



# 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.**

## DignityMA Zoom Sessions

Dignity Alliance Massachusetts participants meet via Zoom every other Tuesday at 2:00 p.m. Sessions are open to all. To receive session notices with agenda and Zoom links, please send a request via [info@DignityAllianceMA.org](mailto:info@DignityAllianceMA.org).

## Spotlight

**[Care At Risk: Upheaval in the Nursing Home Industry](http://www.GoodJobsFirst.org)**  
[www.GoodJobsFirst.org](http://www.GoodJobsFirst.org)

By Siobhan Standaert  
December 2023

### Executive Summary

A small group of lesser-known nursing home chains with poor patient safety records are taking over a growing share of the long-term care industry as some of the larger players abandon the business. Federal and state regulators have been slow to keep up with ownership changes, hampering critically needed increased oversight of recidivist companies.

A dozen of these bad actors—some of which have doubled or tripled in size in recent years by purchasing facilities sold off by more established operators—have been averaging over \$100,000 in penalties per facility, nearly three times the national level. These firms, such as Arcadia Care, Brius Health Care, Aperion Care, and Infinity Healthcare Management, also perform poorly in the federal government’s nursing home rating system, averaging only 2 on a 1-5 scale where 5 is best.

Many of the penalties paid by these chains stem from serious abuses. An Illinois-based facility operated by Aperion Care was fined \$243,000 for failing to properly administer blood work resulting in a resident death. A facility tied to Infinity Healthcare was penalized over \$300,000 for failing to prevent physical and sexual abuse between residents.

These findings come from an analysis of 28,000 regulatory enforcement actions covering the past five years, collected for addition to the Violation Tracker database of corporate misconduct. The penalty records were obtained from both the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and state regulators, which share responsibility for overseeing nursing homes.

Some states are not transparent about their enforcement activity. Seventeen of them fail to put information on penalty cases on their agency websites and refused to supply it in response to open records requests submitted by Good Jobs

	<p>First. We were able to fill those gaps with data provided by CMS and thus were able to determine the volume of enforcement activity for each state. This revealed wide variations across the country when measured in relation to each state’s number of facilities.</p> <p>States such as Oregon, California, and Arkansas have brought an average of over 15 cases per facility over the past five years and have imposed an average of more than \$100,000 in fines per facility. At the other end of the spectrum, states such as Alabama and Maine have averaged less than 2 cases and under \$25,000 in fines per facility.</p> <p>Such wide disparities indicate that CMS needs to do more to raise the level of enforcement in the laggard states. Given that they share oversight responsibilities with CMS, all states should be held to high, uniform levels across the country. This should include both those facilities that participate in Medicare and Medicaid and those that do not.</p> <p>The new nursing home staffing requirements announced recently by CMS may improve the situation in facilities across the country, but only if they are adequately enforced. CMS also needs to make improvements of its own when it comes to information gathering. For a long time, the agency’s data collection failed to keep up with ownership changes in the nursing home industry, especially when private equity firms began making acquisitions in the early 2000s. This made it difficult to see how these changes were affecting the quality of care.</p> <p>A provision in the Affordable Care Act of 2010 was designed to rectify this by expanding ownership data collection by CMS and requiring that the data be shared with the public. That requirement was largely ignored until last year. CMS is now making a more serious effort to monitor ownership relationships, but our research for this report suggests that there are still serious gaps in the agency’s system. Better transparency by itself will not eliminate deficiencies in the quality of care, but it will make it easier to identify the worst operators and help pressure them to improve their practices.</p>
<p><b>Quotes</b></p>	<p><i>"Why do these things happen to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and don't happen to able bodied people? It challenges us to ask about how we allow institutions like [the Walter E.] Fernald [State School] to exist to begin with, and how we haven't reckoned with the history of those institutions."</i></p>

Rick Glassman, director of advocacy, Disability Law Center, [Feds launch civil rights investigation into patient privacy breach at abandoned Fernald School](#), **WGBH News**, April 4, 2024

*"We are very happy to have a reliable and trusted person at the helm [of the Benjamin Healthcare Center] now. There has been lots of uncertainty and lack of transparency throughout this whole process. We're also incredibly grateful to the staff and residents who kept showing up and demanding a response. They knew something was wrong and that folks were in danger. Without their trust in us and without their support and organizing, we would have had a much harder battle."*

State Representative Samantha Montañó, [Receiver Named For Nursing Home Facing Closure](#), **State House News**, April 4, 2024

*"[Physician assistants] are the only health care professional[s] that needs to have their license appended to another professional. Nurse practitioners don't have that, nurses don't have that, respiratory therapists don't have that."*

Duncan Daviau, president of the Massachusetts Association of Physician Assistants (MAPA), [Law Change May Help Physician Assistants Fill Labor Gap](#), **State House News**, April 4, 2024

*"The defendants in this case unlawfully exploited vulnerable individuals, including disabled and unhoused victims, in order to cheat the system for their own personal gain."*

Attorney General Andrea Campbell, [AG Campbell Announces Indictments In Worcester-Based Home Health Medicaid Fraud Scheme](#), **Office of the Massachusetts Attorney General**, April 1, 2024

*The situation raises questions about what vetting process the state uses to examine its highest-paid vendors.*

[N.Y.'s largest health vendor linked to owner accused of fraud, neglect](#), **Times Union**, April 7, 2024

*“[N]o matter how much we tell ourselves we won’t be like our parents, no matter how hard and fast we run in the other direction, we become them.”*

Steven Petrow, a *Washington Post* contributing columnist and author of the book [“\*Stupid Things I Won’t Do When I Get Older: A Highly Judgmental, Unapologetically Honest Accounting of All the Things Our Elders Are Doing Wrong\*”](#), [How to age better than your parents](#),  
\**Washington Post*, April 6, 2024

*Think about it: Government dysfunction has undermined a critical, half-century-old safety-net program. States knew this “unwinding” process would be a massive challenge that could overwhelm their infrastructure, yet they bungled it anyway.*

*Equally embarrassing: We don’t know what ultimately happened to those who were purged and how many have any access to care now. . .*

*About [1 in 5 Americans](#) is on Medicaid. Yet, for some reason, the partial dismantling of this critical program has barely pierced the election news cycle so far. Presumably, some politicians would prefer to keep it that way.*

[The Great Medicaid Purge was even worse than expected](#),  
\**Washington Post*, April 5, 2024

*“We have allowed American health care to become too much the servant of the profit motive.”*

Dr. Donald Berwick, president emeritus of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement and former administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services under President Obama, [Markey and Warren rip Steward’s bosses for ‘rot of their greed’ at State House hearing](#),  
\**Boston Globe*, April 3, 2024

*“And law enforcement authorities should carefully review every aspect of this fiasco. We also need to change the law. Private equity should not be allowed to loot one business after another.”*

US Senator Elizabeth Warren, [Markey and Warren rip Steward’s bosses for ‘rot of their greed’ at State House hearing](#), \**Boston Globe*,  
April 3, 2024

*We make life changing decisions based on our perceptions of capacity—and we might be wrong in those perceptions. By addressing the poverty issues, those “hallmarks” of incapacity may vanish.*

[Poverty Masquerading as Incapacity](#), American Bar Association, March 28, 2024

*Insurance companies have long blamed private-equity-owned hospitals and physician groups for exorbitant billing that drives up health care costs. But a tool backed by private equity is helping insurers make billions of dollars and shift costs to patients.*

[In Battle Over Health Care Costs, Private Equity Plays Both Sides](#), New York Times (free access), April 7, 2024

*“I probably won’t be around for the next [total eclipse]. So, I’m hoping the weather will cooperate long enough for me to see this one. I’m praying for clear weather.”*

LaVerne Biser, a 105-year-old man who is avid eclipse aficionado, [Texas man is preparing to watch his 13th solar eclipse. He’s 105.](#), \*Washington Post, April 5, 2024

*Jimmy Carter’s long hospice stay, [now more than a year](#), has shown a different model for hospice—one that supports its mission to help people live well, with dignity and quality of life, for whatever time remains.*

[It’s Past Time For An Upgrade To The Medicare Hospice Benefit](#), Health Affairs, April 5, 2024

*Because no data exists to shed light on who is currently under guardianship, let alone why, little to nothing is known about guardianship’s impact on marginalized communities. What is known, however, is that the systemic inequalities experienced over the life of a marginalized older adult can increase the adult’s risk of various harms, including chronic disease and death, which may contribute to an increased likelihood of guardianship.*

[Guardianship Data Reform](#), Justice in Aging, March 24, 2024



	<p><i>“These firms, such as Arcadia Care, Brius Health Care, Aperion Care, and Infinity Healthcare Management, perform poorly in the federal government’s nursing home rating system, averaging only 2 on a 1 to 5 scale. These bad actors — some of which have doubled or tripled in size in recent years by purchasing facilities sold off by more established operators — have been averaging over \$100,000 in penalties per facility, nearly three times the national level.”</i></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Where Nursing Homes Hide Their Profits</u></a>, <b>The Lever</b>, April 8, 2024</p> <p><i>There are about 15,600 nursing facilities with 1.7 million licensed beds in the United States. Two-thirds of them are affiliated with 600 chains while the others are independent. Seventy percent of the facilities, with 74 percent of the beds, are owned by for-profit companies.</i></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Care At Risk: Upheaval in the Nursing Home Industry</u></a>, <a href="http://www.GoodJobsFirst.org"><u>www.GoodJobsFirst.org</u></a>, December 2023</p>
<p><b>BCIL 50th anniversary kick-off event</b></p>	<p><b>Boston Center for Independent Living</b>  <a href="#"><u>50th Anniversary Kick Off Event</u></a>  Thursday, May 16, 2024, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.</p> <p>2024 marks a major milestone for BCIL: celebrating its 50th Anniversary. As one of the first Independent Living Centers in the country, BCIL plays a transformative role in creating and advocating for equal access to health care, affordable housing, accessible transportation, job and educational opportunities, and ADA compliance for residents of Greater Boston and beyond. To amplify this momentous year with reflection, celebration, and action, they are hosting a virtual event, “ BCIL 50 Years In: Wins, Lessons and What’s Next for Independent Living,” on May 16, 2024, from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm ET. Speakers will reflect on the independent living movement nationwide and here in Boston exploring the future we are creating together.</p> <p>This event will include: • Facilitator Dr. Lisa Iezzoni, disability rights advocate, Harvard Medical School professor, and BCIL Board Member, Boston. • Keynote speaker Maria Town, CEO of the American Association of People with Disabilities, Washington, DC. • Panelist Karen Tamley, President and CEO of Access Living, Chicago. • Panelist Alex Green, Advocate/Scholar, Harvard Kennedy School, Boston. • Panelist Dr. Anjali Forber-Pratt, Director of the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research, Washington, DC. Additionally, we will have a conversation</p>

	<p>with two disability activists, on where they believe IL must go. Joining us will be: • Moderator Dianna Hu, Disability Activist, Google Engineer, BCIL Board Chair • Panelist Felix Jordan, BCIL Organizer on Housing Issues and Climate Change • Panelist Giovani Velasquez, BCIL Pre-Employment Training Services Coordinator. CART and ASL will be available. <a href="#">Register</a></p>
<p><b>Guide to news items in this week's <i>Dignity Digest</i></b></p>	<p><b>FY 2025 State Budget</b> <a href="#">FY 2025 State Budget</a> (State House News, April 5, 2024)</p> <p><b>Benjamin Healthcare Center</b> <a href="#">Receiver Named For Nursing Home Facing Closure</a> (State House News, April 4, 2024)</p> <p><b>Nursing Homes</b> <a href="#">CMS Issues NPRM Regarding Medicare Payments for Skilled Nursing Facilities and Civil Monetary Penalties</a>, Centers for Medicare &amp; Medicaid Services, March 26, 2024</p> <p><b>Home and Community Based Services</b> <a href="#">AG Campbell Announces Indictments In Worcester-Based Home Health Medicaid Fraud Scheme</a> (Office of the Massachusetts Attorney General, April 1, 2024)</p> <p><b>Hospice</b> <a href="#">It's Past Time For An Upgrade To The Medicare Hospice Benefit</a> (Health Affairs, April 5, 2024)</p> <p><b>Housing</b> <a href="#">Majority of older homeowners plan to stay in their home as they age: Redfin</a> (Yahoo! Finance, April 2, 2024)</p> <p><b>Private Equity</b> <a href="#">Where Nursing Homes Hide Their Profits</a> (The Lever, April 8, 2024) <a href="#">In Battle Over Health Care Costs, Private Equity Plays Both Sides</a> (New York Times (free access), April 7, 2024) <a href="#">Markey and Warren rip Steward's bosses for 'rot of their greed' at State House hearing</a> (*Boston Globe, April 3, 2024) <a href="#">Steward plan to sell doctors network comes under scrutiny from federal and state lawmakers</a> (*Boston Globe, March 27, 2024)</p> <p><b>Medicaid</b> <a href="#">The Great Medicaid Purge was even worse than expected</a> (*Washington Post, April 5, 2024)</p> <p><b>Guardianship</b> <a href="#">Program Spotlight: Nevada's Guardianship Advocacy Project (GAP)</a> (Justice in Aging, April 4, 2024) <a href="#">Poverty Masquerading as Incapacity</a> (American Bar Association, March 28, 2024) <a href="#">Guardianship Data Reform</a> (Justice in Aging, March 24, 2024)</p> <p><b>Workforce</b> <a href="#">Law Change May Help Physician Assistants Fill Labor Gap</a> (State House News, April 4, 2024)</p> <p><b>Healthcare</b> <a href="#">47 health systems ranked by annual revenue</a> (Becker's Hospital CFO Report, April 5, 2024)</p> <p><b>Disability Topics</b> <a href="#">Feds launch civil rights investigation into patient privacy breach at abandoned Fernald School</a> (WGBH News, April 4, 2024)</p>

	<p><b>Aging Topics</b>  <a href="#">How to age better than your parents</a> (*Washington Post, April 6, 2024)</p> <p><b>Longevity</b>  <a href="#">Texas man is preparing to watch his 13th solar eclipse. He's 105.</a> (*Washington Post, April 5, 2024)</p> <p><b>From Our Colleagues from around the Country</b>  <a href="#">N.Y.'s largest health vendor linked to owner accused of fraud, neglect</a> (Times Union, April 7, 2024)</p>
<p><b>Public Events</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>1. Advocates for Autism of Massachusetts</b>  Tuesday, April 9, 2024, 10:30 a.m.  Great Hall, State House  19<sup>th</sup> Annual Autism Advocacy Day  <i>An Unbearable Wait: The Burden Placed on the Autism Community by the Workforce Crisis</i>  Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll will provide opening remarks and present a proclamation recognizing Autism Advocacy Day. Sen. Joanne Comerford will be recognized for her work to pass the "Blue Envelope Bill" in the Senate, which aims to address potential issues when a driver with autism is pulled over by police. Reps. Sean Garballey and Kay Khan will also be honored. Tere Ramos, executive director of Partners for Youth with Disabilities, will give keynote remarks.</p> </li> <li> <p><b>2. Massachusetts Office on Disability</b>  Wednesday, April 10, 2024, 10 a.m.  Suffolk University Law School, 120 Tremont St., Boston  <i>Networking Event</i>  Mary Mahon McCauley, the office's executive director, and Administration and Finance Secretary Matt Gorzkowicz are slated to deliver opening remarks.  <a href="#">More Info and Register</a></p> </li> <li> <p><b>3. Older Adult Behavioral Health Network (OABHN)</b>  Wednesday, May 8, 2024, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  The Hogan Center, College of the Holy Cross, 1 College Street, Worcester  <i>2024 OABHN Conference, "Leading Change: Making a Difference at the Intersection of Practice, Policy, and Lived Experience"</i>  The annual conference offers an engaging day of plenary and workshop sessions to cultivate leaders from within the aging services workforce to influence policy, programs, and public understanding of the mental health needs of older adults. Join colleagues from around Massachusetts to learn to use your voice for positive change!  <a href="#">REGISTER TODAY</a></p> </li> </ol>
<p><b>Webinars and Other Online Sessions</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>4. Consumer Voice</b>  Wednesday, April 10, 2024, 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.  <a href="#">Hidden Profits in the Nursing Home Industry</a>  Consumer Voice has long been a proponent of increased transparency and accountability in nursing home finances. Data and research show that roughly 75% of nursing homes use related party transactions. These common transactions permit some nursing home owners to hide how profitable their facilities really are. On March 4, 2024, a new paper, "Tunneling and Hidden Profits in Health Care" was published by Dr. Ashvin Gandhi and Dr. Andrew Olenski. Their paper looked specifically at</p> </li> </ol>



	<p>related party transactions in nursing homes and “tunneling.” Tunneling is the process by which nursing home providers “covertly extract profit by making inflated payments for goods and service to commonly owned related parties.” This paper, a first of its kind, found that in 2019, 63% of nursing home profits were “hidden” in related party transactions. In other words, the reported profits by the industry are roughly 1/3 of what they truly are.</p> <p>Join Consumer Voice in welcoming the authors of this groundbreaking study to discuss their methodology, findings, and what steps they recommend be taken to address the lack of transparency and accountability that allows nursing homes to continuously claim poverty as to why they are unable to provide high-quality care.</p> <p>This timely study pulls back the curtain on nursing home finances and challenges the industry narrative that they are not paid enough in Medicare or Medicaid dollars. Importantly, it shows that when money is diverted away through “tunneling” reforms such as a minimum staffing standard face uphill challenges, as the industry claims it cannot do better with more money.</p> <p><a href="#">REGISTER</a></p>
<p><b>Previously posted webinars and online sessions</b></p>	<p>Previously posted webinars and online sessions can be viewed at: <a href="https://dignityalliancema.org/webinars-and-online-sessions/">https://dignityalliancema.org/webinars-and-online-sessions/</a></p>
<p><b>FY 2025 State Budget</b></p>	<p><b>5. State House News</b>  April 5, 2024  <a href="#">FY 2025 State Budget</a></p> <p>House budget chief Aaron Michlewitz is rolling out a redraft of Gov. Maura Healey’s fiscal 2025 budget next week while leading talks with Senate Democrats over a fiscal 2024 spending bill that will dictate the future of family shelter funding and restrictions, outdoor dining rules, and the fate of to-go drinks sold by restaurants. Floor deliberations on the House budget are not scheduled to begin until Wednesday, April 24, but House Democrats usually unveil their spending plan the week before school vacation week, giving representatives a couple of days to file amendments and staff more than a week to review and sort them into categories that lead to the adoption of mega-amendments. Here are some issues to watch as the spending plan comes into view:</p> <p>-- <b>One-Timers:</b> State tax collections have stopped growing, but the appetite to spend more remains and the pressure to boost investments is always strong. One-time revenues are the usual fallback to keep spending on the rise but can set the state up for budget headaches the following year when the money is gone but the expectations for spending are still there. How much will Michlewitz and Speaker Ron Mariano lean on one-time revenues in fiscal 2025, especially after Mariano warned that fiscal 2026 may be a tough year?</p> <p>-- <b>New Revenues:</b> When budget bills are rolled out, authors love to point out that their bills do not propose new taxes or increase existing ones. The tax front has been active in recent years, with historic automatic tax refunds, followed by a major tax increase on high-income households and last year’s \$1 billion targeted tax relief law. Gov. Healey wants the Legislature to let cities and towns raise taxes, but lawmakers seem cool to</p>

	<p>that idea. House Democrats might make another push for revenues associated with legalizing online Lottery sales and may be on the lookout for other new revenue sources as well since existing taxes are not currently churning out more revenue.</p> <p>-- <b>The Bottom Line:</b> Gov. Healey proposed a \$58.13 billion budget in January. While the governor and legislative leaders are basing their budgets off the same \$40.2 billion consensus tax revenue estimate, there's no requirement that they agree on a bottom-line spending number. There are billions of dollars in non-tax revenues underpinning the state budget each year, from the federal government, fees and trust funds, that factor into how much is available to spend, and any significant differential in the bottom line between Healey and the House would underscore differences over both spending demands and revenue availability. For instance, how heavily will House spending plans rely on volatile capital gains tax revenues, and will the House go along with Healey's call for a tax amnesty program intended to pull overdue obligations in from taxpayers?</p> <p>-- <b>Honest Budgeting:</b> In recent years when tax revenues far surpassed expectations, House and Senate budget negotiators often just settled on the higher appropriation when choosing between line-item recommendations in their respective budgets. Given the current revenue squeeze, be on the lookout for potential underfunding of accounts, which frees up money to spend on paper but often requires the Legislature to replenish accounts mid-budget year with supplemental spending bills. Over the years, sheriffs and snow and ice removal have periodically been underfunded in the annual budget, and the most recent glaring example of underfunding was this year's \$325 million for emergency family shelter. House leaders have already promised to fully fund some pricey early education and K-12 education accounts.</p> <p>-- <b>Policy Riders:</b> Legislative leaders like to use the annual state spending plan as a vehicle for other policy goals, especially in recent years as larger omnibus bills have become the norm. Some have a clear budget-related angle, like Healey's proposal to close the MCI-Concord prison and save millions of dollars per year, but the likely dozens of outside sections can and do reach across many topics. Keep an eye out for the House to roll onto the table some other policy priorities that the Senate and governor might need to consider as part of the budget.</p>
<p><b>Benjamin Healthcare Center</b></p>	<p><b>6. State House News</b>  April 4, 2024  <a href="#"><u>Receiver Named For Nursing Home Facing Closure</u></a>  By Michael P. Norton  Supporters trying to prevent the closure of a Mission Hill nursing home are celebrating the appointment of a receiver.  The head of the Edgar P. Benjamin Healthcare Center announced plans on Feb. 14 to close the nearly century-old nursing home, which has 205 licensed beds, by July 1. CEO Tony Francis, in a <a href="#"><u>letter</u></a> to residents and family members, wrote the center faced "insurmountable financial challenges" due to rising labor costs and expenses, and "workforce constraints."  Residents and elected officials have rallied to save the nursing home and urged the state to appoint a receiver, the appointment of which instead came through the courts.</p>

	<p>Dignity Alliance Massachusetts on Wednesday night shared a Superior Court ruling in which Judge Katie Rayburn concluded an emergency exists at the long-term care facility and that a temporary receiver "is necessary to preserve the health, safety, and well-being of the residents" in part by "taking measures to ensure the Facility retain adequate vendors and staff."</p> <p>The court named as receiver Boston attorney Joseph Feaster Jr., chair of the city's Reparations Task Force, granting him broad authority and powers pertaining to the home's bank accounts, property, employees, contracts, rents, income and profits.</p> <p>"We are very happy to have a reliable and trusted person at the helm now," Rep. Samantha Montañó said. "There has been lots of uncertainty and lack of transparency throughout this whole process. We're also incredibly grateful to the staff and residents who kept showing up and demanding a response. They knew something was wrong and that folks were in danger. Without their trust in us and without their support and organizing, we would have had a much harder battle."</p> <p>As the nursing home's supporters <a href="#">rallied outside the facility at 120 Fisher Ave. last month</a>, Francis told the News Service that the center was focused on ensuring "appropriate and orderly resident transfers."</p> <p>"The economic climate for long-term care is dismal and continued operation of the facility is simply not sustainable, so the skilled nursing facility is scheduled to close July 1, after all resident transfers are complete," Francis said last month. "We continue to work closely with state and local elected and appointed officials. We appreciate the interest and support of these officials but the fiscal reality remains the same."</p>
<p><b>Nursing Homes</b></p>	<p><b>7. Centers for Medicare &amp; Medicaid Services</b>  March 26, 2024  <a href="#">CMS Issues NPRM Regarding Medicare Payments for Skilled Nursing Facilities and Civil Monetary Penalties</a></p> <p>On Friday, March 26, 2024, the Centers for Medicare &amp; Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) that would raise Medicare payments for skilled nursing facilities by 4.1%. In addition, CMS proposes to change the current enforcement regulations to permit multiple civil monetary penalties (CMP) for poor care, specifically allowing for per day and per instance CMPs. Currently, regulation does not permit the issuance of per instance and per day CMPs for the same survey. CMS claims that this will ensure that penalties for non-compliance are sufficient.</p>
<p><b>Home and Community Based Services</b></p>	<p><b>8. Office of the Massachusetts Attorney General</b>  April 1, 2024  <a href="#">AG Campbell Announces Indictments In Worcester-Based Home Health Medicaid Fraud Scheme</a>  <i>Defendants allegedly submitted over \$500,000 in false claims to MassHealth for home health services that were not provided</i></p> <p>Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell announced that the Worcester County Superior Court has returned indictments against four individuals in relation to a wide-spread personal care attendant and home health Medicaid fraud scheme in the Worcester area. The defendants allegedly billed over \$500,000 to MassHealth, for home health services that were not provided, including services by personal care attendants ("PCA"), home health aides ("HHA"), or Adult Foster Care ("AFC") caretakers. . .</p>

	<p>The AG's office alleges that this scheme involved false billing for at least seventeen different MassHealth members, causing many of those members not to receive critical, medically necessary health services that they needed. Mercedes and his co-conspirators allegedly utilized the MassHealth funds for personal expenses, including travel, lifestyle, jewelry, and various luxury items, along with a downpayment on a home in Worcester.</p> <p>Additionally, on March 20, 2024, similar indictments were returned to the Franklin County Superior Court related to a separate PCA MassHealth fraud scheme involving a PCA consumer, Brenda Bialecki, formerly of South Deerfield, and two PCAs, John Baracewicz and Isaiah Salaam. The defendants allegedly caused nearly \$100,000 in false claims to be submitted to MassHealth for home health services that were not provided and/or were the result of kickbacks.</p>
<p><b>Hospice</b></p>	<p><b>9. Health Affairs</b>  April 5, 2024  <a href="#"><u>It's Past Time For An Upgrade To The Medicare Hospice Benefit</u></a>  By Cara L. Wallace and Stephanie P. Wladkowski  <b>Hospice Care: Beyond the Six-Month Prognosis</b>  Hospice care is intended to provide comfort and support during a patient's final months. However, current Medicare rules require a prognosis of six months or less to qualify, leading to challenges for patients with chronic illnesses and frequent discharges.</p> <p><b>The Current System's Limitations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Six-Month Prognosis:</b> This rule doesn't reflect the unpredictable nature of chronic illnesses, a growing population in hospice.</li> <li>• <b>Live Discharges:</b> Many patients improve or stabilize, leading to discharge from hospice despite ongoing needs. This disrupts care and creates emotional distress. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Decertification:</b> When a patient's condition stabilizes, they are discharged.</li> <li>○ <b>Revocation:</b> Patients who seek emergency care may be discharged, even if related to their hospice diagnosis.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Focus on Fraud Prevention:</b> Strict regulations to prevent fraud may lead to unnecessary discharges due to fear of audits.</li> </ul> <p><b>Impact on Patients and Families:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Disrupted Care:</b> Discharged patients often struggle to replicate hospice services like medication delivery and support.</li> <li>• <b>Emotional Distress:</b> Discharge can feel like abandonment, causing anxiety and grief.</li> <li>• <b>Financial Burden:</b> Finding post-discharge care can be expensive, especially for those with limited resources.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Carter Case and Its Significance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Jimmy Carter's long hospice stay</b> highlights the possibility of hospice care beyond six months.</li> <li>• <b>Raises awareness</b> about the limitations of the current system and the challenges of live discharge.</li> </ul> <p><b>Looking Forward: How Can We Do Better?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Policy Changes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Broaden Definition of Terminally Ill:</b> Include prognoses longer than six months.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Billable Live Discharge Protocol:</b> Standardize discharge planning and follow-up.</li> <li>○ <b>Expand Funding:</b> Increase access to community-based palliative care or create new levels of care within hospice.</li> <li>● <b>Continued Access to Security:</b> Allow discharged patients some level of continued hospice support (e.g., after-hours access to information or care).</li> </ul> <p>By advocating for these changes, we can ensure a more inclusive and supportive hospice system that meets the needs of all patients, regardless of their prognosis. This will improve the quality of end-of-life care for everyone.</p>
<p><b>Housing</b></p>	<p><b>10. Yahoo! Finance</b>  April 2, 2024  <a href="#"><u>Majority of older homeowners plan to stay in their home as they age: Redfin</u></a>  By Sarah Marx  <b>Baby Boomers Staying Put Creates Housing Squeeze for Young Families</b>  A significant number of older Americans, particularly baby boomers, are choosing to stay in their homes as they age. This trend, driven by financial incentives and personal preference, is limiting housing availability for younger generations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>High Homeownership Rates:</b> Baby boomers boast high homeownership rates (nearly 80%) and often have their mortgages paid off or secured at much lower rates than today's market. Selling and buying new would be financially disadvantageous.</li> <li>● <b>Limited Senior Housing Options:</b> Government policies haven't prioritized building senior-friendly housing, making existing homes more attractive for aging in place.</li> <li>● <b>Shifting Market:</b> While single-family home inventory is slowly increasing, it remains historically low. Baby boomers occupy a large share of family-sized homes (28% of three-bedroom homes), further squeezing younger buyers.</li> </ul> <p>This trend has consequences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Inventory Shortage:</b> Fewer homes on the market make it harder for young families to find suitable housing.</li> <li>● <b>Intergenerational Impact:</b> Millennials with children have a smaller share of family-sized homes compared to boomers.</li> </ul> <p>Possible solutions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Building Senior Housing:</b> Increased government focus on senior-friendly housing might incentivize boomers to move, freeing up family homes.</li> <li>● <b>Addressing Affordability:</b> Policies allowing for more affordable housing options in general could benefit both young families and seniors.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Private Equity</b></p>	<p><b>11. The Lever</b>  April 8, 2024  <a href="#"><u>Where Nursing Homes Hide Their Profits</u></a>  By Merrill Goozner  <i>While industry leaders plead poverty to fight a proposed staffing standard, private equity owners are funneling cash into their affiliated real estate and management firms.</i></p>



### **Nursing Home Industry Under Fire: Profit over Care?**

This article exposes the troubling conditions in many for-profit nursing homes, particularly those owned by private equity firms. Here are the key takeaways:

- **Safety Violations and Poor Care:** The story opens with an incident at a Chicago nursing home where a resident suffered a broken leg due to understaffing and a nurse violating safety protocols. Federal records show numerous violations at this facility.
- **Private Equity's Role:** The industry has undergone a shift, with large chains being replaced by smaller private equity firms. These firms are accused of prioritizing profits over resident care.
- **Profit Tunneling:** A growing concern is the practice of "tunneling" profits. This involves inflating costs through related-party transactions, such as excessive rent payments to real estate companies affiliated with the same ownership group. This makes the nursing home appear unprofitable while masking true profits.
- **Minimum Staffing Standards Proposed:** The Biden administration has proposed minimum staffing ratios for nurses and aides to improve care quality. However, the industry claims it can't afford this due to low government reimbursement rates.
- **Industry Pushback:** The for-profit nursing home industry is lobbying heavily against the proposed staffing rules, arguing they would force closures and cause financial hardship.
- **Non-Profits vs. For-Profits:** The article contrasts the financial practices of for-profit and non-profit nursing homes. Non-profits tend to spend less on rent and management fees and more on direct care staff.
- **First-Hand Account:** A certified nursing assistant describes the challenges of working in a short-staffed environment and the impact on resident care.
- **Uncertain Future:** The federal government is expected to finalize the staffing rules soon. Whether they will prioritize resident care over industry profits remains to be seen.

This article raises serious concerns about the for-profit nursing home model and the potential consequences for vulnerable residents. It highlights the need for stricter regulations and financial transparency to ensure quality care in these facilities.

#### **12. New York Times (free access)**

April 7, 2024

[\*In Battle Over Health Care Costs, Private Equity Plays Both Sides\*](#)

By Chris Hamby

A private equity-backed company called MultiPlan sells a tool named Data iSight to insurance companies. This tool recommends how much insurers should pay for out-of-network medical bills.

Data iSight lowers the amount insurers pay but raises profits for MultiPlan and insurers through processing fees. This benefit comes at a cost to patients, who may end up with higher bills, and medical providers, who receive lower payments.

Here's a more detailed breakdown:

- **Data iSight:** This tool is used by insurers to determine how much to pay out-of-network medical bills. It recommends lower rates than what medical providers typically charge.

- **MultiPlan:** The company that sells Data iSight to insurers. MultiPlan is backed by private equity firms and has been bought and sold multiple times more profitably each time.
- **Impact on Insurers:** Insurers benefit because Data iSight reduces the amount they need to pay for medical bills. They also profit from processing fees based on the size of the final payment.
- **Impact on Patients:** Patients can be negatively affected in two ways. First, if their provider receives a lower payment from the insurer, they may be billed for the remaining balance. Second, some insurers may stop protecting patients from balance bills altogether.
- **Impact on Medical Providers:** Medical providers receive lower payments for out-of-network services when insurers use Data iSight. This can strain their finances and may lead some to join hospital systems or private equity groups.
- **Transparency:** The details of how Data iSight calculates appropriate reimbursement rates are not fully transparent.

**13. \*Boston Globe**

April 3, 2024

[Markey and Warren rip Steward's bosses for 'rot of their greed' at State House hearing](#)

By Robert Weisman and Travis Andersen

*Senate hearing in Boston spotlights abuses in for-profit health care*

Senators Markey and Warren criticized Steward Health Care for its financial instability and its CEO Ralph de la Torre for not appearing at a hearing on the rise of private equity in healthcare.

- Steward is a for-profit hospital system that bought Massachusetts hospitals from Caritas Christi in 2010 with funding from Cerberus, a private equity firm.
- Senators accused Steward and Cerberus of prioritizing profit over patient care. Steward has missed payments to vendors and is struggling financially. Cerberus made a large profit from its investment in Steward.
- Markey and Warren are proposing bills to increase oversight and accountability of private equity firms in healthcare.
- Panelists at the hearing argued that private equity ownership harms patient care and called for stricter regulations.
- Steward recently obtained new loans and is selling assets to stay afloat.
- The future of Steward hospitals remains uncertain

**14. \*Boston Globe**

March 27, 2024

[Steward plan to sell doctors network comes under scrutiny from federal and state lawmakers](#)

By Robert Weisman

*Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Campbell pledged to "use every tool available" to address problems that might arise from the sale*

*Lawmakers Scrutinize For-Profit Healthcare as Steward Health Care Seeks to Sell Physician Network to Optum*

Massachusetts is in the midst of a healthcare controversy as Steward Health Care, a financially struggling for-profit hospital operator, plans to sell its physician network to Optum, a subsidiary of the giant health insurer UnitedHealth Group. This deal has raised concerns from lawmakers and

	<p>healthcare professionals who worry about its impact on patient access, affordability, and quality of care.</p> <p><b>Key Players and Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Steward Health Care:</b> A for-profit company facing financial difficulties.</li> <li>• <b>Optum:</b> A subsidiary of UnitedHealth Group, a major health insurer.</li> <li>• <b>Massachusetts Attorney General:</b> Reviewing the deal to ensure patient access, affordability, and proper use of proceeds from the sale.</li> <li>• <b>U.S. Senator Ed Markey:</b> Holding a hearing to investigate the role of private equity in healthcare and its potential negative effects.</li> <li>• <b>State Senator Cindy Friedman:</b> Working on legislation to increase oversight and transparency of private equity ownership in healthcare.</li> </ul> <p><b>Concerns about the Deal:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increased Focus on Profits:</b> Lawmakers worry that for-profit ownership might prioritize profits over patient care, leading to practices like pressuring doctors to see more patients or order unnecessary tests.</li> <li>• <b>Reduced Access and Affordability:</b> There's a concern that the deal could limit patient choice and drive up healthcare costs.</li> <li>• <b>Role of Private Equity:</b> Steward was previously owned by a private equity firm, which is criticized for saddling companies with debt while extracting profits. Lawmakers are concerned about the broader impact of private equity in healthcare.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Path Forward:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Government Scrutiny:</b> Both state and federal officials are reviewing the deal and may impose limitations or even block it.</li> <li>• <b>Increased Regulation:</b> Massachusetts lawmakers are considering legislation to increase oversight of private equity involvement in healthcare.</li> </ul> <p>This situation highlights the ongoing debate about for-profit healthcare in the US. Lawmakers are grappling with how to balance the need for financial sustainability in the healthcare system with ensuring patient access to affordable and high-quality care.</p>
<p><b>Medicaid</b></p>	<p><b>15. *Washington Post</b>  April 5, 2024  <a href="#">The Great Medicaid Purge was even worse than expected</a>  By Catherine Rampell  It's a tale of two countries: In some states, public officials are trying to make government work for their constituents. In others, they aren't. This week marks one year since the <a href="#">Great Medicaid Purge</a> (a.k.a. the "unwinding") began. Early during the pandemic, in exchange for additional funds, Congress temporarily prohibited states from kicking anyone off Medicaid. But as of April 1, 2023, states were allowed to start disenrolling people. Some did so immediately. So far, at least <a href="#">19.6 million people</a> have lost Medicaid coverage. That's higher than the initial forecast, <a href="#">15 million</a>, even though the process hasn't yet finished.</p>
<p><b>Guardianship</b></p>	<p><b>16. Justice in Aging</b>  April 4, 2024  <a href="#">Program Spotlight: Nevada's Guardianship Advocacy Project (GAP)</a>  <b>The Guardianship Advocacy Project (GAP)</b> is a program of Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada, the largest legal aid provider in Nevada. GAP</p>

	<p>provides legal representation to all persons facing or under guardianship in Clark County, the most populous county in Southern Nevada. Since its inception in 2017, GAP has represented well over 12,000 older adults and adults with disabilities in guardianship court with impressive results. Of the GAP cases closed in 2022, for example, 28% closed due to the guardianship being denied and 18% closed because the guardianship was terminated for cause. In that same year, GAP obtained recovery awards exceeding \$858,000 and avoided over \$117,000 in charges to their clients' guardianship estates.</p> <p><b>17. American Bar Association</b>  March 28, 2024  <a href="#">Poverty Masquerading as Incapacity</a>  By Nicole Shannon, J.D.  Older adults living in poverty must contend with the dual prejudices of society. One result of ageism is assuming that older adults are incapable of handling their own affairs and need to be stripped of independence and autonomy for their own protection. Likewise, society places harsh value judgments on people living in poverty and how they spend their money. Combined, these prejudices combine to treat low-income older adults as incapable of handling their own affairs, and morally incorrect in their attempts to do so.</p> <p><b>18. Justice in Aging</b>  March 24, 2024  <a href="#">Guardianship Data Reform</a>  This issue brief reviews past and ongoing calls for more and better data in the guardianship space generally, discusses a number of current data collection efforts, and delves into how the lack of data impedes any discussion about guardianship and marginalized older adults, which is critical given the chance that systemic inequalities experienced over the life of a marginalized older adult might actually increase the risk of guardianship. Finally, the issue brief provides recommendations to policymakers and interested parties on how to center marginalized older adults in data collection and data reform efforts.  <a href="#">Read the issue brief</a></p>
<p><b>Workforce</b></p>	<p><b>19. State House News</b>  April 4, 2024  <a href="#">Law Change May Help Physician Assistants Fill Labor Gap</a>  By Alison Kuznitz  <b>Physician Assistants Seek to Practice Independently in Massachusetts</b>  <b>Summary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physician assistants (PAs) in Massachusetts are lobbying for changes to their licensure requirements.</li> <li>• Current law requires PAs to have a "supervising physician" on file, but PAs argue this is outdated and unnecessary.</li> <li>• A bill (S 1354) would eliminate this requirement, allowing PAs to practice more independently.</li> <li>• The Massachusetts Association of PAs (MAPA) says this would improve access to care, especially in underserved areas.</li> <li>• The Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) opposes the bill, arguing it could compromise patient safety.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The legislation is being considered alongside other healthcare reforms aimed at addressing workforce shortages and access to care.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PAs have a master's degree and can provide a variety of medical services.</li> <li>The existing supervision requirement is seen as a burden by PAs.</li> <li>Supporters say the change would improve access to care, particularly in primary care.</li> <li>Opponents worry about patient safety without physician oversight.</li> <li>The outcome of the bill is uncertain, but it is part of a larger discussion about healthcare reform in Massachusetts.</li> </ul>
Healthcare	<p><b>20. Becker's Hospital CFO Report</b>  April 5, 2024  <a href="#">47 health systems ranked by annual revenue</a>  By Alan Condon and Andrew Cass  Three Massachusetts health systems are included in the ranking  10. <b>Mass General Brigham (Boston):</b> \$18.8 billion  *Results for the 12 months ended Sept. 30  30. <b>Beth Israel Lahey Health (Cambridge, Mass.):</b> \$7.7 billion  *Results for the 12 months ending Sept. 30  46. <b>Tufts Medicine (Boston):</b> \$2.6 billion  *Results for the 12 months ending Sept. 30</p>
Disability Topics	<p><b>21. WGBH News</b>  April 4, 2024  <a href="#">Feds launch civil rights investigation into patient privacy breach at abandoned Fernald School</a>  By Craig LeMoult and Maeve Lawler  The federal government is investigating potential HIPAA violations after media exposed patient records left behind at the closed Fernald State School for people with disabilities. The watchdog group Disability Law Center filed a complaint and questioned why such a privacy breach wouldn't happen at a regular hospital.</p>
Aging Topics	<p><b>22. *Washington Post</b>  April 6, 2024  <a href="#">How to age better than your parents</a>  By Steven Petrow  <i>Mine weren't perfect role models, but I'm learning from their mistakes and embracing healthier habits</i>  Many of my generation — boomers — have come to equate aging with illness, loneliness and disability. But it doesn't have to be that way. As Deborah Carr, a sociologist, wrote in her 2023 book, "Aging in America," powerful economic, technological and cultural changes in recent decades mean that older adults in 2050 will be leading very different lives than those who are retirement-age today. . .  So, unlike my parents, I'm making an effort to better appreciate the gifts of age and have started taking small steps in an effort to live better.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use hearing aids when needed.</li> <li>Stay socially engaged.</li> <li>Keep moving.</li> <li>Make an effort to smile.</li> <li>Don't climb on things.</li> </ul>
Longevity	<p><b>23. *Washington Post</b></p>





LaVerne Biser, at his home in Fort Worth, holds a photo he took of his favorite solar eclipse in 1979. Biser, 105, is planning to watch his 13th solar eclipse on April 8. (Photo by Cheryl Torres)

April 5, 2024  
[Texas man is preparing to watch his 13th solar eclipse. He's 105.](#)  
 By Cathy Free  
*LaVerne Biser has traveled the world to take photos and witness total eclipses of the sun. He's also made his own telescopes.*  
 LaVerne Biser, a 105-year-old man from Texas, is an eclipse chaser. His fascination began in 1963 during a family road trip to Maine to witness his first solar eclipse. Since then, he has traveled across the US and abroad to watch 12 more eclipses. This weekend, he will attempt to see his 13th and possibly last eclipse due to his age and health. He is hopeful for clear skies as he prepares to travel to his daughter's house for a longer duration of totality. Despite his age, Biser remains active and curious about the world. He attributes his longevity to a healthy lifestyle and a love for science and exploration.

**From Around the Country**

**24. Times Union**  
 April 7, 2024  
[N.Y.'s largest health vendor linked to owner accused of fraud, neglect](#)  
 By Raga Justin  
*New York has contracts worth \$27 billion with a company closely linked to a nursing home conglomerate that's accused of fraud in a state attorney general's investigation.*  
 [State Attorney General Letitia] James accused two Centers Health Care executives of orchestrating “multiple fraudulent schemes” that siphoned millions from the state’s Medicaid program to enrich themselves, their business associates and also to purchase a flailing Israeli airline. She pointed to disturbing, graphic examples of hundreds of elderly residents forced to endure harmful conditions for years because of the company’s alleged role in woefully understaffing nursing homes. . .  
 But six months after the allegations of widespread abuse and Medicaid fraud against him were made public, New York approved a 5-year, multibillion-dollar contract with the state’s largest and highest-paid managed care company — which [chief executive officer Kenneth] Rozenberg also owns.  
 That company, called Centers Plan for Healthy Living, has had \$27 billion worth of business with the state Department of Health since at least 2012, according to records maintained by the state comptroller’s office. Two contracts totaling nearly \$17 billion have a start date of January 2022, likely around the time the attorney general’s investigation began.

**Dignity Alliance Massachusetts Legislative Endorsements**

Information about the legislative bills which have been endorsed by Dignity Alliance Massachusetts, including the text of the bills, can be viewed at: <https://tinyurl.com/DignityLegislativeEndorsements>  
 Questions or comments can be directed to Legislative Work Group Chair Richard (Dick) Moore at [rmoore8473@charter.net](mailto:rmoore8473@charter.net).

**Websites**

**Grandmothers Village Project**  
<https://www.grandmothersvillageproject.org/>  
 We are a nonprofit intentional community organization developed to house our BIPOC grandmothers/fathers in an environmentally safe and ecologically sound “Grandmothers’ Village.”  
 Mission: To foster a healthy and sustainable environment; promote social, economic, environmental, housing, food, and spiritual justice, and strengthen

	<p>democracy for our BIPOC Elder Women/Grandmothers, and Grandfathers. Phase One.</p> <p>Phase two through five include: Grandparents with custody of their grandchildren; Families; 2SLGBTQ+; Veterans; and Teens aging out of foster care.</p>
<b>Blogs</b>	
Previously recommended websites	The comprehensive list of recommended websites has migrated to the Dignity Alliance MA website: <a href="https://dignityalliancema.org/resources/">https://dignityalliancema.org/resources/</a> . 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 <a href="https://dignityalliancema.org/funding-opportunities/">https://dignityalliancema.org/funding-opportunities/</a> .
Websites of Dignity Alliance Massachusetts Members	See: <a href="https://dignityalliancema.org/about/organizations/">https://dignityalliancema.org/about/organizations/</a>
Contact information for reporting complaints and concerns	<p><b>Nursing home</b></p> <p><a href="#">Department of Public Health</a></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Print and complete the <a href="#">Consumer/Resident/Patient Complaint Form</a></li> <li>2. Fax completed form to (617) 753-8165</li> </ol> <p>Or</p> <p>Mail to 67 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA 01752</p> <p><a href="#">Ombudsman Program</a></p>
Nursing Home Closures (pending)	<p><a href="#">Massachusetts Department of Public Health</a></p> <p><i>Benjamin Healthcare Center, Roxbury</i>  Closure date: July 1, 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Notice of Intent to Close (PDF)</a>   <a href="#">(DOCX)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Draft of Closure and Relocation Plan (PDF)</a>   <a href="#">(DOCX)</a></li> </ul> <p><i>Bridgewater Nursing &amp; Rehab, Bridgewater</i>  Closure date: May 24, 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Notice of Intent to Close (PDF)</a>   <a href="#">(DOCX)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Draft of Closure and Relocation Plan (PDF)</a>   <a href="#">(DOCX)</a></li> </ul> <p>For more information about each individual facility, please use the <a href="#">Massachusetts Nursing Home Survey Performance Tool</a> and the <a href="#">CMS Nursing Home Compare website</a>.</p>
Nursing Home Closures	<p><a href="#">Massachusetts Department of Public Health</a></p> <p><i>Savoy Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, New Bedford</i>  Closure date: April 3, 2024</p> <p><i>New England Sinai Hospital Transitional Care Unit</i>  Closure date: April 2, 2024</p> <p><i>South Dennis Health Care, Dennis</i>  Closure date: January 30, 2024</p> <p><i>Arnold House Nursing Home, Stoneham</i>  Closure date: September 22, 2023</p> <p><i>Willimansett East, Chicopee</i>  Closure date: June 6, 2023</p> <p><i>Willimansett West, Chicopee</i>  Closure date: June 6, 2023</p> <p><i>Chapin Center Springfield</i>  Closure date: June 6, 2023</p> <p><i>Governors Center, Westfield</i>  Closure date: June 6, 2023</p>

	<p><i>Stonehedge Rehabilitation and Skilled Care Center, West Roxbury</i>  Closure February 10, 2022</p> <p><i>Heathwood Healthcare, Newton</i>  Closure date: January 5, 2022</p> <p><i>Mt. Ida Rest Home, Newton</i>  Closure date: December 31, 2021</p> <p><i>Wingate at Chestnut Hill, Newton, MA</i>  Closure date: October 1, 2021</p> <p><i>Halcyon House, Methuen</i>  Closure date: July 16, 2021</p> <p><i>Agawam HealthCare, Agawam</i>  Closure date: July 27, 2021</p> <p><i>Wareham HealthCare, Wareham</i>  Closure date: July 28, 2021</p> <p><i>Town &amp; Country Health Care Center, Lowell</i>  Closure date: July 31, 2021</p>
<p>Nursing homes with admission freezes</p>	<p><b>Massachusetts Department of Public Health</b>  <i>Temporary admissions freeze</i>  There have been no new postings on the DPH website since May 10, 2023.</p>
<p>Massachusetts Department of Public Health  Determination of Need Projects</p>	<p><b>Massachusetts Department of Public Health</b>  <b><i>Determination of Need Projects: Long Term Care 2023</i></b>  <a href="#"><u>Navigator Homes of Martha's Vineyard, Inc. – Long Term Care Substantial Capital Expenditure</u></a>  <a href="#"><u>Royal Wayland Nursing Home, LLC – Conservation Long Term Care Project</u></a>  <b>2022</b>  <a href="#"><u>Ascentria Care Alliance – Laurel Ridge</u></a>  <a href="#"><u>Ascentria Care Alliance – Lutheran Housing</u></a>  <a href="#"><u>Ascentria Care Alliance – Quaboag</u></a>  <a href="#"><u>Berkshire Healthcare Systems, Inc. – Windsor Long Term Care Conservation</u></a>  <a href="#"><u>Fairlawn Rehabilitation Hospital-Hospital/Clinic Substantial Capital Expenditure</u></a>  <a href="#"><u>Long Term Centers of Lexington – Pine Knoll – Long Term Care Conservation</u></a>  <a href="#"><u>Long Term Centers of Wrentham – Serenity Hill – Long Term Care Conservation</u></a>  <a href="#"><u>Next Step Healthcare LLC-Conservation Long Term Care Project</u></a>  <a href="#"><u>Royal Falmouth – Conservation Long Term Care</u></a>  <a href="#"><u>Royal Norwell – Long Term Care Conservation</u></a>  <a href="#"><u>Wellman Healthcare Group, Inc</u></a>  <b>2020</b>  <a href="#"><u>Advocate Healthcare, LLC Amendment</u></a>  <a href="#"><u>Campion Health &amp; Wellness, Inc. – LTC - Substantial Change in Service</u></a>  <a href="#"><u>Heywood Healthcare, Inc. – Hospital/Clinic Substantial Capital Expenditure</u></a>  <a href="#"><u>Notre Dame Health Care Center, Inc. – LTC Conservation</u></a>  <b>2020</b>  <a href="#"><u>Advocate Healthcare of East Boston, LLC.</u></a>  <a href="#"><u>Belmont Manor Nursing Home, Inc.</u></a></p>

<p>List of Special Focus Facilities</p>	<p><b>Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services</b>  <i>List of Special Focus Facilities and Candidates</i>  <a href="https://tinyurl.com/SpecialFocusFacilityProgram">https://tinyurl.com/SpecialFocusFacilityProgram</a>  Updated March 29, 2023  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.  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.  This is important information for consumers – particularly as they consider a nursing home.  <b>What can advocates do with this information?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Post the list on your program’s/organization’s website (along with the explanation noted above).</li> <li>• Encourage current residents and families to check the list to see if their facility is included.</li> <li>• Urge residents and families in a candidate facility to ask the administrator what is being done to improve care.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> <p><b>Massachusetts facilities listed (updated March 29, 2023)</b>  <b>Newly added to the listing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Somerset Ridge Center, Somerset  <a href="https://somersetridgerehab.com/">https://somersetridgerehab.com/</a>  Nursing home inspect information:  <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225747">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225747</a></li> <li>• South Dennis Healthcare  <a href="https://www.nextstephc.com/southdennis">https://www.nextstephc.com/southdennis</a>  Nursing home inspect information:  <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225320">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225320</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Massachusetts facilities not improved</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul> <p><b>Massachusetts facilities which showed improvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marlborough Hills Rehabilitation and Health Care Center, Marlborough  <a href="https://tinyurl.com/MarlboroughHills">https://tinyurl.com/MarlboroughHills</a>  Nursing home inspect information:  <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225063">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225063</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Massachusetts facilities which have graduated from the program</b></p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Oxford Rehabilitation &amp; Health Care Center, Haverhill  <a href="https://theoxfordrehabhealth.com/">https://theoxfordrehabhealth.com/</a>  Nursing home inspect information:  <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225218">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225218</a></li> <li>• Worcester Rehabilitation and Health Care Center, Worcester  <a href="https://worcesterrehabcare.com/">https://worcesterrehabcare.com/</a>  Nursing home inspect information:  <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225199">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225199</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Massachusetts facilities that are candidates for listing (months on list)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charwell House Health and Rehabilitation, Norwood (15)  <a href="https://tinyurl.com/Charwell">https://tinyurl.com/Charwell</a>  Nursing home inspect information:  <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225208">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225208</a></li> <li>• Glen Ridge Nursing Care Center (1)  <a href="https://www.genesishcc.com/glenridge">https://www.genesishcc.com/glenridge</a>  Nursing home inspect information:  <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225523">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225523</a></li> <li>• Hathaway Manor Extended Care (1)  <a href="https://hathawaymanor.org/">https://hathawaymanor.org/</a>  Nursing home inspect information:  <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225366">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225366</a></li> <li>• Medway Country Manor Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation, Medway (1)  <a href="https://www.medwaymanor.com/">https://www.medwaymanor.com/</a>  Nursing home inspect information:  <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225412">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225412</a></li> <li>• Mill Town Health and Rehabilitation, Amesbury (14)  No website  Nursing home inspect information:  <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225318">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225318</a></li> <li>• Plymouth Rehabilitation and Health Care Center (10)  <a href="https://plymouthrehab.com/">https://plymouthrehab.com/</a>  Nursing home inspect information:  <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225207">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225207</a></li> <li>• Tremont Health Care Center, Wareham (10)  <a href="https://thetremontrehabcare.com/">https://thetremontrehabcare.com/</a>  Nursing home inspect information:  <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225488">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225488</a></li> <li>• Vantage at Wilbraham (5)  No website  Nursing home inspect information:  <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225295">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225295</a></li> <li>• Vantage at South Hadley (12)  No website  Nursing home inspect information:  <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225757">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225757</a>  <a href="https://tinyurl.com/SpecialFocusFacilityProgram">https://tinyurl.com/SpecialFocusFacilityProgram</a></li> </ul>
<i>Nursing Home Inspect</i>	<p><b>ProPublica</b>  <b><i>Nursing Home Inspect</i></b>  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</p>



	<p>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).</p> <p>Massachusetts listing:  <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/state/MA">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/state/MA</a>  <b>Deficiencies By Severity in Massachusetts</b>  <a href="#">(What do the severity ratings mean?)</a></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td># reported</td> <td>Deficiency Tag</td> </tr> <tr> <td><a href="#">250</a></td> <td><a href="#">B</a></td> </tr> <tr> <td>82</td> <td><a href="#">C</a></td> </tr> <tr> <td>7,056</td> <td><a href="#">D</a></td> </tr> <tr> <td><a href="#">1,850</a></td> <td><a href="#">E</a></td> </tr> <tr> <td>546</td> <td><a href="#">F</a></td> </tr> <tr> <td>487</td> <td><a href="#">G</a></td> </tr> <tr> <td>31</td> <td><a href="#">H</a></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td><a href="#">I</a></td> </tr> <tr> <td>40</td> <td><a href="#">J</a></td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td><a href="#">K</a></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td><a href="#">L</a></td> </tr> </table>	# reported	Deficiency Tag	<a href="#">250</a>	<a href="#">B</a>	82	<a href="#">C</a>	7,056	<a href="#">D</a>	<a href="#">1,850</a>	<a href="#">E</a>	546	<a href="#">F</a>	487	<a href="#">G</a>	31	<a href="#">H</a>	1	<a href="#">I</a>	40	<a href="#">J</a>	7	<a href="#">K</a>	2	<a href="#">L</a>
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Nursing Home Compare	<p><b>Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)</b>  <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.</p> <p>This information will be posted for each facility and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Staff turnover:</b> 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.</li> <li>• <b>Weekend staff:</b> The level of weekend staffing for nurses and registered nurses at a nursing home over a three-month period.</li> </ul> <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.</p> <p><a href="https://tinyurl.com/NursingHomeCompareWebsite">https://tinyurl.com/NursingHomeCompareWebsite</a></p>																								
Data on Ownership of Nursing Homes	<p><b>Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services</b>  <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 <a href="https://data.cms.gov">data.cms.gov</a> and updated monthly.</p>																								

<p>Long-Term Care Facilities Specific COVID-19 Data</p>	<p><b>Massachusetts Department of Public Health</b>  <i>Long-Term Care Facilities Specific COVID-19 Data</i>  <i>Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) reports related to long-term care facilities in Massachusetts.</i></p> <p><b>Table of Contents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">COVID-19 Daily Dashboard</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">COVID-19 Weekly Public Health Report</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Additional COVID-19 Data</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">CMS COVID-19 Nursing Home Data</a></li> </ul>		
<p>DignityMA Call Action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MA Senate released a report in response to COVID-19. <b>Download the <a href="#">DignityMA Response to Reimagining the Future of MA.</a></b></li> <li>• <b>Advocate</b> for state bills that advance the Dignity Alliance Massachusetts' Mission and Goals – <a href="#">State Legislative Endorsements.</a></li> <li>• <b>Support</b> relevant bills in Washington – <a href="#">Federal Legislative Endorsements.</a></li> <li>• <b>Join</b> our <a href="#">Work Groups.</a></li> <li>• <b>Learn</b> to use and leverage social media at our workshops: <a href="#">Engaging Everyone: Creating Accessible, Powerful Social Media Content</a></li> </ul>		
<p>Access to Dignity Alliance social media</p>	<p>Email: <a href="mailto:info@DignityAllianceMA.org">info@DignityAllianceMA.org</a>  Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/DignityAllianceMA/">https://www.facebook.com/DignityAllianceMA/</a>  Instagram: <a href="https://www.instagram.com/dignityalliance/">https://www.instagram.com/dignityalliance/</a>  LinkedIn: <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/dignity-alliance-massachusetts">https://www.linkedin.com/company/dignity-alliance-massachusetts</a>  Twitter: <a href="https://twitter.com/dignity_ma?s=21">https://twitter.com/dignity_ma?s=21</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.DignityAllianceMA.org">www.DignityAllianceMA.org</a></p>		
<p><b>Participation opportunities with Dignity Alliance Massachusetts</b></p> <p>Most workgroups meet bi-weekly via Zoom.</p> <p>Interest Groups meet periodically (monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly).</p> <p>Please contact group lead for more information.</p>	<p><b>Workgroup</b></p>	<p><b>Workgroup lead</b></p>	<p><b>Email</b></p>
	<p>General Membership</p>	<p>Bill Henning Paul Lanzikos</p>	<p><a href="mailto:bhenning@bostoncil.org">bhenning@bostoncil.org</a> <a href="mailto:paul.lanzikos@gmail.com">paul.lanzikos@gmail.com</a></p>
	<p>Behavioral Health</p>	<p>Frank Baskin</p>	<p><a href="mailto:baskinfrank19@gmail.com">baskinfrank19@gmail.com</a></p>
	<p>Communications</p>	<p>Lachlan Forrow</p>	<p><a href="mailto:lforrow@bidmc.harvard.edu">lforrow@bidmc.harvard.edu</a></p>
	<p>Facilities (Nursing homes and rest homes)</p>	<p>Arlene Germain</p>	<p><a href="mailto:agermain@manhr.org">agermain@manhr.org</a></p>
	<p>Home and Community Based Services</p>	<p>Meg Coffin</p>	<p><a href="mailto:mcoffin@centerlw.org">mcoffin@centerlw.org</a></p>
	<p>Legislative</p>	<p>Richard Moore</p>	<p><a href="mailto:rmoore8743@charter.net">rmoore8743@charter.net</a></p>
	<p>Legal Issues</p>	<p>Jeni Kaplan</p>	<p><a href="mailto:jkaplan@cpr-ma.org">jkaplan@cpr-ma.org</a></p>
	<p><b>Interest Group</b></p>	<p><b>Group lead</b></p>	<p><b>Email</b></p>
	<p>Assisted Living</p>	<p>John Ford</p>	<p><a href="mailto:jford@njc-ma.org">jford@njc-ma.org</a></p>
	<p>Housing</p>	<p>Bill Henning</p>	<p><a href="mailto:bhenning@bostoncil.org">bhenning@bostoncil.org</a></p>
	<p>Veteran Services</p>	<p>James Lomastro</p>	<p><a href="mailto:jimlomastro@comcast.net">jimlomastro@comcast.net</a></p>
	<p>Transportation</p>	<p>Frank Baskin Chris Hoeh</p>	<p><a href="mailto:baskinfrank19@gmail.com">baskinfrank19@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:cdhoeh@gmail.com">cdhoeh@gmail.com</a></p>
	<p>Covid / Long Covid</p>	<p>James Lomastro</p>	<p><a href="mailto:jimlomastro@comcast.net">jimlomastro@comcast.net</a></p>
	<p>Incarcerated Persons</p>	<p>TBD</p>	<p><a href="mailto:info@DignityAllianceMA.org">info@DignityAllianceMA.org</a></p>
<p><b><i>The Dignity Digest</i></b></p>	<p>For a free weekly subscription to <i>The Dignity Digest</i>:  <a href="https://dignityalliancema.org/contact/sign-up-for-emails/">https://dignityalliancema.org/contact/sign-up-for-emails/</a>  Editor: Paul Lanzikos  Primary contributor: Sandy Novack</p>		

	MailChimp Specialist: Sue Rorke
Note of thanks	<p>Thanks to the contributors to this issue of <i>The Dignity Digest</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chris Hoeh</li> <li>• Dick Moore</li> </ul> <p>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 <a href="mailto:Digest@DignityAllianceMA.org">Digest@DignityAllianceMA.org</a>.</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.</i></p> <p><i>Our guiding principle is the assurance of dignity for those receiving the services as well as for those providing them.</i></p> <p><i>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 <u>The Tuesday Digest</u> and <u>The Dignity Digest</u> are available at:</i>  <a href="https://dignityalliancema.org/dignity-digest/">https://dignityalliancema.org/dignity-digest/</a></p> <p><i>For more information about Dignity Alliance Massachusetts, please visit <a href="http://www.DignityAllianceMA.org">www.DignityAllianceMA.org</a>.</i></p>	