



The Dignity Digest

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

***May require registration before accessing article.**

Spotlight

Celebrating Residents' Rights Month **October 2023**

By Former Senator Richard Moore
Chair DignityMA Legislative Workgroup

While the abuse of residents with intellectual disabilities in state institutions cries out for reform, residents of nursing homes appear to have even fewer rights. Despite improvements brought about by the federal 1987 Nursing Home Reform Act and state laws and regulations, residents of nursing homes in Massachusetts have fewer rights and protections than clients of the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Even when the generic theme of some rights is comparable, the regulations lack the specificity provided in the other agencies. The result is that Massachusetts residents of nursing homes have less dignity, independence, choice, and protection than older adults or people with disabilities who are DMH and DDS clients

Nursing Home residents need more rights, more clarity of existing rights, and deserve the same rights as DMH and DDS clients. If a DMH or DDS client needs the services of a skilled nursing facility, they would have fewer rights under Department of Public Health (DPH) regulations than as clients of the other agencies. The inequality is unfair and a violation of basic human rights.

The issue of inequality became apparent when reviewing the rights of nursing home residents and the lack of effective relief through litigation resulting from state grants of immunity under COVID emergency statutes and nursing homes insistence on residents giving up the right to sue and forced to pursue arbitration of complaints.

Regulations equalizing rights of nursing home residents with other state agencies plus an effective enforcement process and prohibiting mandatory arbitration agreements would strengthen the rights of nursing home residents and improve their dignity, independence, choice, and safety.

Improvements in care of nursing home residents will reduce hospitalization due to substandard care or abuse and will

	<p>substantially improve quality of care and life. The Department of Public Health and the Attorney General should adopt regulations to include or expand rights already available to clients of DMH and DDS and develop an effective enforcement process comparable to that used in the other state agencies.</p> <p>The goal for Massachusetts should be that of equalizing rights of older adults and people with disabilities regardless of their residence or the agency responsible for their care. This would be a great way to honor their dignity and celebrate RESIDENT RIGHTS' MONTH!</p>
<p>Quotes</p>	<p><i>“Having a disability and being healthy are not mutually exclusive.”</i></p> <p>Andrés Gallegos, chair of the National Council on Disability, an independent government advisory agency, Disability groups win fight to be included in health equity research, *Washington Post, September 26, 2023</p> <p><i>“I grew up watching my mom care for seniors in their homes, and I have a deep appreciation for the important work that personal care attendants do. Our administration is proud to reach this historic agreement that provides fair pay and benefits for PCAs that reflect the heroic contributions they make to Massachusetts families.”</i></p> <p>Governor Maura Healey, Higher wages coming for home care workers, *Gloucester Times, October 7, 2023</p> <p><i>In our world of increasing tolerance for the variety of human tastes, it seems strange that an innocuous personal choice made by two consenting adults is still jarring to us. People like to say our attachment to the older man/younger woman model is “biology,” but when it comes to two individuals, I think we can assume that they have worked out the reproductive issues between themselves. And of course, as a culture, we have abandoned many of the brutal imperatives of the Darwinian wild.</i></p> <p>By Katie Roiphe, Our Hang-Up With ‘Cougars, *Wall Street Journal, October 5, 2023</p>

“Curing isn’t enough anymore. Now we have to dial back, not dial up.” [to minimize later life complications].

Dr. Greg Armstrong, the principal investigator for the Childhood Cancer Survivor Study, [It Takes a Lifetime to Survive Childhood Cancer](#), *New York Times, October 6, 2023

“While climate hazards impose financial challenges for households across income and wealth spectrums, financial burdens are not distributed evenly. For vulnerable households, the financial costs and losses associated with climate hazards have the potential to compound existing inequities.”

U.S. Treasury Report, [You need to be saving more for emergencies, thanks to climate change](#), *Washington Post, October 6, 2023

“CDC opened the ordering process before they had enough vaccine to meet the demand. Their inventory is catching up now, but they did not have enough vaccine from the manufacturers right away to meet the initial demand in its entirety.”

Joseph Wendelken, spokesman for the Rhode Island Department of Health, [COVID-19 is back in nursing homes. So where is the vaccine?](#), NPR, October 6, 2023

“This virus is so contagious, that if you didn't get that shot, or if you haven't had COVID lately,” she said, “I wouldn't go into a nursing home right now.”

Stephanie Igoe, Administrator, Bethany Home, Providence, RI, [COVID-19 is back in nursing homes. So where is the vaccine?](#), NPR, October 6, 2023

“I think reality TV is the downfall of civilization.”

Vicki Wyan, age 69, commenting after watching “The Golden Bachelor”, [Too Young for Me!: A Senior Center Watches ‘The Golden Bachelor’](#), New York Times (free access), October 5, 2023

“Love is blind, but marriage is an eye-opener.”

Linda Arns, age 78, who has been married more than 50 years, [Too Young for Me!: A Senior Center Watches ‘The Golden Bachelor’](#), New York Times (free access), October 5, 2023

“Those are two of the biggest killers right there. When you eliminate excessive alcohol intake and smoking, one thing you’re left with is genetics. . . Many people who are 80 years old now have more in common with people a couple generations ago who were 60.”

Bradley Willcox, a professor and research director at the Department of Geriatric Medicine at the University of Hawaii, [For Biden and Trump, Age Really Is Just a Number](#), *Wall Street Journal, October 6, 2023

[Jay Olshansky, a professor of epidemiology and biostatistics at the University of Illinois, Chicago] estimates that Trump and Biden would likely have at least an 80% chance of completing their terms in good health, far better than voters think. He suggests voters worry less about the candidates’ ages and more about their values and policies.

[For Biden and Trump, Age Really Is Just a Number](#), *Wall Street Journal, October 6, 2023

Only 3% of U.S. adults say it’s best for a president to be in their 70s or older, according to a [separate Center survey conducted in June](#). Roughly half of Americans (49%) say it’s best for a president to be in their 50s, while another 24% say it’s best for a chief executive to be in their 60s.

[Most Americans favor maximum age limits for federal elected officials, Supreme Court justices](#), Pew Research Center, October 4, 2023

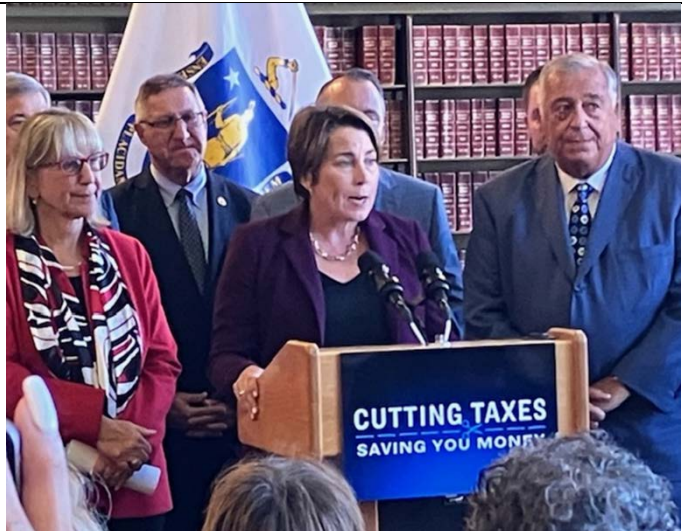
“If the VA is sending vets to substandard care, that in itself is a scandal.”

Robert Blancato, the national coordinator of the Washington-based Elder Justice Coalition, [A Colorado veteran needed help. He ended up dead after the VA referred him to a nursing home](#), Denver Gazette, October 5, 2023


“The impact that COVID-19 had on disadvantaged populations, including people with disabilities, was enormous and demonstrates the critical importance of health disparities research.”

Eliseo Pérez-Stable, director of the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities at the National Institutes of Health, [Disability groups win fight to be included in health equity research](#), *Washington Post, September

	26, 2023
<p>Comments by former Senator Richard Moore, Chair DignityMA Legislative Workgroup, in response to Abuse and neglect in residential schools for children with severe autism by Liz Kowalczyk, Boston Globe, September 27, 2023</p>	<p>Liz Kowalczyk and the Globe team authored a shocking piece on the abuse and mistreatment of people with disabilities in institutional settings! Let's hope policymakers and advocates can come together to address the issues raised in the Globe.</p> <p>The same hope for positive action followed an earlier Globe series about abuse of older adults in nursing homes across the state, but in several years, and a catastrophic failure during COVID of both nursing homes and Department of Public Health oversight, little has been done to improve the lives of nursing home residents.</p> <p>Despite a pledge by the House Speaker that nursing home oversight and reform would be a priority of the current legislative session, House Bill 3929, the comprehensive nursing home reform legislation, remains stuck in the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing - undoubtedly because the for-profit nursing home industry, largely owned by out of state investors, don't want any change. Passage of H.3929, while not perfect and in need of some improvements, would be a responsible step forward in better treatment for nursing home residents who suffered tragically during the Pandemic, and continue to suffer from insufficient staffing. Nursing homes claim that they can't find help and just need more taxpayer money, but the truth is the real problem is that they can't keep help, and turnover is much too high for any safe care to exist. Additionally, most don't need more money which only goes to line the pockets of investors and owners.</p> <p>The State Auditor should check on compliance with the law requiring nursing homes to spend 75% of revenues on staff salaries and benefits! She, and the Attorney General, should also investigate the blatant failure of the Department of Public Health to conduct regular (preferably unannounced) visits to nursing homes. They would find that about seventy-five percent fail to maintain the minimal staffing regulations, Insufficient staff especially on nights and weekends, results in poor care, elder abuse, and overworked, underpaid staff. It's not just a scandal in the treatment of intellectually disabled in institutional settings, it's at least as serious a scandal in how we treat older adults who are being warehoused in poor quality nursing homes. Mass DPH is a failed agency when it comes to nursing home oversight! The Governor and Legislature ought to create a strong, independent regulatory agency to provide real oversight of nursing homes along the lines of H.622/S.396 - bills to establish an Office of Elder Advocate.</p>
<p>Action Alert Responses due by October 31, 2023</p>	<p>1. Massachusetts Department of Public Health <i>Community Health Equity Survey</i> The Department of Public Health created the Community Health Equity Survey (CHES) survey to collect information directly from key stakeholders and community members that will be used to help communities improve conditions that impact health, particularly those most impacted by health inequities. The survey was developed in collaboration with DPH partners, community members and organizations across Massachusetts, and it reflects what residents want to know about how their communities experience housing, mental health, safety, and other drivers of health. DPH will use survey data to allocate funding, improve programming, and develop policies that address health inequities.</p>

<p>Opportunities to Comment</p>	<p>Survey</p> <p>2. Staffing standards in long-term care facilities: September 1, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a proposed rule to establish minimum staffing standards for long-term care facilities. Under the proposal, nursing homes that participate in Medicare and Medicaid would have to provide residents with a minimum of 0.55 hours of care from a registered nurse per resident per day, and 2.45 hours of care from a nurse aid per resident per day. In addition, nursing homes would be required to ensure a registered nurse is on site 24 hours per day and 7 days a week. This proposal was informed by the 2022 Nursing Home Staffing Study. EJC released a statement on the proposed rule that can be read here. There will be a 60-day comment period for the notice of proposed rulemaking, and comments must be submitted to the Federal Register no later than November 6, 2023. For more information on how to submit comments or to review the entire rule, visit the Federal Register.</p> <p>3. Regulations for Adult Protective Services: The Administration for Community Living (ACL) is proposing changes to regulations for the Adult Protective Service (APS) systems under the Older Americans Act (OAA) and the Elder Justice Act (EJA). Currently, there are no federal standards for APS systems. These proposed rules aim to provide clear guidance and improve the response to APS cases ensuring consistent standards across states. You can view the proposed rule here and submit a comment by November 13, 2023.</p>
<p>State House Visit</p> <p>On October 4, Dick Moore, Chair, DignityMA Legislative Workgroup, Paul Lanzikos, Coordinator, and Lachlan Farrow, MD distributed <i>Dignity Alliance Massachusetts Annual Reports for 2022</i> to members of the House of Representatives</p>	<p>Governor Maura Healey Tax Bill Signing Ceremony With Senate President Karen Spilka House Speaker Ronald Mariano State House Library October 4, 2023</p> 

	<p>House Speaker Ronald Mariano With Lachlan Forrow, MD Former Senator Richard Moore Paul Lanzikos Speaker’s Office, State House October 4, 2023</p>	
	<p>Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll and Edward Augustus, Secretary, Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities With Lachlan Forrow, MD Former Senator Richard Moore Paul Lanzikos State House October 4, 2023</p>	
	<p>Representative Paul Donato – Malden and Medford With Lachlan Forrow, MD Former Senator Richard Moore Paul Lanzikos Rep. Donato’s Office, State House October 4, 2023</p>	

	<p>Representative Ruth Balsler – Newton With picture and certificate given by Dignity Alliance Massachusetts in 2022 Office of Representative Balsler State House October 4, 2023</p>	
<p>Dignity Alliance Study Sessions <i>Live one-hour sessions with key individuals or specific topics. Open to all via Zoom. Sessions will be recorded and posted on DignityMA website.</i></p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PACE Program 101 and More Presenter: Candace Kuebel, LCSW, MSW, MBA, Executive Director, MassPACE Association Wednesday, October 18, 2023, 10:00 a.m. Zoom link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81798483893?pwd=cWZXdlZvWG12WGMva2VUSUUrBDQxUT09 Meeting ID: 817 9848 3893 Passcode: 334338 One tap mobile: +13052241968,,81798483893#,,,,*334338# US Telephone: +1 305 224 1968 US 2. ReFraming Aging Presenter: Melissa Donegan, LSW, Director, Healthy Living Center of Excellence, AgeSpan Wednesday, November 8, 2023, 10:00 a.m. Join Zoom Meeting https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85666698185?pwd=QUp0RHR3OENJQTZNS1RSeVix a01mZz09 Meeting ID: 856 6669 8185 Passcode: 394342 One tap mobile: +13052241968,,85666698185#,,,,*394342# US Telephone: +1 305 224 1968 US 3. Conversation with Dr. Lisa Iezzoni, Mass Dept of Transportation Board Member Wednesday, January 10, 2024, 2:00 p.m.
<p>Guide to news items in this week's Dignity Digest</p>		<p>Nursing Homes <u>Redefining the Hospital to Skilled Nursing Pipeline: Inside New Practices, Programs Driving Referrals, Skilled Nursing News</u> <u>A Colorado veteran needed help. He ended up dead after the VA referred him to a nursing home, Denver Gazette</u> Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Minimum Staffing Standards for Long-Term Care <u>Statement from the Elder Justice Coalition on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Minimum Staffing Standards for Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities proposed rule, Elder Justice Coalition</u></p>

	<p>Home Care Higher wages coming for home care workers, *Gloucester Times</p> <p>Housing The Supreme Court Could Eviscerate Rent Control, The New Republic</p> <p>Guardianship / Conservatorship Judge Appoints a Conservator to Oversee Affairs of Former Supreme, *New York Times</p> <p>Medicaid 500,000 Mistakenly Dropped from Medicaid Nationwide, Disability Scoop</p> <p>Disability Topics Disability groups win fight to be included in health equity research, *Washington Post Announcement of Decision to Designate People with Disabilities as a Population with Health Disparities, National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities National Disability Employment Awareness Month: October 2023, U. S. Census Bureau</p> <p>Covid / Long Covid Protect nursing-home residents from COVID surge, Orlando Sentinel COVID-19 is back in nursing homes. So where is the vaccine?, NPR What Are the Side Effects of COVID-19 Vaccines?, AARP</p> <p>Ageism Our Hang-Up With ‘Cougars, *Wall Street Journal For Biden and Trump, Age Really Is Just a Number, *Wall Street Journal ‘Too Young for Me!’: A Senior Center Watches ‘The Golden Bachelor’, New York Times (free access) Most Americans favor maximum age limits for federal elected officials, Supreme Court justices, Pew Research Center</p> <p>Heat Emergency / Disaster Preparation You need to be saving more for emergencies, thanks to climate change, *Washington Post</p>
<p>Webinars and Other Online Sessions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> SEIU Healthcare Now or Never Recorded virtual rally in support of strong minimum nursing home staffing standards Justice in Aging Thursday, October 12, 2023, 2:00 p.m. Fulfilling the Promise of Equity for Older Adults – Opportunities in Law & Policy Low-income older adults face significant barriers both because of their age and other identities. Law and policy play a key role in addressing those barriers and advancing equity for older adults. This webinar will review a forthcoming paper from Justice in Aging entitled, “Fulfilling the Promise of Equity for Older Adults – Opportunities in Law & Policy,” in which we argue that law and policy should address structural ageism and other types of discrimination that intersect with age and compound harmful inequities. This webinar will discuss key policy recommendations to advance equity for older adults. Presenters: Denny Chan, Managing Director, Equity Advocacy, Justice in Aging Carolyn Ingram, Executive Director, Molina Healthcare Charitable Foundation Archie Roundtree, Jr., Staff Attorney, Justice in Aging

	<p>Sahar Takshi, Staff Attorney, Justice in Aging Who Should Participate: Advocates, policymakers, and others interested in aging and equity. Register Now</p> <p>3. Health Affairs Thursday, October 19, 2023, 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. Briefing: Key Challenges Encountered by The Medicare and Medicaid Dually-Eligible Population</p> <p>An online event to explore these and other issues in more detail. Hear from a variety of perspectives. The discussion will focus on key challenges encountered by the dually eligible population, as well as potential solutions. Speakers will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kelli Emans, Senior Strategic Integration Advisor, Department of Social and Health Care Services, Aging and Long-Term Support Administration, Washington State • Dennis Heaphy, Researcher, Disability Policy Consortium, and Commissioner, MACPAC, author of <i>Requiring Integrated Care Plans to Offer Spiritual Care to Dually Eligible Individuals</i> (<i>Forefront</i>, January 31, 2023) • Laura Keohane, Assistant Professor, Department of Health Policy, Vanderbilt University, author of several rapid-response articles in the series • Olivia Richard, Advocate, Camden Coalition • Kristal Vardaman, Managing Principal, Medicaid Policy & Programs, Aurrera Health Group • Brandon Wilson, Senior Director, Center for Community Engagement in Health Innovation, Community Catalyst, author of <i>Engaging Dual-Eligible Beneficiaries to Build Effective Integrated Care Programs</i> (<i>Forefront</i>, May 22, 2023) <p>Place: Online details will be shared with registrants 24 hours in advance of the event.</p>
Previously posted webinars and online sessions	Previously posted webinars and online sessions can be viewed at: https://dignityalliancema.org/webinars-and-online-sessions/
Nursing Homes	<p>4. Skilled Nursing News October 6, 2023 Redefining the Hospital to Skilled Nursing Pipeline: Inside New Practices, Programs Driving Referrals</p> <p>Hospital systems and skilled nursing facilities are redefining their relationships in response to manifold challenges and changes affecting the continuum of care. . . This new approach has led to an overall reduction in SNF use while improving [hospital] readmission rates.</p> <p>4. Denver Gazette October 5, 2023 A Colorado veteran needed help. He ended up dead after the VA referred him to a nursing home</p> <p>The Colorado Gazette published an article by investigative journalist Jenny Deam that highlights the lack of accountability in nursing homes. This story focuses on an elderly veteran who died due to negligence in a Colorado nursing home after being referred by the VA. The investigation revealed substandard ratings for nursing homes in Colorado with VA contracts.</p>
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)	<p>5. Elder Justice Coalition September 1, 2023</p>

<p>Minimum Staffing Standards for Long-Term Care</p>	<p><u>Statement from the Elder Justice Coalition on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Minimum Staffing Standards for Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities proposed rule</u></p> <p>Today’s release of a proposed rule to implement a minimum staffing standard in nursing homes has twofold importance. Firstly, it is an important affirmation that the relationship of adequate staffing to proper care in a nursing home is essential.</p> <p>Secondly, it also offers an important opportunity through public comments to improve the rule, which in its current form falls far short of what advocates had hoped for. The rule could look a lot different and better if public comments are provided in great numbers. We hope that is the case.</p>
<p>Home Care</p>	<p>6. *Gloucester Times October 7, 2023 <u>Higher wages coming for home care workers</u> By Sam Drysdale State House News Service</p> <p>As of Friday, 58,000 home care workers will have an extra dollar per hour tacked on to their wages, the first of several increases that are the culmination of months of negotiation with the Healey administration.</p> <p>The Personal Care Attendant Workforce Council voted last week to approve a three-year contract for personal care attendants from 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, which includes a pathway to wages of \$25 per hour for some attendants by 2026.</p> <p>The contract also includes wage differential for PCAs who care for individuals with complex health care needs, retirement savings accounts, paid professional development opportunities, two new holidays, privacy protections, and increased flexibility to cash out paid time off benefits, according to the union. . .</p> <p>The home health workforce is mainly made up of women and people of color, many of whom are immigrants and don’t speak English as a first language. It is one of the fastest growing jobs in the country, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. . .</p> <p>Since 2008 when PCAs joined the union through the end of their new three-year contract, the home care workers have experienced a 131% increase in wages, according to SEIU.</p>
<p>Housing</p>	<p>7. The New Republic October 6, 2023 <u>The Supreme Court Could Eviscerate Rent Control</u> By Matt Ford</p> <p>A group of New York landlords is now asking the Supreme Court to make things easier for them and harder for their tenants. The cases in question, <i>74 Pinehurst LLC v. New York</i> and <i>335-7 LLC v. City of New York</i>, seek to overturn New York’s Rent Stabilization Law, or RSL. The law, which was originally passed in 1969, received a series of major amendments in 2019 that added new protections for tenants who sought to maintain their current housing. . .</p> <p>At stake is how far states and cities can go to protect their residents from rent hikes and evictions, and how far the Constitution protects landlords who want to maximize their own profits.</p>
<p>Guardianship / Conservatorship</p>	<p>8. *New York Times October 4, 2023 <u>Judge Appoints a Conservator to Oversee Affairs of Former Supreme</u> By Julia Jacobs and Lauren Herstik</p>

	<p>After suffering a series of strokes and financial misfortune, Cindy Birdsong, the former Supreme, has had her affairs put under the control of a conservator. . . The conservatorship case started winding its way through the court system this summer.</p>
Covid / Long Covid	<p>9. Orlando Sentinel October 7, 2023 Protect nursing-home residents from COVID surge By Tampa Bay Times Editorial Board Americans tired of hearing about COVID-19 may greet the latest vaccine with a collective yawn, but residents and staff at nursing homes cannot be as cavalier. With infections rising in these facilities, governments and industry must work to protect those living and working in group settings from this potential killer.</p> <p>10. NPR October 6, 2023 COVID-19 is back in nursing homes. So where is the vaccine? By Lynn Arditi [R]eported distribution problems among vaccine manufacturers and high demand for the new COVID-19 shots have delayed their arrival in nursing homes and assisted living facilities across the country, just as the predicted fall infection rates climb. . . The process of getting the vaccines is different this year since the federal government stopped purchasing and distributing the COVID vaccines. Nursing homes now have to buy the vaccines from long-term care pharmacies and bill insurers, which are supposed to cover 100% of the cost. The upfront cost is \$144 per patient per vaccine, said Igao, Bethany Home’s administrator. . . Nationwide, two-thirds of all seniors and about half of all adults in the U.S. intend to get the new COVID vaccine this fall, according to a survey published Sept. 27 by the nonprofit Kaiser Family Foundation</p> <p>11. AARP October 4, 2023 (updated) What Are the Side Effects of COVID-19 Vaccines? By Rachel Nania A new batch of COVID-19 vaccines is now available, and these latest shots — from Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and Novavax — have been reformulated to better target some of the more recently circulating coronavirus variants. . . Health officials are recommending that everyone 6 months and older roll up their sleeves for the added dose of protection against the illness that has taken more than 1.1 million American lives. (People 12 and older can receive the Novavax vaccine.) The shots are especially important for older adults, who continue to be hospitalized for COVID-19 at rates that are much higher than younger groups.</p>
Health Care	<p>12. *New York Times October 6, 2023 It Takes a Lifetime to Survive Childhood Cancer By Pamela Paul Cancer is understood essentially as a disease of aging. Our body makes its own toxins, oxidants that damage our DNA. With every bite of food, every breath of air, each cell that divides, come tiny mutations that then accumulate. While most mutated cells are eliminated, at some point, a key cell continues to</p>

	<p>multiply uncontrollably and cancer develops. We essentially poison ourselves over time.</p> <p>But childhood cancer, which often originates in utero, is fundamentally different in that it can progress before a child even begins to age. For most fetuses, the process of rapid growth doesn't lead to cancer. But with all that cell division going on, occasionally there are mistakes. When those mistakes take place in certain cells, they're like a ticking bomb hidden away in the fetus, often somewhere in the immune system. Those cells may stay hidden for years. Leukemia, the most common childhood cancer, manifests most frequently when children are about 3 or 4 years old and their immune system becomes more developed. But the originating cancer cell has been there all along.</p> <p>For decades, a diagnosis of cancer in a child was a death sentence of the worst kind. Fewer than half of the children diagnosed in the 1960s were still alive five years later.</p> <p>Too many children still die of cancer, which is the second leading cause of death in kids ages 1 to 14. But the treatment of pediatric cancer is also considered one of modern medicine's success stories. Over 85 percent of children diagnosed with cancer survive. There are currently about 500,000 survivors of childhood cancer — approximately one in every 750 people — alive in America today. These statistics may give comfort to the parents of the roughly 15,000 children who face a cancer diagnosis each year. . .</p> <p>How might a doctor modify a patient's medical treatment as the person ages in order to decrease some of the known risks of long-term cancer survival?</p>
Medicaid	<p>13. Disability Scoop September 25, 2023 500,000 Mistakenly Dropped from Medicaid Nationwide by Ariel Hart, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution</p> <p>Federal health officials announced late last week that 30 states had mistakenly dropped people from Medicaid while re-examining their rolls. So far, at least 500,000 children and families nationwide have been improperly marked for cancellation and then reinstated to coverage after officials recognized the problem, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. . .</p> <p>The mistake started with looking at entire households that are on Medicaid, and not looking instead at the qualifications of each individual in the household, according to a letter the feds sent to states on Aug. 30.</p>
Disability Topics	<p>14. *Washington Post September 26, 2023 Disability groups win fight to be included in health equity research By Amanda Morris</p> <p>The designation of disabled people as a 'health disparity population' allows for more funding and research into the health equity barriers disabled people face.</p> <p>15. National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities September 26, 2023 Announcement of Decision to Designate People with Disabilities as a Population with Health Disparities</p> <p>People with disabilities often experience a wide and varying range of health conditions that lead to poorer health and shorter lifespan. In addition, discrimination, inequality, and exclusionary structural practices, programs, and policies create barriers to timely and comprehensive health care, which further results in poorer health outcomes. People with disabilities who also belong to</p>

	<p>one or more other populations with health disparities fare even worse. NIMHD recognizes the importance and need for research to better understand the complexities leading to disparate health outcomes and multilevel interventions.</p> <p>16. U. S. Census Bureau October 2023 National Disability Employment Awareness Month: October 2023 From the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP): “Observed each October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) celebrates the contributions of America’s workers with disabilities past and present and showcases supportive, inclusive employment policies and practices that benefit employers and employees. ODEP has chosen "Advancing Access and Equity" as its theme for NDEAM 2023.”</p>
Ageism	<p>17. *Wall Street Journal October 6, 2023 For Biden and Trump, Age Really Is Just a Number How long can the two presidential candidates expect to live a healthy life? The answer from actuaries might surprise voters. Either Donald Trump or Joe Biden would be the oldest person to win the presidency if they prevail in next year’s election. At age 77 and 80, respectively, both are already past the U.S. life expectancy of 76.4 years. It’s become a major source of voter concern and media attention. In a CBS News poll, only 34% of respondents thought Biden would complete a second term and only 55% thought Trump would. It isn’t just the presidential contenders. Last week, California Sen. Dianne Feinstein died at age 90, long after her health had clearly declined. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, 81, twice went strangely silent in public during the summer. Nancy Pelosi, who until the beginning of this year was speaker of the House, is 83. Yet the concern that their age somehow disqualifies them from public office doesn’t really align with the state of aging in the year 2023. There’s biological truth to the adage that age is just a number. Americans on average are healthier in old age than before. Many of the factors that predict longer life favor Biden and Trump, based on publicly released information about their health.</p> <p>18. *Wall Street Journal October 5, 2023 Our Hang-Up With ‘Cougars By Katie Roiphe Even people who consider themselves open-minded are often uncomfortable when an older woman dates a younger man. . . [Author Susan] Sontag reminds us that “Rules of taste enforce structures of power. The revulsion against aging in women is the cutting edge of a whole set of oppressive structures.” These structures reveal themselves in what can seem like casual gossip, in unguarded moments of judgment or excessive curiosity. These women should not be “cougars”; they should just be boringly, mundanely, going about their lives.</p> <p>19. New York Times (free access) October 5, 2023 ‘Too Young for Me!’: A Senior Center Watches ‘The Golden Bachelor’ The new show features daters in their 60s and 70s, centering on a mild-</p>

	<p>mannered 72-year-old man from Indiana named Gerry Turner, who is looking for love again after his wife died several years ago. Eager to generate buzz around the spinoff, ABC has helped to facilitate watch parties at retirement homes around the country, targeting a television audience — people over 60 — that has effectively become the core constituency for broadcast networks.</p> <p>20. Pew Research Center October 4, 2023 Most Americans favor maximum age limits for federal elected officials, Supreme Court justices With the advanced age of some U.S. political leaders in the spotlight, 79% of Americans favor maximum age limits for elected officials in Washington, D.C. And 74% support such limits for Supreme Court justices, according to a new Pew Research Center survey. . . The U.S. Constitution sets minimum, but not maximum, age thresholds for presidents and members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. The minimum age is 35 for presidents, 30 for senators and 25 for representatives. The Constitution does not set a minimum or maximum age for Supreme Court justices.</p>
Heat Emergency / Disaster Preparation	<p>21. *Washington Post October 6, 2023 You need to be saving more for emergencies, thanks to climate change By Michelle Singletary For the financially fragile, climate change is making life even more expensive. . . Most Americans, even those who have saved well, are seeing their budgets strained because of major climate change events. And it’s only going to get worse. . . When asked what’s costing them the most, 32 percent said higher energy costs, followed by losses due to food spoilage (think power outage from a storm). Others cited home or property damage, lost income, dealing with a damaged car, medical bills, and evacuation expenses.</p>
Dignity Alliance Massachusetts Legislative Endorsements	<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>
Websites	<p>Actuaries Longevity Illustrator https://www.longevityillustrator.org/ With information you provide based on a few questions about your health, smoking habits and demographic characteristics, the ALI will produce tables and graphs showing the likelihood that you (and your spouse/partner, if applicable) may live to certain ages. In addition, the ALI provides information on the number of future years that you might expect to live, as opposed to living to certain ages. The tables and graphs can be used to help you understand your potential retiree financial longevity risk.</p> <p>Healthy Life Expectancy Calculator https://apps.goldensoncenter.uconn.edu/HLEC/ Developed by the Goldenson Center at the University of Connecticut Calculates healthy, unhealthy, and total life expectancy.</p> <p>U. S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General</p>

	<p>Exclusions Program https://oig.hhs.gov/exclusions/index.asp</p> <p>This webpage provides information about OIG's exclusion authority and activities. OIG has the authority to exclude individuals and entities from Federally funded health care programs for a variety of reasons, including a conviction for Medicare or Medicaid fraud. Those that are excluded can receive no payment from Federal health care programs for any items or services they furnish, order, or prescribe. This includes those that provide health benefits funded directly or indirectly by the United States (other than the Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan).</p> <p>OIG maintains a list of all currently excluded individuals and entities called the List of Excluded Individuals/Entities (LEIE)</p> <p>Elder Justice Coalition https://elderjusticecoalition.com/</p> <p>Founded in 2003, the Elder Justice Coalition has 3,000 members, spanning all generations. Comprised of individuals and organizations, we are a resource to Congress, the Administration, media, and the general public to raise awareness of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation and help develop and advocate for national policies to end this crisis.</p>
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 Dignity 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/ .
Websites of Dignity Alliance Massachusetts Members	See: https://dignityalliancema.org/about/organizations/
Nursing homes with admission freezes	<p>Massachusetts Department of Public Health <i>Temporary admissions freeze</i></p> <p>There have been no new postings on the DPH website since May 10, 2023.</p>
Massachusetts Department of Public Health Determination of Need Projects	<p>Massachusetts Department of Public Health <i>Determination of Need Projects: Long Term Care</i> 2023 Navigator Homes of Martha's Vineyard, Inc. – Long Term Care Substantial Capital Expenditure Royal Wayland Nursing Home, LLC – Conservation Long Term Care Project</p> <p>2022 Ascentria Care Alliance – Laurel Ridge Ascentria Care Alliance – Lutheran Housing Ascentria Care Alliance – Quaboag Berkshire Healthcare Systems, Inc. – Windsor Long Term Care Conservation Fairlawn Rehabilitation Hospital-Hospital/Clinic Substantial Capital Expenditure Long Term Centers of Lexington – Pine Knoll – Long Term Care Conservation Long Term Centers of Wrentham – Serenity Hill – Long Term Care Conservation Next Step Healthcare LLC-Conservation Long Term Care Project Royal Falmouth – Conservation Long Term Care Royal Norwell – Long Term Care Conservation Wellman Healthcare Group, Inc</p> <p>2020</p>

	<p>Advocate Healthcare, LLC Amendment Campion Health & Wellness, Inc. – LTC - Substantial Change in Service Heywood Healthcare, Inc. – Hospital/Clinic Substantial Capital Expenditure Notre Dame Health Care Center, Inc. – LTC Conservation 2020 Advocate Healthcare of East Boston, LLC. Belmont Manor Nursing Home, Inc.</p>
<p>List of Special Focus Facilities</p>	<p>Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services</p> <p><i>List of Special Focus Facilities and Candidates</i> https://tinyurl.com/SpecialFocusFacilityProgram Updated March 29, 2023</p> <p>CMS has published a new list of <u>Special Focus Facilities</u> (SFF). SFFs are nursing homes with serious quality issues based on a calculation of deficiencies cited during inspections and the scope and severity level of those citations. CMS publicly discloses the names of the facilities chosen to participate in this program and candidate nursing homes.</p> <p>To be considered for the SFF program, a facility must have a history (at least 3 years) of serious quality issues. These nursing facilities generally have more deficiencies than the average facility, and more serious problems such as harm or injury to residents. Special Focus Facilities have more frequent surveys and are subject to progressive enforcement until it either graduates from the program or is terminated from Medicare and/or Medicaid.</p> <p>This is important information for consumers – particularly as they consider a nursing home.</p> <p>What can advocates do with this information?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include the list of facilities in your area/state when providing information to consumers who are looking for a nursing home. Include an explanation of the SFF program and the candidate list. • Post the list on your program’s/organization’s website (along with the explanation noted above). • Encourage current residents and families to check the list to see if their facility is included. • Urge residents and families in a candidate facility to ask the administrator what is being done to improve care. • Suggest that resident and family councils invite the administrator to a council meeting to talk about what the facility is doing to improve care, ask for ongoing updates, and share any council concerns. • For long-term care ombudsmen representatives: Meet with the administrator to discuss what the facility is doing to address problems and share any resources that might be helpful. <p>Massachusetts facilities listed (updated March 29, 2023)</p> <p>Newly added to the listing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somerset Ridge Center, Somerset https://somersetridge rehab.com/ Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225747 • South Dennis Healthcare https://www.nextstephc.com/southdennis Nursing home inspect information:

<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225320>

Massachusetts facilities not improved

- None

Massachusetts facilities which showed improvement

- Marlborough Hills Rehabilitation and Health Care Center, Marlborough
<https://tinyurl.com/MarlboroughHills>
Nursing home inspect information:
<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225063>

Massachusetts facilities which have graduated from the program

- The Oxford Rehabilitation & Health Care Center, Haverhill
<https://theoxfordrehabhealth.com/>
Nursing home inspect information:
<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225218>
- Worcester Rehabilitation and Health Care Center, Worcester
<https://worcesterrehabcare.com/>
Nursing home inspect information:
<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225199>

Massachusetts facilities that are candidates for listing (months on list)

- Charwell House Health and Rehabilitation, Norwood (15)
<https://tinyurl.com/Charwell>
Nursing home inspect information:
<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225208>
- Glen Ridge Nursing Care Center (1)
<https://www.genesishcc.com/glenridge>
Nursing home inspect information:
<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225523>
- Hathaway Manor Extended Care (1)
<https://hathawaymanor.org/>
Nursing home inspect information:
<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225366>
- Medway Country Manor Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation, Medway (1)
<https://www.medwaymanor.com/>
Nursing home inspect information:
<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225412>
- Mill Town Health and Rehabilitation, Amesbury (14)
No website
Nursing home inspect information:
<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225318>
- Plymouth Rehabilitation and Health Care Center (10)
<https://plymouthrehab.com/>
Nursing home inspect information:
<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225207>
- Tremont Health Care Center, Wareham (10)
<https://thetremontrehabcare.com/>
Nursing home inspect information:
<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225488>
- Vantage at Wilbraham (5)
No website
Nursing home inspect information:
<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225295>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vantage at South Hadley (12) No website Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225757 https://tinyurl.com/SpecialFocusFacilityProgram 																								
<p><i>Nursing Home Inspect</i></p>	<p>ProPublica <i>Nursing Home Inspect</i> Data updated November 2022 This app uses data from the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Fines are listed for the past three years if a home has made partial or full payment (fines under appeal are not included). Information on deficiencies comes from a home’s last three inspection cycles, or roughly three years in total. The number of COVID-19 cases is since May 8, 2020, when homes were required to begin reporting this information to the federal government (some homes may have included data on earlier cases). Massachusetts listing: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/state/MA Deficiencies By Severity in Massachusetts (What do the severity ratings mean?)</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th># reported</th> <th>Deficiency Tag</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>250</td> <td>B</td> </tr> <tr> <td>82</td> <td>C</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7,056</td> <td>D</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1,850</td> <td>E</td> </tr> <tr> <td>546</td> <td>F</td> </tr> <tr> <td>487</td> <td>G</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31</td> <td>H</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>I</td> </tr> <tr> <td>40</td> <td>J</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>K</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>L</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	# reported	Deficiency Tag	250	B	82	C	7,056	D	1,850	E	546	F	487	G	31	H	1	I	40	J	7	K	2	L
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<p><i>Nursing Home Compare</i></p>	<p>Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) <i>Nursing Home Compare Website</i> Beginning January 26, 2022, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is posting new information that will help consumers have a better understanding of certain staffing information and concerns at facilities. This information will be posted for each facility and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff turnover: The percentage of nursing staff as well as the number of administrators who have stopped working at a nursing home over the past 12-month period. Weekend staff: The level of weekend staffing for nurses and registered nurses at a nursing home over a three-month period. <p>Posting this information was required as part of the Affordable Care Act, which was passed in 2010. In many facilities, staffing is lower on weekends, often meaning residents have to wait longer or may not receive all the care they need. High turnover means that staff are less likely to know the residents, recognize changes in condition, or implement preferred methods of providing care. All of this contributes to the quality-of-care residents receive and their quality of life. https://tinyurl.com/NursingHomeCompareWebsite</p>																								

Data on Ownership of Nursing Homes	Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services <i>Data on Ownership of Nursing Homes</i> CMS has released data giving state licensing officials, state and federal law enforcement, researchers, and the public an enhanced ability to identify common owners of nursing homes across nursing home locations. This information can be linked to other data sources to identify the performance of facilities under common ownership, such as owners affiliated with multiple nursing homes with a record of poor performance. The data is available on nursing home ownership will be posted to data.cms.gov and updated monthly.		
Long-Term Care Facilities Specific COVID-19 Data	Massachusetts Department of Public Health <i>Long-Term Care Facilities Specific COVID-19 Data</i> Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) reports related to long-term care facilities in Massachusetts. Table of Contents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Daily Dashboard • COVID-19 Weekly Public Health Report • Additional COVID-19 Data • CMS COVID-19 Nursing Home Data 		
DignityMA Call Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MA Senate released a report in response to COVID-19. Download the DignityMA Response to Reimagining the Future of MA. • Advocate for state bills that advance the Dignity Alliance Massachusetts' Mission and Goals – State Legislative Endorsements. • Support relevant bills in Washington – Federal Legislative Endorsements. • Join our Work Groups. • Learn to use and leverage Social Media at our workshops: Engaging Everyone: Creating Accessible, Powerful Social Media Content 		
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. Interest Groups meet periodically (monthly, bi-	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 Lachlan Forrow	prisoreilly@gmail.com lforrow@bidmc.harvard.edu
	Facilities (Nursing homes)	Arlene Germain	agermain@manhr.org
	Home and Community Based Services	Meg Coffin	mcoffin@centerlw.org
	Legislative	Richard Moore	rmoore8743@charter.net
	Legal Issues	Jeni Kaplan	jkaplan@cpr-ma.org
	Interest Group	Group lead	Email
Assisted Living and Rest Homes	In formation		
Housing	Bill Henning	bhenning@bostoncil.org	

monthly, or quarterly). Please contact group lead for more information.	Veteran Services	James Lomastro	jimlomastro@comcast.net
	Transportation	Frank Baskin Chris Hoeh	baskinfrank19@gmail.com cdhoeh@gmail.com
	Covid / Long Covid	James Lomastro	jimlomastro@comcast.net
	Incarcerated Persons	TBD	info@DignityAllianceMA.org
<i>The Dignity Digest</i>	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		
Note of thanks	Thanks to the contributors to this issue of <i>The Dignity Digest</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suzanne Lanzikos • Dick Moore Special thanks to 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 Digest@DignityAllianceMA.org.</i>		
<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.</i></p> <p><i>Previous issues of The Tuesday Digest and The Dignity Digest are available at: https://dignityalliancema.org/dignity-digest/</i></p> <p><i>For more information about Dignity Alliance Massachusetts, please visit www.DignityAllianceMA.org.</i></p>			