration to reinstitute a statewide indoor public mask mandate, increase efforts to achieve vaccine equity and require proof of vaccination for most public indoor social venues."</i></p> <p>Massachusetts State Senate President Karen Spilka, <i>It's time to upgrade your mask, public health experts say</i>, *Boston Globe, December 21, 2021, https://tinyurl.com/UpgradeYourMask</p>
<p>Featured News Article</p>	<p>1. New York Times (free access) December 10, 2021 (updated) <i>How Nursing Homes' Worst Offenses Are Hidden from the Public</i> Thousands of problems identified by state inspectors were never publicly disclosed because of a secretive appeals process, a New York Times investigation found. A New York Times investigation found that at least 2,700 . . . dangerous incidents were also not factored into the rating system run by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, or C.M.S., which is designed to give people reliable information to evaluate the safety and quality of thousands of nursing homes. Many of the incidents were uncovered by state inspectors and verified by their supervisors, but quashed during a secretive appeals process, according to a review of thousands of pages of inspection reports and nursing home appeals, which The Times obtained via public-records requests. Others were omitted from the C.M.S. ratings website because of what regulators describe as a technical glitch. The Times this year has documented a series of problems with Medicare's ratings system. Much of the data that powers the system is wrong and often makes nursing homes seem cleaner and safer than they are. The rating system also obscures how many residents are receiving powerful antipsychotic drugs. . . The Times asked public health agencies in all 50 states how often citations were upheld, reduced in severity, or deleted entirely since 2016. Eighteen states provided figures. About 37 percent of the time, the nursing homes succeeded in getting citations removed or reduced in severity. The success rate varied from state to state. In Massachusetts, 36 percent of the citations that nursing homes appealed ended up being deleted. . . But the appeals process tilts in favor of nursing homes because the facilities are the only ones to make their case; residents and their families are shut out of the process. Regardless of the reason, visitors to the Care Compare website have no way of knowing if they are getting an incomplete picture of problems at a nursing home. . .</p>

	<p>The appeals often shed light on serious violations that never made it onto Care Compare. The Times reviewed 76 federal administrative decisions published in 2020 and 2021. Ten violations that were upheld by the court were not posted to the federal website and didn't affect the homes' star ratings. https://tinyurl.com/NursingHomeWorseOffenses</p>
Essays	<p>2. *Boston Globe Magazine December 17, 2021 (updated) <i>The Land of the Well</i> (print title) <i>When my father was diagnosed with cancer, we embarked on a journey into the 'kingdom of the sick'</i> (online title) As our e-mails crisscrossed the Atlantic, he in England, I in Boston, it became harder for me to fully inhabit the land of the well. And so, when my father — who never got sick — was suddenly diagnosed with terminal acute myeloid leukemia during the pandemic, the two of us launched a bold experiment. We began an epistolary project between two lands, inspired by writer Susan Sontag's description of how "sooner or later, each of us is obliged, at least for a spell, to identify ourselves as citizens of . . . the kingdom of the sick." . . . Soon after his terminal diagnosis, Dad was visited by dear friends who were feeling sorrowful about his approaching departure. He thanked them graciously — but not before adding, with a playful laugh, "But how do you know you won't die before me?" Throughout the summer, he was admitted to the hospital several times. On a night we thought we might lose him, I sat at my kitchen table in Jamaica Plain, more than 3,000 miles away. . . We'd have known that before long — tomorrow, or later this year — one of us would need to go to the airport and get on a plane. That's who we are, those of us who belong to multiple places. But not that night. https://tinyurl.com/LandOfTheWell</p> <p>3. *Boston Globe Magazine November 24, 2021 (updated) <i>Amazing Grace at 99</i> (print title) <i>My husband is 97, I'm 99. We have so much to be thankful for</i> (online title) To us, music says "thank you" best, so Roger played "Amazing Grace" on his saxophone to thank the nurse who gave us our COVID vaccines. After a Zoom Christmas and Zoom New Year's Eve, 2021 brought hope and a new vaccine. Health care workers were getting their shots in January. Older people were next. We are older. I am 99 and will turn 100 on December 14. My husband, Roger, is 97, and up until October, we still lived in our own home in Beverly. We were excited about getting the COVID-19 vaccine and getting back to our lives, with family members dropping by. . . On Wednesday we heard a knock at the door. "Hello," a nurse greeted us. We rolled up our sleeves and he gave us the shot at long last. We were free. . . Feeling grateful, Roger said, "I would like to play a song on my saxophone to thank you." Roger selected his favorite sax and played "Amazing Grace." The nurse joined in, singing in French, and Kathy chimed in, also in French. It turned out that the nurse had grown up in Paris. We all sang "Amazing Grace" in English the second time. This time Roger put down his saxophone and sang the tenor part. What a special day! https://tinyurl.com/AmazingGraceAt99</p>
Reports	<p>4. National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities December 22, 2021 (updated)</p>

	<p><i>Time-Based Associations Between COVID-19 Cases and Community-Level Risk Factors in Massachusetts</i></p> <p>There has been a disproportionate burden of COVID-19 cases in the U.S. among racial and ethnic minority populations, workers in essential services, people living in poverty or crowded housing, and among those with reduced access to testing or health care. Previous studies assessing increased risk for COVID-19 exposure or incidence have predominantly considered only one point in time. A recent study supported by NIMHD examined COVID-19 risk at the community-level in Massachusetts across multiple timepoints during the pandemic. The study investigators examined whether sociodemographic factors were predictive of changes in COVID-19 cases over time.</p> <p>The investigators compiled publicly available datasets for 351 towns and cities in Massachusetts across five periods of time from March 2020 to October 2020. They used mixed-effect, adjusted Poisson regression models to identify sociodemographic factors associated with town-level COVID-19 case incidence. The datasets included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 case data from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. • Sociodemographic, occupational, and economic data from the 2014-2018 American Community Survey (ACS). • Estimates of the percentage of essential and service workers (i.e., healthcare practitioners, transportation occupation, food preparation) modified from the ACS using a dataset created by the American Civil Liberties Union. • Cell phone mobility data to calculate the percentage of residents commuting to work using SafeGraph Social Distancing Metrics. <p>The investigators reported that one of the strongest predictors of COVID-19 incidence across all timepoints was an increased percentage of town residents classified as essential workers. At the beginning of the pandemic, there was also a positive association between COVID-19 cases and the percentage of residents over 80 years of age, as well as the number of long-term care facility beds. However, the association of incidence with residents over 80 years of age and number of long-term care facility beds decreased over time from the first time point to the last. There was also variable association between COVID-19 cases in cities and towns with higher percentages of residents with no health insurance or with greater population density.</p> <p>https://tinyurl.com/CommunityRiskFactorsMass</p>
Legislative hearings	<p>5. Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities Tuesday, January 4, 2021, 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>H.268 An Act regarding spouses as caregivers Rep. Adam J. Scanlon S.89 An Act allowing spouses to serve as caregivers Sen. Joanne Comerford</p> <p>Submit written testimony to jointcommittee.children&families@malegislature.gov To sign up for oral testimony, email jointcommittee.children&families@malegislature.gov to register in advance and to provide the following information by WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 29TH AT 5PM: For more information: https://malegislature.gov/Events/Hearings/Detail/4146</p>
State Policies	<p>6. Milbank Memorial Fund December 17, 2021</p> <p><i>It's Time to Promote Aging in Community: Opportunities for States</i> Co-author: Alice Bonner, former Secretary, Massachusetts Executive of Elder Affairs</p> <p>According to a recent AARP survey, most older adults want to live in their own</p>

	<p>homes and communities as they age. This preference aligns with states’ interest in managing Medicaid budget growth. Medicaid is an entitlement for all eligible people and already represents a national average of 28.6% of state budgets. Spending on Medicaid-funded long-term services and supports (LTSS) averages 32% of those expenditures. Enabling older adults to remain at home and out of hospitals and nursing homes could lead to significant savings for Medicaid. The Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services has championed “rebalancing” of LTSS funding from institutions such as nursing homes to home and community-based services (HCBS) options, and a number of states have made considerable progress with initiatives designed to support successful aging-in-community. . .</p> <p>And as state and federal government agencies partner to address spending on at-home services, both have opportunities to help older adults age in community by implementing emerging, evidence-based interventions that braid funding for both medical and social supports. A leading example is the Community Aging in Place: Advancing Better Living for Elders (CAPABLE) approach.</p> <p>What Is CAPABLE?</p> <p>CAPABLE assesses the needs of older people with self-identified difficulty with at least one activity of daily living (ADL) in their home environment over a four-to-five-month period through 10 home visits from an inter-professional team composed of an occupational therapist (OT), registered nurse (RN), and handy worker. The CAPABLE clinician team (OT and RN) uses comprehensive assessment tools to work with people in setting individual goals related to mobility, self-care, and ADLs. Handy workers perform home modifications and repairs, working closely with the OT and the participant. Evidence from multiple trials and community implementations shows that CAPABLE improves participant self-efficacy, reduces disability, decreases hospitalizations, reduces nursing home days, and improves depression and pain conditions.</p> <p>CAPABLE is based on a participant-driven approach to goal setting and actions taken between visits. The older adult participant is at the center of the team and is considered the expert in determining priorities and timelines, as well as deciding how and when to enlist family members. Studies find that when participants set goals and believe they are able to achieve them, they are more motivated to complete those goals. The RN and OT use motivational interviewing and other techniques to engage and encourage older adults, as well as to build problem-solving skills that may be used in the future. The program is designed for sustainability: by addressing functional issues early on, the program can help prevent more serious challenges even after the intervention has been completed. https://tinyurl.com/PromoteAgingInTheCommunity</p> <p>7. PEW Stateline December 14, 2021 <i>Your State Could Decide to Open a Bank</i> Unlike commercial banks, the mission of public banks would be to invest in public priorities such as affordable housing, small business loans or infrastructure projects. Most proposed public banks would offer consumers “no fee” banking, including a limit or ban on overdraft fees. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation would insure the deposits in public banks and guarantee the financial soundness of the institutions, just as the agency does for commercial banks. https://tinyurl.com/StateOpenPublicBank</p>
Videos	<p>8. AARP Massachusetts <i>VIDEO: Watch the AARP Massachusetts Virtual ReiMagine Age and Dementia</i></p>

	<p><i>Friendly Summit</i></p> <p>Video: Keynote Address – Partnerships and Power of Individual Advocates by Callie Crossley, the Host of the radio show and podcast Under the Radar with Callie Crossley, which airs on GBH. Her award-winning radio essays air Mondays during <i>GBH’s Morning Edition</i>. She also hosts <i>Basic Black on GBH-TV</i>, which focuses on current events impacting communities of color. Crossley is a frequent commentator on local and national television and radio programs and has been quoted in a variety of publications, including The Washington Post, and Vanity Fair.</p> <p>Video: Age and Dementia Friendly Education: Municipal Departments and Businesses - Uncover the many ways municipalities have worked across departments and engaged local businesses in their efforts to make the community more inclusive for all residents. Click to learn more about the Boston Age-Friendly Business Program.</p> <p>Facilitator: Jacquie Bishop, AARP Massachusetts</p> <p>Speaker: Andrea Burns, Age Strong Commission, Boston</p> <p>Video: Encouraging Local Government Participation – Learn creative ways to empower residents and encourage local government participation in your community’s Age and Dementia Friendly efforts.</p> <p>Facilitator: Kelli Lefler, AARP Massachusetts</p> <p>Speakers: Beatrice Dewberry and Emily Thibault, Way Finders Walter Leutz, Waltham Connections for Healthy Aging</p> <p>Video: Organizing Community Stakeholders – Discussion on the different ways communities have identified and established groups of stakeholders to assist with moving the age friendly initiatives forward.</p> <p>Facilitator: Patty Sullivan, Dementia Friendly Massachusetts</p> <p>Speakers: Carrie Johnson, SeniorCare Inc. Nour Elkhataby Strauch, LifePath</p> <p>Video: Reframing: Equity and Inclusion – This session offers community-based organizations tools to advance equity and reframe aging, including recommendations from Frameworks Institute Reframing Aging research and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Racial Equity Data Road Map. Communities will be challenged to consider who is participating of their age- and dementia-friendly movement, who may be missing, and how to create inclusive spaces. Additionally, the session will explore ways reframing aging has evolved in the context of the pandemic and offer time for conversation and discussion regarding communities’ journey for inclusivity and equity in age and dementia-friendly work.</p> <p>Facilitator: Amanda Bernardo, Executive Office of Elder Affairs</p> <p>Speakers: Sabrina Selk, Massachusetts Department of Public Health Alrie McNiff Daniels, Tufts Health Plan Foundation https://tinyurl.com/AARPMVirtualSummit</p>
Podcasts	<p>9. Kaiser Health News (Podcast)</p> <p>December 9, 2021</p> <p><i>KHN’s ‘What the Health?’: Much Ado About (Vaccine) Mandates</i></p> <p>Among the takeaways from this week’s episode:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congress is expected to pass a bill shortly that will protect Medicare reimbursements for hospitals and doctors, who faced some automatic pay cuts based on previous laws that sought to rein in federal spending. Some physicians were looking at a 10% cut in payments. • Republican and Democratic leaders agreed this week to add to that Medicare

	<p>bill a complicated scheme that will allow Congress to approve an extension of the federal debt limit. The measure will give the Senate a one-time option to pass the debt ceiling bill by a simple majority and not face the threat of a filibuster.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public health officials say preliminary data suggests that the newest covid-19 variant, omicron, may be more contagious than delta but perhaps may cause less severe symptoms. Still, more infections could create problems for the already-straining health care system. • Senate Republicans — with the support of two Democrats — launched an attack on Biden’s vaccination mandates at work and passed a bill that would repeal that regulation. That effort is a sign of how the political opposition to the effort to force vaccines is growing. It’s an outgrowth of other efforts by conservatives to oppose public health measures designed to fight the pandemic, including mask mandates and business shutdowns. • A successful effort to stop covid requires robust testing, but in this country getting rapid tests to the public has been lacking. Overseas, those tests often are ubiquitous and cheap. But here, they are relatively expensive and often hard to find. Biden’s efforts to help consumers by requiring insurers to cover the costs is still a month from starting and will be cumbersome to set up. It will help only those who have private insurance because the requirement does not apply to people who don’t have insurance or are covered by Medicare or Medicaid. • Often overlooked last week in the hype about the Supreme Court arguments on the Mississippi abortion law were two recent cases about federal hospital payments. Both are complex cases, one dealing with administrative rules about hospital funding for poor patients and the other concerning a drug discount pricing program. • The highly publicized trial of Elizabeth Holmes, former head of the now-defunct company Theranos, points to a federal regulatory issue. Both the Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services have authority over diagnostic lab testing, but neither apparently made much of an impact in stopping what prosecutors allege was a fraudulent scheme by Theranos to test people for maladies by analyzing a few drops of blood. • Sen. Bob Dole of Kansas, who is being lauded this week after his death Sunday, was a strong Republican. But that never meant he wouldn’t work with people from the Democratic Party. For him, issues were about policy and were not personal. It was an era far different from today. <p>https://tinyurl.com/WhatsTheHealthDec9</p>
Blogs	<p>10. Milbank Memorial Fund December 17, 2021 <i>Care Is an Action, Not a Transaction</i> Does primary care, and by extension all of health care, exist to meet the needs of the community or the individual. . . More fundamentally, is the provision of care itself an act of service or a transaction? The term “care” is used promiscuously in our economy: from “Care Bears” to “hospice care.” At its core, however, to care for someone is to bestow one’s concern, time, and skills on another who is weakened and vulnerable. It has a foundational component of personal sacrifice and</p>

	<p>selflessness. Care is delivered with a respect for the relationship of the caregiver to the care receiver, and awareness of eventual reciprocity: sooner or later we will all be care receivers.</p> <p>https://tinyurl.com/CareIsAnAction</p>
<p>Webinar and online sessions</p>	<p>11. The International Federation of Social Workers Wednesday, June 29 to Saturday, July 2, 2022 <i>Global People's Summit for a New Eco-Social World 2022</i> The Global Summit for a New Eco-Social World is for everyone. It brings together community representatives, global organisations, government leaders, health and social work professions, environmental campaigners, people of lived experience, trade unions, civil rights champions, individuals, and members of communities, in partnership to begin this process. The summit is timed to take place immediately before the United Nations High-Level Political Forum in July 2022. The conclusions from the summit will be delivered to the United Nations and all the world's leaders. The vision is that when we emerge from this pandemic, we co-build a world based on values that ensure our planet will be sustainable, and together we can provide good quality life-cycles , not only for each human being, but for each part of our eco-systems on which we all depend, leaving no one behind. More information is here : http://www.newecosocialworld.com/</p>
<p>Previously posted webinars and online sessions</p>	<p>Previously posted webinars and online sessions can be viewed at: https://dignityalliancema.org/webinars-and-online-sessions/</p>
<p>Nursing Homes</p>	<p>12. *New York Times December 22, 2021 <i>National Guard Empties Bedpans and Clips Toenails at Nursing Homes</i> Over the past two weeks, 30 Guard members have been working as certified nursing assistants at North Ridge, which has been so badly hobbled by an exodus of employees that administrators have been forced to mothball entire wings, severely limiting new admissions. As a result, hospitals cannot send patients to long-term care centers like North Ridge, creating a backup that is eroding Minnesota's capacity to treat people with Covid-19 and other medical emergencies. Similar backlogs — hospital patients well enough to be discharged but too fragile to go home — are choking health systems across the country. Staffing shortages have long been a problem for nursing homes in the United States, but the coronavirus has pushed many to the brink as low-wage aides retire early or quit for jobs that are better paid and less taxing. "The pandemic has underscored the system's fragility, and the need for fundamental change," said R. Tamara Konetzka, an expert in the economics of long-term care at the University of Chicago. In Minnesota, that means 23,000 nursing home positions were unfilled in October, up from 8,000 last March, according to a survey of providers. North Ridge has been hit especially hard by the pandemic, with more than 592 cases and 52 Covid deaths among its residents since March 2020, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, though the vast majority of those cases, 472, were among patients already sickened by Covid when they arrived. Over the past four years, North Ridge has been fined more than \$180,000 by federal inspectors and cited for a number of health and safety violations. It has received two out of five stars for overall care from C.M.S., a "below average" rating. . . Certified nursing assistants, the workhorses of long-term care facilities, normally go through five weeks of training before taking final exams, but nursing school leaders condensed the program to eight 10-hour days. "It feels like we're</p>

	<p>supporting a natural disaster,” said Traci Krause, the director of nursing at Minneapolis Community & Technical College, as a group of students practiced pulse taking and face washing on bed-bound mannequins. . . “The Guard has really given us the opportunity to take a breather and allow people to spend time with their families and try to deal with the emotional burnout of the last 18 months,” said Mr. Blilie, the vice president of operations. “Hopefully, they’ll come back feeling a bit refreshed, and ready to go back at it.”</p> <p>https://tinyurl.com/NationalGuardNursingHomes</p>
<p>Home and Community Based Services</p>	<p>13. Home Health Care News December 22, 2021 <i>DOL Oversight Ramping Up, But Home Care Industry ‘Still a Little Behind’ on Compliance</i> https://tinyurl.com/DOLoversightHomeHealth</p> <p>14. Administration on Community Living December 22, 2021 <i>Senior Nutrition Program 50th Anniversary</i> Since 1972, the national Senior Nutrition Program has supported nutrition services for older adults across the country. Funded by the Older Americans Act (OAA), local senior nutrition programs serve as hubs for older adults to access nutritious meals and other vital services that strengthen social connections and promote health and wellbeing. ACL has chosen "Celebrate. Innovate. Educate." as the theme for the Senior Nutrition Program's 50th anniversary. With this theme, we celebrate the many accomplishments of the national and local programs; we acknowledge innovative approaches used to support seniors; and we look at how education can help communities understand and use nutrition services.</p> <p>Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anniversary logos - all formats (.zip) • Customizable event flyer - predesigned PDF; just enter your content! • Twitter cover image and Facebook cover image - all formats (.zip) • Document masthead (header image) - all formats (.zip) <p>https://tinyurl.com/SEniorNutrition50th</p> <p>15. Milbank Memorial Fund December 15, 2021 <i>Payers Can Advance Equity by Strengthening Primary Care</i> Good evidence shows that investing in high-quality primary care is the foundation for a health care system that results in better health for all and greater equity. The level of investment in primary care in the United States, however, is woefully low compared to comparable OECD countries, and many of our health statistics lag as well. This historic underinvestment has resulted in patient access issues and workforce challenges that have led to worse patient outcomes, greater inequities, and higher cost. COVID-19 has further exposed the fragile state of primary care infrastructure and made all too clear that people of color are hurt hardest by these systemic issues. . . Scaling Innovation: Supporting Access and Equity in Primary Care Through New Payment Models, on December 7, brought together national and local stakeholders to discuss how California can realize the vision for primary care as a common good. The NASEM report identified three key implementation objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay for primary care teams to care for people, not doctors to deliver services • Ensure that high-quality primary care is available to every individual and family

in every community

- Train primary care teams where people live and work

Five Key Takeaways from Scaling Innovation: Supporting Access and Equity in **Primary Care Through New Payment Models:**

- Paying for the primary care team is essential to improving health equity, access, and quality
- It is in a payer's self-interest to invest in stronger primary care
- The fragile primary care system we have will continue to erode if we do nothing
- We will get the same inequities if we don't design care delivery models in partnership with patients
- There are successful models within California on how to design care around the whole person and break down barriers to equity and access
- Payers have the power to improve health equity by aligning population-based payment models with high-quality primary care

<https://tinyurl.com/AdvanceEquityPrimaryCare>

16. The Playbook (Milbank Memorial Fund)

December 9, 2021

Landmark Health: Providing Comprehensive In-Home Care to Older Adults

Landmark Health was formed in 2013 as a for-profit company to bring comprehensive care to the homes of patients with multiple chronic conditions. Landmark contracts mostly with Medicare Advantage plans to serve Medicare enrollees and a smaller number of low-income and disabled people who are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid. Landmark and the health plans use the company's algorithm to select enrollees based on their current health status, number of chronic conditions, and potential cost savings. Nearly 10 percent of a plan's enrollees usually meet the criteria. Landmark also contracts with other provider organizations, such as risk-contracted primary care physician practices, to serve their patients. Under those contracts, Landmark assumes financial risk for hospital stays and ED visits and other costs incurred by its enrollees. . . Landmark patients on average are 77 years old and have eight to nine chronic conditions. Forty percent have two or more behavioral health conditions, 40 percent have advanced renal disease, and 40 percent have 12 or more prescribed medications. . . Landmark's providers — physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants — visit patients in their homes at least six to 12 times a year, with 12 to 24 additional check-in calls, to address a broad range of medical, urgent care, behavioral health, social, economic, and palliative care needs.

The care team also includes behavioral health nurse practitioners, social workers, palliative care practitioners, dietitians, nurse care managers, as well as unlicensed health care "ambassadors," who help with light social work and care coordination needs and make sure patients don't miss appointments. . . Landmark claims that its program has reduced hospital admissions for its enrolled population by 15 to 25 percent. It also says it reduces medical costs during the last 12 months of its patients' lives by 20 percent. In addition, the company says its services are associated with a 26 percent decline in mortality for patients within 12 months of their enrolling in the program.

Insights

- Demonstrating value to primary care physicians is key.
- It's important to constantly seek improvements in the care model.
- Helping patients make decisions about care at the end-of-life is a critical part of

	<p>the job. https://tinyurl.com/LandmarkHealth</p> <p>17. *Modern Healthcare December 9, 2021 <i>Home Care Workers Are Far More Likely to Have Poor Mental Health, New Study Shows</i> One in 5 home healthcare workers said they experienced poor mental health — about double what typical American workers experience — a new study published Wednesday found. The data, from a paper published in the American Journal of Public Health, looks at how home care workers evaluated their own health and well-being between 2014 and 2018. Researchers examined responses from almost 3,000 workers to a behavioral health study collected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://tinyurl.com/HomeCareWorkersMentalHealth</p>
Housing	<p>18. Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies December 22, 2021 <i>Top 10 Blogs of 2021</i> A look back at the most-read blogs shows that specific effects of the pandemic on housing markets, racial disparities in housing, and national living patterns grew clearer this year, though many questions remain.</p> <p>1. The Extraordinary and Unexpected Pandemic Increase in House Prices: Causes and Implications Our top blog of the year was senior fellow Don Layton’s case that the downturn-defying, strong housing price growth seen in 2020 was not merely a distortion but a fundamental change precipitated by the new pandemic reality. Layton also unpacked the implications of the Supreme Court’s decision to eliminate the FHFA director’s independence, as well as other changes this year at the GSEs and the Treasury under the Biden administration.</p> <p>2. Are Millennials So Different from the Generations Before Them? Former Center postdoctoral fellow Hyojung Lee examined assumptions and realities of the trajectory of the much-scrutinized millennial generation. Addressing the question of whether an “urban exodus” will occur as millennials age, he found that the oldest millennials are indeed moving away from cities, but an increasing number of young adults, including many late millennials, are seeking out urban living.</p> <p>3. High-Income Black Homeowners Receive Higher Interest Rates than Low-Income White Homeowners In one of the blogs that garnered the most media interest this year, research analyst Raheem Hanifa found significant racial disparities in current mortgage interest rates. Black homeowners not only have primary mortgages with higher interest rates than white homeowners with similar incomes, they also have higher rates than white homeowners with substantially lower incomes.</p> <p>4. Black and Hispanic Renters Face Greatest Threat of Eviction in Pandemic Also tracing the present-day effects of systematic racial discrimination, research assistant Sophia Wedeen found that pandemic pressures exacerbated preexisting inequalities. Renter households of color already faced higher housing cost burdens, but since the pandemic began Black and Hispanic renter households were twice as likely as white renter households to be behind on housing payments and at risk of eviction.</p> <p>5. After a Brief Return, Young Adults Quick to Move Out of Parents’ Homes as the</p>

	<p><u>Pandemic Continues</u></p> <p>Despite a publicized pandemic surge in young adults returning home to their parents, senior research associate Daniel McCue found that this trend was short-lived. By the close of 2020, the share of adults aged 25-29 living in parents' homes had returned to normal levels, while the share of those aged 18-24 living with parents was only slightly elevated.</p> <p>6. <u>Young Families and the Growing Number of New Single-Family Rentals</u></p> <p>A record number of single-family rentals were built in 2020, but senior research analyst Alexander Hermann found that their appeal for younger, modest-income families with children means that further growth is needed. He also charted the <u>skyrocketing prices in most US housing markets</u> as part of our <u>2021 State of the Nation's Housing report</u>, which offers an expanded view of developments in the second year of the pandemic.</p> <p>7. <u>Single-Family Zoning: Can History Be Reversed?</u></p> <p>The discriminatory history of single-family zoning still reverberates today, as senior research fellow Alexander von Hoffman recounted. A look into the roots of these policies shows that while eliminating single-family zones in US cities is necessary to address the racial segregation they enabled, it is not alone sufficient to address other obstacles to multifamily residential development.</p> <p>8. <u>How Has the Pandemic Affected Landlords?</u></p> <p>To gauge the effects of the pandemic on landlords, former Center research assistant Elijah de la Campa and University of Pennsylvania professor Vincent J. Reina surveyed rental property owners in ten US cities for a paper produced as part of the <u>Housing Crisis Research Collaborative</u>. They found that rent collection was down significantly in 2020, and that renter households of color have been more likely to face punitive landlord action.</p> <p>9. <u>Interactive Tool Illustrates the Disparate Economic Impacts of the Pandemic</u></p> <p>Updating data released the previous year, research associate Whitney Airgood-Obrycki found unequal financial impacts of the pandemic refracting across racial, tenure, and age lines. While 45 percent of all households lost employment income between March and December 2020, effects were magnified for low-income households, renters, and households of color, with Black renters most likely to be behind on housing payments at the end of the year.</p> <p>10. <u>Despite Devastating Effects on the Broader Economy, Pandemic Has Been a Boon for US Home Improvement</u></p> <p>On a rare positive note, our <i>2021 Improving America's Housing</i> report found spending on home improvements and repairs grew more than 3 percent in response to pandemic needs, even while the US economy shrank in 2020. Former project director of the Remodeling Futures Program Kermit Baker, who retired in 2021 after 25 years at the Center, recounted how DIY renovations surged as the sudden shift to remote work increased demand for larger homes and new interiors. <u>https://tinyurl.com/HarvardHousingCenterTopBlogs</u></p>
Behavioral Health	<p>19. *New York Times</p> <p>December 22, 2021</p> <p><i>Another Surge in the Virus Has Colleges Fearing a Mental Health Crisis</i></p> <p>After almost two years of remote schooling, restricted gatherings and constant testing, many students are isolated and depressed. Omicron may make things worse. . . Colleges across the country are facing a mental health crisis, driven in part by the pandemic. After almost two years of remote schooling, restricted gatherings and constant testing, many students are anxious, socially isolated,</p>

	<p>depressed — and overwhelming mental health centers. At a few institutions, there has been a troubling spate of suicides. . . Some administrators worry that there is a conflict between protecting students’ physical health and their mental health. https://tinyurl.com/CollegesMentalHealthCrisis</p> <p>20. The Ethel from AARP December 20, 2021 <i>Beat Any Blues by Walking Through the Seasons of Life</i> “How my walks have boosted my mental fitness for decades.” According to the Harvard Medical School study “Walking for Health,” this exercise is nothing short of a miracle drug, curing all sorts of ails. “Walking can have a bigger impact on disease risk and various health conditions than just about any other remedy that’s readily available to you,” says the study. “Walking for 2.5 hours a week — that’s just 21 minutes a day — can cut your risk of heart disease by 30%. In addition, this do-anywhere, no-equipment-required activity has also been shown to reduce the risk of diabetes and cancer, lower blood pressure and cholesterol, and keep you mentally sharp.” https://tinyurl.com/BeatAnyBlues</p>
<p>Alzheimer’s Disease / Dementia</p>	<p>21. *STAT+ December 20, 2021 <i>Biogen slashes price of Alzheimer’s drug Aduhelm in half, plans \$500M in cost-cutting</i> Biogen said Monday that it has reduced the price of its Alzheimer’s drug Aduhelm by half and is planning a series of cost-cutting measures across the company next year that aim to save \$500 million. The moves follow a disappointing commercial launch of Aduhelm, as well as anger over the drug’s high price. https://tinyurl.com/BiogenSlashesAduhelmPrice</p> <p>22. Jewish Family and Children’s Service <i>Dementia Friends Massachusetts</i> Dementia Friends is a global movement that is changing the way people think, act, and talk about dementia. Developed by the Alzheimer’s Society in the United Kingdom, the Dementia Friends initiative is underway in Massachusetts. By helping everyone in a community understand what dementia is and how it affects people, each of us can make a difference for people touched by dementia. This program is currently available in English, Chinese, Arabic, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese. https://tinyurl.com/DementiaFriendsMass</p>
<p>Covid-19</p>	<p>23. *New York Times December 23, 2021 <i>What Does It Mean to Be ‘Fully Vaccinated’ Against Covid-19?</i> With all the uncertainty around the Omicron variant, vaccine guidelines are evolving. . . Some workplaces and college campuses are now mandating that vaccination include boosters. The governor of New York said that state officials planned to change the definition of “fully vaccinated” to include receiving a booster dose, and Britain’s government won’t be far behind. The N.F.L. last week issued a booster shot mandate for team staff members who work closely with players. https://tinyurl.com/FullyVaccinatedDefinition</p> <p>24. *Washington Post December 22, 2021</p>

Supreme Court sets special hearing for Biden's vaccine rules for health-care workers, private businesses

The Supreme Court on Wednesday night announced it will hold a special hearing next month to consider challenges to the Biden administration's pandemic efforts affecting millions of workers, a nationwide vaccine-or-testing requirement for large employers and a separate [coronavirus](#) vaccine mandate for health-care workers. Both policies have been at least partially blocked from going into effect by lower courts after challenges from Republican-led states, and from business and religious coalitions. . . The Supreme Court generally has been supportive of decisions by local governments and universities to require vaccination. But the justices also have been skeptical of federal agencies' power to mandate pandemic-related responses.

<https://tinyurl.com/SpecialHearing>

25. *Washington Post

December 22, 2021

Real-world data from U.K. suggests omicron is less likely than delta to send people to the hospital

Researchers looking at real-world [coronavirus](#) cases in Britain reported Wednesday that the omicron variant appears to be less severe than the once dominant delta strain.

Early evidence from Scotland and England suggests that omicron is sending fewer people to the hospital with severe symptoms.

<https://tinyurl.com/OmicronLessHospitalizations>

26. *Washington Post

December 22, 2021

FDA authorizes Pfizer's anti-covid pill as omicron surges

The supply of Paxlovid will be limited initially, even as demand is expected to soar. Federal regulators Wednesday authorized the first easy-to-take [pill to treat covid-19](#), a drug developed by Pfizer that will help refill the nation's medicine cabinet even as the omicron variant, now dominant in much of the country, has [thwarted most other options](#). . . "The very good news is that we have a product now that has about a 90 percent efficacy in preventing hospitalization," Anthony S. Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said Wednesday at a coronavirus task force briefing. "The sobering news is, unfortunately, it is really a quite complicated and complex synthetic process" to manufacture the drug. He added that "we will be working with the company to figure out how we can help alleviate the stress of the long duration that it takes to make it."

<https://tinyurl.com/FDAAuthorizedAntoCovidPill>

27. *New York Times

December 22, 2021

Omicron infections do not seem as severe, leading less often to hospitalization, U.K. researchers report.

Three separate teams of scientists on two continents have found that Omicron infections more often result in mild illness than earlier variants of the coronavirus, offering hope that the current surge may not be quite as catastrophic as feared despite skyrocketing caseloads. . . While Omicron may be causing milder disease on average, it's also spreading faster than any variant yet. It is now the dominant variant in the United States, Europe, and many other regions of the world.

Yet encouraging news came from South Africa on Wednesday, suggesting that

these surges may not last as long as previous ones. Omicron has fueled a record number of daily new cases, but officials [reported](#) on Wednesday that the wave of infections may have peaked.

<https://tinyurl.com/OmicronLessSevere>

28. *New York Times

December 22, 2021

The Flu Makes an Unwelcome Comeback as Omicron Surge

The flu virus, which [all but disappeared](#) in early 2020, is once again circulating in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported about 2,500 cases from clinical tests nationwide for the week that ended Dec. 11. That number is typical for this time of year, but it also represents a level of cases that has not been seen since before the coronavirus pandemic.

<https://tinyurl.com/FluUnwelcomeComeback>

29. Administration on Community Living

December 22, 2021

Highlights from the 2021 Elder Justice Coordinating Council (EJCC) Meeting: COVID, Equity, and Partnerships

The meeting touched on a wide range of issues, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and social isolation, the connection between elder justice and advancing equity, and the importance of partnerships. The meeting featured a variety of dedicated leaders including Health and Human Services Deputy Secretary Andrea Palm and Associate Attorney General Vanita Gupta.

<https://tinyurl.com/2021EJCCMeeting>

30. National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities

December 22, 2021 (updated)

Time-Based Associations Between COVID-19 Cases and Community-Level Risk Factors in Massachusetts

There has been a disproportionate burden of COVID-19 cases in the U.S. among racial and ethnic minority populations, workers in essential services, people living in poverty or crowded housing, and among those with reduced access to testing or health care. Previous studies assessing increased risk for COVID-19 exposure or incidence have predominantly considered only one point in time. A recent study supported by NIMHD examined COVID-19 risk at the community-level in Massachusetts across multiple timepoints during the pandemic. The study investigators examined whether sociodemographic factors were predictive of changes in COVID-19 cases over time.

The investigators compiled publicly available datasets for 351 towns and cities in Massachusetts across five periods of time from March 2020 to October 2020. They used mixed-effect, adjusted Poisson regression models to identify sociodemographic factors associated with town-level COVID-19 case incidence.

The datasets included:

- COVID-19 case data from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.
- Sociodemographic, occupational, and economic data from the 2014-2018 American Community Survey (ACS).
- Estimates of the percentage of essential and service workers (i.e., healthcare practitioners, transportation occupation, food preparation) modified from the ACS using a dataset created by the American Civil Liberties Union.
- Cell phone mobility data to calculate the percentage of residents commuting to work using SafeGraph Social Distancing Metrics.

The investigators reported that one of the strongest predictors of COVID-19 incidence across all timepoints was an increased percentage of town residents classified as essential workers. At the beginning of the pandemic, there was also a positive association between COVID-19 cases and the percentage of residents over 80 years of age, as well as the number of long-term care facility beds. However, the association of incidence with residents over 80 years of age and number of long-term care facility beds decreased over time from the first time point to the last. There was also variable association between COVID-19 cases in cities and towns with higher percentages of residents with no health insurance or with greater population density.

<https://tinyurl.com/CommunityRiskFactorsMass>

31. *Washington Post

December 21, 2021

In 32 states, 1 in 100 seniors have died of covid. Will this wave break the trend?

Since the pandemic began, 32 states have seen 1 percent of their population age 65 and over die of covid. These are estimates, overlaying data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, updated through the week of Dec. 11, on The Washington Post's state-level data and then compared with Census Bureau figures on population by age. But in many states, it's not really very close. . . Since the beginning of the pandemic, there's been a fairly consistent relationship between new cases and new deaths. Shift the curve of new deaths by 21 days, and its surges overlap neatly with the number of new cases. In other words, about three weeks after the number of new cases begins to rise or fall, so does the number of deaths. Since the beginning of this year, the number of new covid-19 deaths on a given day has been equal, on average, to 1.4 percent of the number of new cases three weeks prior. That ratio has shifted around a bit and is lower than it was a year ago, which is a good sign. But it still would suggest that, if omicron is like delta or the original virus, we could see more than 2,100 deaths a day by early January.

<https://tinyurl.com/1In100Seniors>

32. *Boston Globe

December 21, 2021

It's time to upgrade your mask, public health experts say

"We updated the face covering advisory today to urge all residents to wear a mask in public indoor spaces," [Governor Charlie] Baker said during a State House briefing. "We'll continue to release the best public health [guidance] we have, so people can make informed decisions about how to protect themselves."

Which mask should you wear?

Toss out your cloth mask, experts say.

Quality face coverings — namely surgical and KN95 masks — are "essential" to keep the virus at bay, said Dr. Philip Landrigan, director of the program for Global Public Health and the Common Good at Boston College. "But any mask is better than no mask."

The snug, medical alternatives will block aerosol particles more effectively than cloth coverings and provide greater protection against Omicron, the highly transmissible strain that has quickly become the dominant variant. It accounted for [73 percent](#) of US cases between Dec. 12 and 18, according to the CDC. . . Only cloth masks and undamaged and dry surgical masks can be reworn, she added in an e-mail. KN95 are "not optimal to reworn, but possible" if they are cleaned thoroughly.

<https://tinyurl.com/UpgradeYourMask>

	<p>33. Washington Post (free access) December 21, 2021 <i>Walgreens and CVS struggle against ‘unprecedented’ holiday demand for home tests amid omicron surge</i> With coronavirus cases spiking because of the fast-spreading omicron variant, many Americans have flooded their Walgreens and CVS stores this week for at-home tests, which have become the must-have item for millions ahead of the Christmas holiday. The long lines forming at test centers and pharmacies nationwide are in response to news from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that omicron accounted for nearly three-quarters of covid-19 cases in the past week, making it the nation’s new dominant variant. https://tinyurl.com/WalgreensCVSStruggleTests</p> <p>34. Salem News December 20, 2021 <i>Baker needs to lead on mask mandate</i> [C]ases of COVID-19 are soaring – there were 7,070 new positive ones reported in Massachusetts on Friday. And as the number of infections goes up, a growing number of lawmakers, public health experts and other state officials are pressuring the governor to do more to combat the spread. . . Baker – a vocal critic of former President Donald Trump’s failure to guide states on how to react at the outset of the pandemic – fails to lead. Speaking to reporters Thursday he again balked at implementing a mandate, instead advising local officials to impose their own. . . Thirteen lawmakers wrote a letter to Baker earlier in the week urging him to rethink his administration’s pandemic policies, including universal indoor masking, MassLive reported. Along with it they sent an action plan endorsed by more than 120 public health and medical experts, as well as 30 community organizations. But even with surging breakthrough cases, Baker insists shots are enough. https://tinyurl.com/BakerNeedToLead</p>
Caregiving / Caregivers	<p>35. Milbank Memorial Fund December 17, 2021 <i>Care Is an Action, Not a Transaction</i> Does primary care, and by extension all of health care, exist to meet the needs of the community or the individual. . . More fundamentally, is the provision of care itself an act of service or a transaction? The term “care” is used promiscuously in our economy: from “Care Bears” to “hospice care.” At its core, however, to care for someone is to bestow one’s concern, time, and skills on another who is weakened and vulnerable. It has a foundational component of personal sacrifice and selflessness. Care is delivered with a respect for the relationship of the caregiver to the care receiver, and awareness of eventual reciprocity: sooner or later we will all be care receivers. https://tinyurl.com/CareIsAnAction</p> <p>36. *Washington Post Magazine October 26, 2021 <i>The Truth About Caregiving: Your Determination Isn’t Enough</i> <i>After caring for my ill son, my dying husband, and my elderly mother, I’ve learned that you can fight only so hard to save a loved one.</i> https://tinyurl.com/TruthAboutCaregiving</p>
Veteran Services	<p>37. Brainline December 20, 2021 <i>Finding Community and Support in the Weirdest Places</i></p>

	<p>December is upon us. This means holidays for many folks. Perhaps some celebrations complete with candles or cocoa, yule logs or mulled spices? It can also be a trying time for anyone who has struggled with family relationships, before or after brain injury/PTSD. Relationships after a life-altering injury or diagnosis are, well, weird. Some people will stand by you no matter what. Hold on to them and let them know, often, how grateful you are that they are in your life. Others, even family—no, especially family—are not so loyal. We are not immune to alienation and estrangement. It sucks. Not everyone "gets it" and understands how off-putting and, in fact, painful large, loud gatherings can be. Or, how triggering some well-meaning family member can be when asking about injury or treatment.</p> <p>https://tinyurl.com/SupportWeirdestPlaces</p>
<p>Mission Care / Farren Care Center</p>	<p>38. Greenfield Recorder December 21, 2021 <i>Homeless relief advocates to rally outside Farren on Christmas Eve</i> Homelessness relief advocates are looking to send a poignant message by holding a rally outside the Farren Care Center on Christmas Eve. . . Organizer Cate Woolner expressed disappointment in parent company Trinity Health of New England’s lack of consideration for using the building to house homeless people during the winter. The Montague City Road facility has been closed since early this year, with the company having essentially merged with a facility in Holyoke. . . The Farren Care Center was initially recommended for demolition at a Nov. 8 Selectboard meeting. Immediately, members of the public suggested to the Selectboard that they consider using the facility to house the homeless during the winter. . . The long-term care facility was closed earlier this year when all of the Farren’s 105 residents were reportedly offered space at Mount Saint Vincent Care Center in Holyoke. Trinity Health has maintained that the Montague City Road building was too old for its purposes and would be too expensive to update to modern standard. . . “With winter upon us, and not enough shelter beds in Franklin County to meet the needs of people who are unhoused, many community members face this emergency by sleeping out in the cold in cars or tents,” Woolner wrote in her statement. “No one should spend winter nights unsheltered. And yet the former Farren Hospital in Turners Falls stands empty when only last April it housed 100 people.”</p> <p>https://tinyurl.com/RallyOutsideFarren</p>
<p>Longevity</p>	<p>39. *Washington Post December 22, 2021 <i>U.S. life expectancy fell again in 2020 as the pandemic took a heavy toll</i> Life expectancy at birth fell to 77 years in 2020, a continued slide in a reliable gauge of Americans’ health as the coronavirus pandemic surged through the country, killing more than 350,000 people, the government reported Wednesday. The average expected life span declined 1.8 years over 2019. That was up from July, when the Biden administration reported provisional results for 2020 that showed a 1.5-year drop. Death rates rose for every age group except children ages 1 to 14, with covid-19 becoming the third-leading cause of death in the United States, behind heart disease and cancer, according to the report from the National Center for Health Statistics. The disease caused by the coronavirus was the underlying cause of death for 350,831 people last year — 10.4 percent of the 3,383,729 deaths recorded. Life expectancy had been ticking down in recent years, a troubling trend driven by drug overdose deaths and suicides. But the pandemic has caused much larger declines. The 1.8-year drop was the largest reduction in a</p>

	<p>single year in more than 75 years. https://tinyurl.com/LifeExpectancyFellAgain</p> <p>40. The Ethel from AARP December 20, 2021 <i>Think a Senior Discount Is the Only Perk Associated with Aging?</i> Here are the many other benefits to growing older. https://tinyurl.com/PerkAssociatedWithAging</p>
Disability	<p>41. New York Times (free access) December 16, 2021 <i>'The Music Man' Once Had a Disabled Character. Then He Was Erased.</i> At the urging of producers, Meredith Willson cut a boy in a wheelchair from the early scripts for his 1957 musical. A look back shows what was lost. [S]everal newly recognized drafts of the musical, written between 1954 and 1957, show that originally, the story focused more on the town's persecution of a boy in a wheelchair — carrying a much more serious message than the final draft. At the time, children with disabilities were routinely institutionalized in horrid conditions and denied an education. . . In the earlier drafts, Marian's younger brother was a character named Jim Paroo, a boy in a wheelchair who, in some versions of the show, has limited use of his arms and could not speak. Wherever Jim goes, townspeople want to lock him up, and in some versions, this drives him to hide and live in the school basement instead of at home. . . Then, Harold comes along and challenges the community's assumptions about Jim by bringing him into the band and finding an instrument he's capable of playing with his limited range of motion. An early title for the show, "The Silver Triangle," highlights Jim's instrument of choice and contribution to the band. . . Though Willson's writing of disability was sometimes gimmicky in ways that could now be seen as offensive — in one scene, music inspires Jim to stand up for the first time — Broomfield-McHugh believes that the playwright was trying to spark a conversation about how people with disabilities were treated at the time. . . One memo urged Willson to change the character, stating that "physical disability in a child is impossible to view in any terms but pity and sentiment, the problem is to find some other form of disability besides physical." Today, audiences can more regularly see disabled actors onstage thanks to efforts by small theater companies like The Apothetae, which produces works centered on the disabled experience; and Theater Breaking Through Barriers, an Off-Broadway organization that regularly casts actors with disabilities. . . There have been some successes. Ali Stroker made history in 2019 as the first actor in a wheelchair to win a Tony Award for her role as a flirty fiancée, Ado Annie, in 'Oklahoma!'; Madison Ferris, who has muscular dystrophy and uses a wheelchair, played Laura in a 2017 production of "The Glass Menagerie." There was also the casting of a disabled actor in the role of Tiny Tim in "A Christmas Carol" in 2019; a 2015 revival of "Spring Awakening" by Deaf West Theater, which featured deaf and hearing actors side by side; as well as Martyna Majok's Pulitzer-winning 2017 Off Broadway play, "Cost of Living," about people with disabilities. . . Part of the problem is inaccessibility for acting training programs, said Mozgala, who is also the director of inclusion for the Queens Theater's program Theater for All, which helps support and train disabled playwrights and actors. In his own acting program at the Boston University School for the Arts, he was the only person who identified as disabled and said many actors with disabilities have been told to sit out of certain classes, such as movement classes, because professors felt uncomfortable teaching</p>

	<p>students with disabilities. . . Another barrier is the perception of audiences. Nicholas Viselli, the artistic director of Theater Breaking Through Barriers, said audiences still feel uncomfortable watching disabled actors or characters onstage. For the plays he stages, he said he often receives donations from people who say they think the work is important but don't want to come see it. https://tinyurl.com/MusicManDisabledCharacter</p> <p>42. Center for Retirement Research at Boston College December 2021 <i>Changes in New Disability Awards: Understanding Trends and Looking Ahead</i> This paper found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For both men and women, several health factors (e.g., back pain and heart disease) and non-health measures (e.g., share never married) that are associated with SSDI receipt have become more common. • There has been an increase in SSDI that is beyond what changes in health and demographics alone would predict in the population studied here. For men, only about half of the increase can be explained by changes in these measures; among women the increase explained by changes in these measures is only about 35 percent. • Because factors associated with non-coverage are also associated with receiving SSDI conditional on being covered, results are sensitive to how selection into the SSDI program coverage is modeled. <p>The policy implications of these findings are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the SSDI incidence and prevalence rates have begun to decline in recent years, this does not seem to be due to improved health, and the trend seems unlikely to continue. • While non-health factors matter overall more for women, within these non-health factors, job characteristics mattered somewhat more for men in the sample. Changes to the determination process related to the vocational grid may, then, have more of an impact on men than women. <p>https://tinyurl.com/ChangesInDisabilityAwards</p>
Other	<p>43. NPR Shots December 21, 2021 <i>A hospital offered a payment plan for baby's NICU stay — \$45,843 a month for a year</i> https://tinyurl.com/NICUStay45843Month</p> <p>44. Worcester Business Journal December 17, 2021 <i>Saint Vincent, MNA reach tentative strike-end agreement</i> After being brought to the mediation table with the U.S. labor secretary, Saint Vincent Hospital in Worcester and the Massachusetts Nurses Association announced a tentative agreement to end an historic nine-month nurses strike on Friday night. Under the agreement, all striking nurses would return to their previous positions, addressing the final sticking point after negotiations between the two camps broke down in August. Before the issue of returning nurses to their jobs caused negotiations to stall, the MNA and the hospital, which is owned by Tenet Healthcare Corp. of Texas, had negotiated a contract which assuaged many of the nurses' demands. . . In July, Saint Vincent announced it was closing 100 hospital beds, blaming the nurse strike. That included closing 80 staffed inpatient beds, eight procedural rooms, and closing select outpatient services. The closures</p>

	<p>provoked pressure from state officials in November, including the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and Gov. Charlie Baker. https://tinyurl.com/StVincentSettlement</p> <p>45. Kaiser Health News December 9, 2021 <i>Suit by Doctors, Hospitals Seeks Change in How Arbitrators Settle Surprise Billing Cases</i> Two of the largest lobbying groups representing physicians and hospitals filed a lawsuit Thursday challenging a Biden administration decision on how to implement the law shielding patients from most surprise medical bills. The lawsuit from the American Hospital Association and the American Medical Association does not seek to halt the law from going into effect in January. Instead, it seeks a change in a key provision in regulations issued in September. At issue is how arbitrators will decide the amount insurers pay toward disputed out-of-network bills. . . The No Surprises law is designed to address a common practice: providers sending large, unexpected bills to patients who receive out-of-network care from physicians, laboratories, hospitals, or air ambulance services. https://tinyurl.com/SettleSurpriseBilling</p>
	<p>*May require registration before accessing article.</p>
<p>Dignity Alliance Massachusetts Legislative Endorsements</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Websites</p>	<p>Hadley https://hadley.edu/ The mission of Hadley is to create personalized learning opportunities that empower adults with vision loss or blindness to thrive - at home, at work, and in their communities. Founded in 1920 by William Hadley, an educator who lost his eyesight later in life, Hadley offers practical help, connection and support free of charge to anyone with a visual impairment, their families and professionals supporting them. Hadley provides online, large print, braille, and audio media, reaching all 50 states and 100 countries.</p> <p>National Eye Institute https://www.nei.nih.gov/ The National Eye Institute (NEI) was established by Congress in 1968 to protect and prolong the vision of the American people. NEI research leads to sight-saving treatments, reduces visual impairment and blindness, and improves the quality of life for people of all ages. NEI-supported research has also advanced our knowledge of how the visual system—from the eyes to the brain—works in health and disease. NEI supports vision research through approximately 2,100 research grants and training awards made to scientists at more than 150 medical centers, universities, and other institutions across the country and around the world. NEI also conducts laboratory and patient-oriented research at its own facilities located on the NIH campus in Bethesda, Maryland.</p>
<p>Previously recommended websites</p>	<p>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>.</p>

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	<p>Heathwood Healthcare 188 Florence St. Chestnut Hill, MA 02467 Scheduled to be closed by January 5, 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice of Intent to Close (Word) • Draft of Relocation Plan (Word) <p>Stonehedge Rehabilitation and Skilled Care Center 5 Redlands Road West Roxbury, MA, 02132</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled to be closed by February 10, 2022 Notice of Intent to Close and Draft of Closure Plan (PDF) (DOC) • DPH Comments on Draft of Closure Plan (PDF) (DOC) • Stonehedge Response to DPH Comments on Draft of Closure Plan (PDF) (DOC) • DPH Approval of Closure Plan (PDF) (DOC) <p>Closure Notices and Relocation Plans available at: https://tinyurl.com/MANursingHomeClosures</p>		
Websites of Dignity Alliance Massachusetts Members	See: https://dignityalliancema.org/about/organizations/		
Access to Dignity Alliance social media	<p>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</p>		
<p>Participation opportunities with Dignity Alliance Massachusetts</p> <p>Most workgroups meet bi-weekly via Zoom.</p> <p>Please contact workgroup lead for more information</p>	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
The Dignity Digest	<p>For a free weekly subscription to <i>The Dignity Digest</i>: https://dignityalliancema.org/contact/sign-up-for-emails/ Editor: Paul Lanzikos Primary contributor: Sandy Novack MailChimp Specialist: Sue Rorke</p>		

<p>Note of thanks</p>	<p>Thanks to the contributors to this issue of <i>The Dignity Digest</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judi Fonsh • Chris Hoeh • Dick Moore <p>Special thanks to Paul Spooner with the MetroWest Center for Independent Living for assistance with the website and MailChimp versions of <i>The Dignity Digest</i>. <i>If you have submissions for inclusion in <u>The Dignity Digest</u> or have questions or comments, please submit them to paul.lanzikos@gmail.com.</i></p>
<p><i>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 Dignity Digest" is obtained from publicly available sources and does not necessarily represent positions held by Dignity Alliance Massachusetts. Previous issues of The Tuesday Digest and The Dignity Digest are available at: https://dignityalliancema.org/the-tuesday-digest/ For more information about Dignity Alliance Massachusetts, please visit www.DignityAllianceMA.org.</i></p>	