



The Dignity Digest

Issue # 183

April 16, 2024

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.

Spotlight

[Need, Access, Impact, and Opportunities: Findings From a Multi-Site Evaluation of Elder Justice Shelters in the U.S.](#)

New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM)

By Elisa Fisher, MPH, MSW; Sheaba Daniel, MPH; Mayssa Gregoire, BS
March 2024

Introduction

At least one in 10 older adults in the U.S. experiences abuse or exploitation, a rate that is believed to have increased during the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Most elder abuse is perpetrated by family members or trusted friends, which means that home is often a particularly dangerous place when abuse is imminent or ongoing. However, current domestic violence and homeless service programs are not designed to meet the needs of older adults. As a result, older adults experiencing harm are often either forced to remain at home, with little protection against abuse and exploitation, or are found cycling through emergent systems like adult protective services and hospital emergency departments.

Elder justice shelter (EJS) was pioneered by The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Center for Elder Justice at the Hebrew Home at Riverdale (the Weinberg Center) to meet the temporary housing needs of those older adults experiencing abuse or exploitation who needed a safe, temporary place to stay. Since then, EJSs have been implemented in communities across the United States. While they share similar missions, each EJS program is distinct and tailored to the needs and resources available within the local community.

Opportunities and Recommendations

EJS staff, APS and community referral partners, and stakeholders from nonparticipating shelters reflected on opportunities and provided recommendations for the EJS movement going forward.

- Identify and advocate for sustainable and sufficient funding: Increase financial investment from government and other sources to allow EJS to serve more people and their diverse needs, including funds that allow for greater programmatic flexibility.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and grow shelter programs to serve the diverse needs of clients: Offer EJS placement options with a broader range of geographic locations and levels of care to meet the varying needs of older adults. • Adjust language used to describe EJS programs: Avoid use of terms like “shelter,” “nursing home,” and “victim” when describing EJS programs. Language focused on safety and security, similar to “sanctuary” or “respite,” may be more appealing. • Increase community education and awareness: Provide regular training, education, and outreach to existing and potential referral partners, especially when there is staff turnover within referral organizations, agencies, or shelter programs. • Reduce eligibility criteria and improve intake processes: Fewer restrictions and requirements may increase access to shelters and reduce burdens related to documentation that can complicate intake processes and deter partners from making referrals. <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Findings from this study suggest that safe, supportive emergency housing for older adults who have experienced harm is needed in communities across the U.S., and that EJSs can serve as a valuable resource that meets the specific needs of older adults and contributes to greater long-term stability and well-being among clients. As a result, these programs have the potential to ease the burden on overstretched APS departments and hospitals by streamlining services and reducing the intensity of services required from APS workers, as well as the need to reopen APS cases for clients in the future. Still, the impact of these programs is limited as they remain small and there are multiple barriers to entry. Common barriers to shelter utilization include strict eligibility criteria, difficult intake processes, limited program capacity, and substantial client hesitation related to leaving one’s home, particularly when the EJS is based in a nursing home. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these challenges, highlighting the importance of increasing program flexibility and adapting EJS models to meet client needs within changing healthcare and community contexts. With increased funding, stakeholders recommend expansion of EJSs to increase capacity, provide placement options in a wider range of settings and communities, and offer varying levels of care to enable programs to better serve the diverse needs of clients.</p>
<p>Quotes</p>	<p><i>"I'm worried about health care in general because all of our providers, all of our hospitals, are facing immense pressures -- labor and workforce pressure, they can't get enough nurses; inflationary costs, health care costs generally have increased more over the last year than it has in probably the prior decade."</i></p>

Senator Michael Rodrigues, Chair, Senate Ways and Means Committee, [Rodrigues Sends Strong Signal On Health Care](#), **State House News**, April 8, 2024

“For one entity to have any contact with people [who need personal care services], it’s going to be impossible. There are a lot of supports that are needed ... and we know our consumers, because we are the consumers.”

Denise Figueroa, executive director of the Troy, NY-based Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley, [Health advocates decry changes to long-term home care program](#) (***Times Union**, April 14, 2024)

Healthcare-associated infections are a major cause of morbidity and mortality in long-term care facilities. Evidenced-based information is the key to preventing devastating outcomes from infection outbreaks and combating future pandemics.

[Infection Prevention Compendium for Long-Term Care Facilities](#), **New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM)**

"You go back nine months ago and it was a different [budget] discussion than it is today. It's hard to say exactly where it's going to be in six to nine months. We think the number we're putting on the table for discussion within the House gets us far enough along that we can see where we are going forward down the road."

House Ways and Means Committee Chair Aaron Michlewitz, [House Proposes \\$57.9 Bil Budget For New Fiscal Reality](#), **State House News**, April 15, 2024 (updated)

“People in medicine tend to focus on the one organ system that they’re responsible for. When you build a palliative care team that’s interdisciplinary, that team becomes this nice navigator of the health care system and the social safety net.”

Kimberly Bower, a family physician and senior medical director of Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan, [Palliative care could be a game changer for public health](#), **Harvard Public Health**, April 4, 2024

2024 will be a record-breaking year for retirement in the U.S., with an average of 11,000 Americans a day expected to celebrate their 65th birthday from now until December. Approximately 4.1 million Americans are poised to turn 65 this year and every year through 2027.

[America is hitting "peak 65" in 2024 as record number of boomers reach retirement age. Here's what to know.](#) MoneyWatch CBS News, January 29, 2024

Questions that were raised when the trust approved the first loan include how Neville Place selects lower-income residents and how it could use all 30 Section 8 rent vouchers that the housing authority gave to Neville Place when it was created. Those vouchers could help residents pay the rent portion of assisted-living fees, but Neville Place is still using only 18 of the 30, the same number as last May. The trust report then said Neville's selection process was complicated and could discourage lower-income people from applying for and using the vouchers.

[Neville Place assisted-living gets \\$5.7M loan from city despite unexplained lapses in terms,](#) Cambridge Day, April 13, 2024

A recent [Redfin survey](#) of older American homeowners (aged 60 and over) found that more than three-quarters (78%) will consider staying in their current home as they age — or are already aging in place. While 16% said they'll consider a 55+ community, 9% will consider moving to an assisted living/nursing home/elder care facility.

[Most baby boomers want to stay put in their big family homes — exacerbating a major US housing problem,](#) Yahoo! Finance, April 14, 2024

"It is clear that future generations are likely to bear an increasingly severe burden of the consequences of present failures and omissions to combat climate change."

The European Court of Human Rights President Siofra O'Leary ruling in favor on a lawsuit brought by a group of Swiss women aged over 64 years known as KlimaSeniorinnen, [Swiss women win landmark climate case at Europe top human rights court](#), **Reuters**, April 9, 2024

“A stable workforce is critical for quality resident care and protecting employees’ health insurance is key to retaining the nursing home’s skilled caregivers.”

SEIU 1199 New York statement, [Troubled nursing home in contempt over non-payment of \\$2.65 million for staff healthcare](#), **McKnight Long Term Care News**, April 15, 2024

In the upcoming years, a confluence of factors will produce an unprecedented shortfall in the necessary supply of caregivers. If left unchecked, this shortfall will result in a series of harmful economic outcomes—including sharply raised caregiving costs, outsized burdens on informal caregivers, and subpar quality of care. Since demand for care is largely out of policymakers’ control, the most promising way to address these challenges is by expanding the supply of caregivers. And one of the best strategies for expanding the supply of caregivers is through expanded pathways for legal immigrants.

[Immigration to address the caregiving shortfall](#) (**Brookings**, April 2, 2024)

Baby boomers born between 1946 and 1964 have had relatively higher suicide rates across the age spectrum compared to other birth cohorts in the United States. Given that by 2030, there will be more than 71 million Americans ages 65 and older, the high suicide rate among this group has implications for the future. This is particularly salient in the context of the historically high suicide rates—across age groups—currently being faced in the United States.

[Suicide Rates Are High And Rising Among Older Adults In The US](#) (**Health Affairs Forefront**, March 4, 2024)

	<p><i>“I’m terrified I’ll be forced into deadly and abusive facilities in light of [New York] governor [Hokul’s] proposed draconian budget cuts to homecare, specifically the Consumer Directed Personal Assistant Program.”</i></p> <p>Geri Mariano, 56, a recipient within the program, NY lawmakers fight gov’s plan to reform murky \$6B Medicaid program: ‘I don’t know why Hochul hates me’ (New York Post, March 17, 2024)</p>
<p>Guide to news items in this week’s <i>Dignity Digest</i></p>	<p>FY 2025 State Budget FY 2025 Budget Recommendations (House Ways and Means Committee, April 10, 2024) House Proposes \$57.9 Bil Budget For New Fiscal Reality (State House News, April 15, 2024 (updated))</p> <p>Nursing Homes One man turned nursing home design on its head when he created this stunning facility (Upworthy, April 14, 2024) Concerns Remain About Safeguards To Protect Residents During Facility-Initiated Discharges From Nursing Homes (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, April 3, 2024 (posted)) Nursing Home Residents With Endangering Behaviors and Mental Health Disorders May Be Vulnerable to Facility-Initiated Discharges (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, April 3, 2024 (posted))</p> <p>Assisted Living Neville Place assisted-living gets \$5.7M loan from city despite unexplained lapses in terms (Cambridge Day, April 13, 2024)</p> <p>End of Life / Palliative Care Palliative care could be a game changer for public health (Harvard Public Health, April 4, 2024) Destigmatizing conversations about the end of life (Chronicle – Channel 5, March 29, 2024)</p> <p>Housing Most baby boomers want to stay put in their big family homes — exacerbating a major US housing problem (Yahoo! Finance, April 14, 2024)</p> <p>Private Equity Regional Meetings On Steward Impacts Will Be Closed (State House News, April 12, 2024) Rodrigues Sends Strong Signal On Health Care (State House News, April 8, 2024) Immigration to address the caregiving shortfall (Brookings, April 2, 2024)</p> <p>Covid / Long Covid Infection Prevention Compendium for Long-Term Care Facilities (New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM))</p> <p>Behavioral Health Suicide Rates Are High And Rising Among Older Adults In The US (Health Affairs Forefront, March 4, 2024)</p>

	<p>Disability Topics My daughter excluded my disabled partner from a family gathering (*Washington Post, April 12, 2024)</p> <p>Demographics America is hitting "peak 65" in 2024 as record number of boomers reach retirement age. Here's what to know. (MoneyWatch CBS News, January 29, 2024)</p> <p>Climate Change Swiss women win landmark climate case at Europe top human rights court (Reuters, April 9, 2024)</p> <p>From around the Country Nursing home fights for right to end temporary bonuses, avoid \$369K payout (McKnights Long Term Care News, April 15, 2024) Troubled nursing home in contempt over non-payment of \$2.65 million for staff healthcare (McKnights Long Term Care News, April 15, 2024) Health advocates decry changes to long-term home care program (*Times Union, April 14, 2024) Feds pull Medicaid funding from Fort Worth nursing home. What's next for its residents? (Fort Worth Star Tribune, April 10, 2024) NY lawmakers fight gov's plan to reform murky \$6B Medicaid program: 'I don't know why Hochul hates me' (New York Post, March 17, 2024)</p>
<p>Opportunity for Comment</p>	<p>1. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) HUD Publishes Proposed Rule on Criminal Records and Reducing Barriers to HUD-Assisted Housing This week, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on criminal records and reducing barriers to HUD-assisted housing. The proposed rule would require Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) and assisted housing owners to conduct individualized reviews and consider mitigating factors before any discretionary denial or termination based on criminal activity. Read the proposed rule. Comments on the NPRM are due by June 10, 2024.</p> <p>2. Administration for Community Living Elder Justice Coordinating Council Seeking Input on Priorities The Administration for Community Living has issued a Request for Information (RFI) on how the Elder Justice Coordinating Council (EJCC) can be most beneficial to promoting elder justice and have the greatest positive impact for survivors of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and their communities. The EJCC invites comment from the public, researchers, practitioners, and especially survivors of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation on what it should prioritize over the next decade. The "Request for Information: Elder Justice Coordinating Council Priorities" is available in the Federal Register. Submit responses with "EJCC Priorities" in the subject line by April 24, 2024.</p>
<p>Public Appointment Opportunity</p>	<p>3. Massachusetts Board of Nursing <i>Consumer Seat</i> The MA Board of Nursing is seeking qualified individuals to be appointed to two vacant consumer seats on the Board. The statute which established the Board requires that the consumer board member be knowledgeable in consumer health concerns and shall neither be, nor</p>

	<p>ever have been, associated directly or indirectly with the provision of health care.</p> <p>Board members are appointed by the Governor to a term of three years. The Board meets monthly on the second Wednesday of the month and conducts a Complaint Committee meeting twice a month. The members are expected to attend the monthly Board meetings as well as at least three Complaint Committee meetings a year. Both the Board meeting and Complaint Committee meetings are held virtually. All meeting materials are distributed to the members via a secure electronic document sharing system two weeks in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>The full statute may be found at: General Law - Part I, Title II, Chapter 13, Section 13 (malegislature.gov)</p> <p>Apply via email to Heather Cambra, Executive Director, at heather.j.cambra@mass.gov indicating your interest in a consumer seat and provides. Attach your most recent resume/CV.</p>
Public Events	<p>4. The Arc of Massachusetts Saturday, April 27, 2024, 8:30 a.m.to 4:00 p.m. Worcester State University <i>2024 Transition Conference: The Transitions Journeys</i> The Transition Journeys will feature timely and relevant information about the transition from school programs to adult services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities or autism when they turn 22 years old. All attendees can choose from 17 workshops being offered across three sessions and can each attend three workshops total. Tickets are \$79 per person. Space is limited. REGISTER NOW</p> <p>5. Older Adult Behavioral Health Network (OABHN) 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! REGISTER TODAY</p>
Podcasts	<p>6. The Consumer Voice April 11, 2024 Advocating for Better Nursing Home Laws and Regulations Since the pandemic began, there has been significant efforts by advocates to create better laws and regulations to protect nursing home residents. The pandemic and its devastating impact on nursing home residents has resulted in many states passing new laws or creating new regulations regarding a variety of areas, including staffing, transparency, and the nursing home workforce. On this episode, you will hear from two advocates that have been successful in getting new laws and regulations passed and promulgated. Tony Chicotel, Senior Staff Attorney at California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform and Pam Walz, Supervising Attorney at Community Legal</p>

	<p>Services in Philadelphia, will discuss recent legislative and regulatory victories and how they helped ensure they were implemented.</p> <p>7. The Consumer Voice March 26, 2024 <u><i>How Existing Legal Authorities Can Help Fix America's Nursing Home Crisis</i></u> Often the conversation about addressing the chronic poor care that exists in far too many of today's nursing homes is framed around new laws or regulations. Yet, there are steps that can be taken now - using existing federal and state legal authority - to improve care and conditions in our country's nursing homes. In our conversation, we will discuss four levers of opportunity for increasing quality and accountability in nursing homes with the author of "Using What We Have: How Existing Legal Authorities Can Help Fix America's Nursing Home Crisis." Special Guest: Nina Kohn, J.D., the Solomon Center Distinguished Scholar in Elder Law at Yale Law School, the David M. Levy Professor of Law at Syracuse University College of Law, and a leading authority in elder law and the civil rights of older persons.</p>
<p>Long Term Care Coalition Connection's 14th Annual Reception</p>	<p>8. Long Term Care Coalition Connection's 14th Annual Reception Our colleagues with the Long Term Care Community Coalition in New York are holding their 14th Annual Reception: Tuesday, April 16, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. via Zoom. The event features a compelling panel discussion with esteemed experts from the realms of healthcare providers, government, resident advocacy, and investigative journalism including: Amy Shefrin, Shared Purpose Partners (Moderator) Lori Smetanka, National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care Susan Lynch, Department of Justice Jonathan Evans, Dementia Care Expert and Geriatrician Jayme Fraser, USA TODAY Dignity Alliance Massachusetts is a participating sponsor of the event. So, feel free to register at no cost. However, if you are so inclined, I am sure that LTCCC would appreciate a \$25 donation To register: https://nursinghome411.org/event/ltccc14/</p>
<p>Webinars and Other Online Sessions</p>	<p>9. Administration on Community Living's Grassroots Project Wednesday, April 24, 2024, 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. <i>Finding One's Advocacy Community: Stories & Insights from the Disability Community</i> ACL's Grassroots Project was launched in 2023 to support national, state, and local disability advocates in building networks to stay informed about the policies that affect people with disabilities and to work together to ensure their perspectives, priorities, and preferences are reflected in disability policies and service systems. This national webinar – the first hosted by the Grassroots Project – provides an opportunity to hear from advocates about the steps they took to find their disability advocacy community, the challenges they faced, tips for success, and strategies for maintaining a sense of connection in their advocacy work. Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cody Drinkwater • Allilisa Fernandez </p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lola Kernell • Santa Perez • Eric Washington <p>Register for the webinar</p> <p>10. Justice in Aging Thursday, May 2, 2024, 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. <i>Nursing Facility Resident Rights in Medicare “Short-Stay” Rehabilitation</i> Nursing facility residents often are treated unfairly when they enter a facility for “short-stay” rehabilitation. They may be denied Medicare coverage based on their preceding hospital stay being under “observation status.” Or their Medicare coverage may be terminated prematurely because of a supposed “plateauing” in their response to rehabilitation. Or the nursing facility may try to evict them based on their allegedly not being allowed to remain in a “Medicare bed.” This webinar, Nursing Facility Resident Rights in Medicare “Short-Stay” Rehabilitation, will present the law and advocacy strategies that can protect residents in these and related situations. For example, a “plateauing” of a resident’s condition is not a legitimate reason for stopping Medicare coverage, and a resident generally can remain in a “Medicare bed” even after Medicare coverage has run its course. Advocacy strategies will include Medicare appeal processes, eviction defense hearings, public education, and joining forces with therapy professionals. Who Should Participate: Advocates and legal aid attorneys working with nursing facility residents and their families. Presenter: Eric Carlson, Director, Long-Term Services and Supports Advocacy</p>
<p>Previously posted webinars and online sessions</p>	<p>Previously posted webinars and online sessions can be viewed at: https://dignityalliancema.org/webinars-and-online-sessions/</p>
<p>FY 2025 State Budget</p>	<p>11. House Ways and Means Committee April 10, 2024 FY 2025 Budget Recommendations The House Committee on Ways and Means examines the Governor's Proposal and releases its own recommendations for the annual budget for deliberation by the House of Representatives. Prior to release of the House Ways and Means Budget, Joint Ways and Means Committee budget hearings are held across the state. Relevant highlights: Health and Human Services MassHealth As the Commonwealth provided safety net services to those hit hardest by the COVID–19 pandemic, one of the most important investments has been ensuring that low-income residents have access to affordable, high–quality healthcare. MassHealth continues the eligibility redetermination process which may result in up to 800,000 MassHealth members becoming unenrolled. The House Committee on Ways and Means budget proposal includes \$20.3B for MassHealth programmatic spending to fully support the FY25 caseload estimates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides \$50M to increase nursing facility rates

- Protects Personal Care Attendant programs by ensuring that eligibility criteria and services are maintained at fiscal year 2024 levels

Department of Developmental Services

The Department of Developmental Services empowers children and adults with developmental disabilities to become fully engaged members of their communities. The House Committee on Ways and Means budget proposal reflects the Commonwealth’s commitment to supporting both individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to become active members in their communities through day and employment programs, as well as residential and respite services. The Committee’s proposal fully funds the Turning 22 class, annualizes the costs of the Turning 22 population, and invests in programs to support consumers and their families.

- Provides \$100.4M for the Department of Developmental Services Administration and Operations
- Provides \$2B for Community Residential Services
- Provides \$288M for Community Day and Work Programs, a \$45M increase over fiscal year 2024
- Provides \$3.25M for Supportive Technology for Individuals
- Provides \$119.4M for Respite Family Supports
- Provides \$10.9M for Autism Division
- Provides \$61.9M for Autism Omnibus
- Provides \$40M for Transportation Services

Department of Children and Families

The Department of Children and Families strives to protect the children of the Commonwealth from abuse and neglect by providing family support services and family stabilization services, as well as foster care and adoptive services. The House Committee on Ways and Means budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2025 continues the trend of increasing support for this critical mission.

- Provides \$311.5M for social workers for case management
- Provides \$376.7M for services for children and families
- Provides \$495.9M for congregate care services
- Provides \$139.5M for family support and stabilization
- Provides \$27.3M for Family Resource Centers
- Provides \$11.4M for Lead Agency coordination of services

Department of Transitional Assistance

The Department of Transitional Assistance works to ease the burdens on the Commonwealth’s most vulnerable, ensuring that children, the elderly, people with disabilities, the unemployed and the underemployed have access to the services and the benefits that they need to achieve economic self-sufficiency and a better quality of life. The Department reaches one in eight Massachusetts residents through its economic assistance, food assistance, and workforce training programs, and the House Committee on Ways and Means budget proposal would protect and preserve these standards of support through the post-pandemic recovery and help guarantee opportunity for every resident of the Commonwealth.

- Provides \$496.2M for Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children
- Provides \$178.9M for Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children

- Provides \$15M for Healthy Incentives Program
- Provides \$3.5M for Two Generation Economic Mobility Programs

Department of Public Health

The Department of Public Health aims to ensure that all people of the Commonwealth remain healthy by promoting wellness and establishing health and safety regulations to prevent injury, illness, and premature death. The Department of Public Health also strives to eliminate health disparities within the Commonwealth by acknowledging and addressing social determinants of health. The House Committee on Ways and Means supports the Department’s behavioral health efforts and proposes increases for the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services, Early Intervention Services, and School Based Health Programs to fund workforce development initiatives.

- Provides \$193.5M for the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services
- Provides \$30.9M for early intervention services
- \$12M for targeted workforce development and staffing recovery initiatives
- Provides \$30.5M for HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention
- Provides \$25.1M for family and adolescence reproductive health
- Provides \$13.2M for chronic disease prevention
- Provides \$75.6M for sexual assault and domestic violence services
- Provides \$6.5M for behavioral health supports
- Provides \$22.3M for school-based health programs

Department of Mental Health

As the Commonwealth’s mental health authority, the Department of Mental Health provides community-based and continuing care inpatient services for over 20,000 individuals. The Department serves the severely, persistently mentally ill with the goal of enabling as many individuals as possible to live, work, and participate in their communities. The House Committee on Ways and Means Fiscal Year 2025 budget proposal continues this effort by supporting emergency department diversion boarding and continuing the loan forgiveness program to address workforce retention and development issues within clinical behavioral health.

- Provides \$619.2M for adult support services
- Provides \$130.5M for child and adolescent mental health services
- Provides \$22.4M for emergency department diversion programs

Executive Office of Elder Affairs

The Department of Elder Affairs provides services that promote independence and sustain a high quality of life for elders with support to their families and caregivers. These services range from community-based services and supports as well as nutrition programs, protective services, and housing, which are provided through a network of Aging Service Access Points and Councils on Aging across the state. During the COVID–19 pandemic, these services became even more critical to keep older adults healthy. The House Committee on Ways and Means budget proposes a funding level of \$769.9M to ensure that these important services continue while recognizing the unprecedented, continued growth in the elder population and desire to age in the community.

- Provides \$303.1M for the Community Choices Program, which provides MassHealth eligible elders with nursing facility levels of need with home care support

- Provides \$28M for Grants to Councils on Aging
- Provides \$2.5M in funding for Elder Mental Health Outreach Teams, which link in-crisis elders with a wide variety of behavioral health services
- Maintains \$11.4M in funding for 24 Elder Supportive Housing Sites

Veterans’ Services

The Executive Office of Veterans’ Services provides veterans with access to programs and services throughout the Commonwealth. The Executive Office provides educational opportunities, outreach centers and service benefits, as well as personal care services through the Soldiers’ Homes in Chelsea and Holyoke.

- Provides \$68.2M for Veterans’ Benefit Payments
- Provides \$86.5M for the Soldiers’ Homes in Chelsea and Holyoke
- Provides \$8.3M for Veterans’ Outreach Centers

Housing and Livable Communities

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities provides affordable housing options and essential financial support to vulnerable families and communities in the Commonwealth. A safe housing environment provides a solid foundation from which families and individuals can lead stable, successful lives. As such, the House Committee on Ways and Means budget proposal preserves or expands funding for all emergency homeless assistance programs, as well as homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing for both families and individuals. The Fiscal Year 2025 budget includes an historic \$1.15B to ensure that these important programs continue to support and provide safe housing for thousands of individuals and families across the Commonwealth.

- Provides \$325.3M for the Emergency Assistance Family Shelter Program
- Provides \$219M for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP)
- Provides \$112M for Public Housing Authorities
- Provides \$110.8M for Homeless Individuals Assistance
- Provides \$57.3M for the HomeBASE Program
- Provides \$197.4M for the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) Program
- Provides \$16.5M for Rental Subsidies to Eligible Department of Mental Health Clients
- Provides \$16.4M for the Alternative Voucher Housing Program (AVHP)
- Provides \$8.8M for Housing Consumer Education Centers
- Provides \$5M for Rapid Re-Housing Programs for Homeless Individuals
- Provides \$8.9M for the Home and Healthy for Good Program
- Provides \$6.5M for the Service Coordinators Program
- Provides \$10M for Shelter Workforce Assistance
- Provides \$4.8M for a Housing Assistance for Reentry Transition program
- Provides \$7.7M for assistance to homeless veterans

Transportation

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) works to provide a safe and reliable transportation network across the

Commonwealth. Maintaining infrastructure from roads to rails, MassDOT supports a growing economy and improves the quality of life for residents while investing in innovative solutions to meet the transportation needs of both today and tomorrow. The House Committee on Ways and Means budget supports the complex demands of our dynamic transportation network. The Committee's recommendation enables the Department, the MBTA, and the Regional Transit Authorities to meet the increasing demand for public transportation and actively maintain core services.

- Provides \$538M for MassDOT
 - Provides \$314M for the MBTA
 - Provides \$94M for the Regional Transit Authorities
- Includes \$3.5M for RTA performance-based incentive grant program

12. State House News

April 15, 2024 (updated)

[House Proposes \\$57.9 Bil Budget For New Fiscal Reality](#)

By Chris Lisinski

One-Time Revenues, Redirected Savings Bolster Spending Growth

The Massachusetts House Democrats have proposed a \$57.9 billion budget for fiscal year 2025, which represents a 3.3% increase over the previous year's budget. This proposal shares some similarities with Governor Healey's budget plan, but also includes some key differences.

Key Points:

- **Funding Sources:**
 - Leverages new one-time and recurring revenues, including legalizing online Lottery sales and redirecting funds from savings accounts.
 - Aims to make up to \$375 million in excess capital gains tax revenue available for spending.
 - Uses a different breakdown of surtax revenue compared to Governor Healey's plan, allocating more towards transportation.
- **Spending Priorities:**
 - Education: Provides funding for another year of free school meals, increased rates for childcare providers, and additional K-12 school funding.
 - Transportation: Includes investments in MBTA capital projects and workforce development.
 - Emergency Assistance Shelters: Allocates \$500 million to cover shelter costs, but less than what Governor Healey projected.
- **Disagreements with Governor's Plan:**
 - House proposes half as much for snow and ice removal.
 - House provides less unrestricted general government aid.
 - House allocates surtax dollars differently for education and transportation.
 - House proposes a smaller contribution to emergency assistance shelters.

Next Steps:

- The House Ways and Means Committee will debate the proposal on April 24th.
- Negotiations with the Senate over the fiscal 2024 shelter spending bill are ongoing.

Nursing Homes



Interior views of Lantern care facility in Madison, OH

13. Upworthy

April 14, 2024

[One man turned nursing home design on its head when he created this stunning facility](#)

By Upworthy Staff

"What if we design an environment that looks like outside?" he said.

"What if I can have a sunrise and sunset inside the building?"

Confusion is common in Alzheimer's patients, but [Jean Makesh, CEO of Lantern in Madison, OH] knew there had to be some way to minimize these conflicts.

A big believer in the idea that our environment has an enormous effect on us, he started thinking big — and way outside the box.

"What if we design an environment that looks like outside?" he said.

"What if I can have a sunrise and sunset inside the building? What if I'm able to have the moon and stars come out? What if I build a unit that takes residents back to the '30s and '40s?"

And that was just the beginning. He also researched sound therapy. And aromatherapy. And carpet that looked like grass. No idea was off-limits. Instead of rooms or units, each resident gets a "home" on a quiet little indoor street reminiscent of the neighborhoods many of them grew up in.

Makesh said one of the frustrating shortcomings of most nursing facilities is that they create conflicts with unnatural environments and schedules, and they try to solve them by throwing antipsychotic and anti-anxiety medications at patients. In other words, when someone has severe dementia, we often give up on them. From there, they stop getting the engagement their brain needs to thrive.

14. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General

April 3, 2024 (posted)

[Concerns Remain About Safeguards To Protect Residents During Facility-Initiated Discharges From Nursing Homes](#)

Why OIG Did This Review

- *Facility-initiated discharges that do not follow Federal regulations can be unsafe and traumatic, leading to resident harm.*
- *CMS and State Long-Term Care Ombudsmen have raised concerns about the extent to which nursing homes follow Federal requirements for these discharges.*
- *This review provides insights into a sample of facility-initiated discharges from nursing homes and the extent to which these discharges followed Federal requirements.*

What OIG Found

In most (107 out of 126) of the facility-initiated discharge cases in our review, nursing homes discharged residents for allowable reasons; however, our review raises concerns about nursing homes' understanding of and compliance with notice and documentation requirements for facility-initiated discharges.

- ***Nursing homes sometimes fell short in providing required documentation, such as documentation that the receiving facility could provide services that meet residents' needs.***
- ***Nursing homes often failed to notify residents of their discharges and frequently omitted required information in notices, which may***

have compromised residents' rights and abilities to plan for safe transitions.

- **Even when nursing homes provided the resident with a facility-initiated discharge notice, only about half sent a copy of the notice to the Ombudsman, as required, potentially impeding the Ombudsman's ability to effectively advocate for residents.**

We also found that nursing homes struggled to identify facility-initiated discharges, which may present CMS and State survey agencies with challenges in overseeing these discharges during the survey process.

What OIG Recommends

1. CMS provide a standard notice template to help nursing homes provide complete and accurate information to residents facing discharge and Ombudsmen.
2. CMS require nursing homes to systematically document facility-initiated discharges in information available to CMS and States to enhance oversight.

Report Materials

[Full Report \(PDF, 2.3 MB\)](#)

[Report In Brief \(PDF, 321.8 KB\)](#)

15. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General

April 3, 2024 (posted)

Nursing Home Residents With Endangering Behaviors and Mental Health Disorders May Be Vulnerable to Facility-Initiated Discharges

Why OIG Did This Review

- Facility-initiated discharges that do not follow Federal regulations can be unsafe and traumatic, leading to resident harm.
- CMS and State Long-Term Care Ombudsmen have raised concerns about the extent to which nursing homes follow Federal requirements for these discharges.
- This review provides insights into a sample of facility-initiated discharges from nursing homes, including the reasons cited for discharges, shared characteristics among discharged residents, and the locations to which residents were discharged.

What OIG Found

Nursing homes discharged 72 of the 126 residents in our review because of behaviors that endangered them or others in a facility. In most cases, the residents exhibited aggressive or violent behaviors.

Prior to discharging these residents, nursing homes most commonly tried changing medications and counseling.

Residents discharged due to behaviors shared some characteristics such as a mental health disorder and admission for long-term versus short-term care.

Nursing homes also initiated discharges for residents who failed to pay for a stay (33 of 126) or residents whose health improved and no longer needed facility services (13 of 126).

Lastly, most residents in our review were discharged to acute-care hospitals, and 10 residents were discharged to an unknown location, a nonspecific location, or a hotel.

What OIG Concludes

Our findings highlight the challenges that nursing homes face in caring for residents with mental health disorders as well as raise questions about

	<p>nursing homes' admissions of and capacities to care for these residents. More research is needed into how to provide safe and effective long-term care for residents with mental health disorders and behaviors, especially as the demand for such care grows. To that end, the new Center for Excellence for Behavioral Health in Nursing Facilities, established by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration in partnership with CMS, holds promise.</p> <p>Report Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Report (PDF, 3.0 MB) • Report In Brief (PDF, 341.9 KB)
<p>Assisted Living</p>	<p>16. Cambridge Day April 13, 2024 Neville Place assisted-living gets \$5.7M loan from city despite unexplained lapses in terms By Sue Reinert</p> <p>Cambridge Approves Increased Loan for Financially Improved Neville Place Despite Unanswered Questions Cambridge City Loan for Neville Place Assisted Living Facility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust increased a loan to Neville Place, a city-affiliated assisted-living facility, from \$2.5 million to \$5.7 million. • The reason for the original loan not being used and the details of Neville Place's finances remain unclear. <p>Reasons for Increased Loan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased construction costs, including roof repairs, window work, and unit remodeling. • Upgrading a larger number of units than originally planned. <p>Unanswered Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did Neville Place not use the original loan or fulfill its requirements? • Why did the planned refinancing not occur? • How does Neville Place select low-income residents to fill the available Section 8 housing vouchers? <p>Loan Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The increased loan includes the same requirements as the original loan. • A new requirement is a third-party assessment of Neville Place's capital needs for the next 5-10 years. <p>Additional Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neville Place serves low-income elderly residents. • The Cambridge Housing Authority provided 30 Section 8 vouchers to Neville Place, but only 18 are currently being used. • Neville Place requested an increase in the maximum rent allowed under the vouchers, which improved their financial situation. <p>Overall, the City of Cambridge approved a significantly increased loan for Neville Place despite a lack of transparency regarding the original loan and the facility's financial management.</p>
<p>End of Life / Palliative Care</p>	<p>17. Harvard Public Health April 4, 2024 Palliative care could be a game changer for public health By Meredith Lidard Kleeman</p>

	<p>This article explores the growing role of palliative care in the healthcare system, particularly for patients with chronic illnesses.</p> <p>What is palliative care? Palliative care is often misunderstood as end-of-life care. In reality, it's a flexible approach that provides comfort and support to patients with serious illnesses, regardless of their prognosis. It can help manage symptoms, improve quality of life, and navigate the complexities of the healthcare system.</p> <p>Why is palliative care important?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports patients with multiple chronic conditions: Many people struggle with managing multiple chronic illnesses, and palliative care teams can act as navigators within the healthcare system. • Improves quality of life: Studies show that palliative care reduces symptoms, improves mood, and allows patients to stay at home longer. • Reduces healthcare costs: By managing symptoms and preventing unnecessary hospitalizations, palliative care can save money. <p>Policy and payment models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California: A first-in-the-nation model requires Medicaid to cover palliative care for certain conditions. Blue Shield of California also offers coverage for palliative care in some plans. • Hawaii: This state is pioneering a model that positions palliative care as a preventive service covered by Medicaid. <p>Challenges and opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and training: More clinicians need training in palliative care to meet the growing demand. • Standardization of care: Establishing consistent standards ensures patients receive similar services across providers. • Public awareness: Many people don't understand what palliative care is or how it can benefit them. <p>The future of palliative care With an aging population and rising healthcare costs, palliative care is poised to play a significant role in the future of public health. Increased access, education, and standardized care delivery are key to making palliative care a standard part of healthcare for those who need it most.</p> <p>18. Chronicle – Channel 5 March 29, 2024 Destigmatizing conversations about the end of life Interview with Dr. Stanley Segov, a pioneer in Primary Care and formerly a professor in Primary Care and Family Practice Medicine at Harvard Medical School, who is now dying of a metastatic melanoma complication of lung cancer.</p>
<p>Housing</p>	<p>19. Yahoo! Finance April 14, 2024 Most baby boomers want to stay put in their big family homes — exacerbating a major US housing problem By Vawn Himmelsbach Baby Boomers Aging in Place: Boon or Bane for Housing Market? Key Point: The majority of baby boomers (78%) plan to age in place, keeping their often-large homes, which could worsen the housing shortage. Reasons for Staying Put:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial - Many homes are paid off, and downsizing might be expensive due to high housing prices and rising mortgage rates. • Emotional - Attachment to memories, fear of change, and desire to stay near friends and family. • Lack of Affordable Alternatives - Senior living communities can be very expensive. <p>Impact on Housing Market:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low housing inventory - Large homes remain occupied by empty nesters, reducing options for younger families. • Exacerbates affordability issues - Limited supply keeps housing prices high. <p>Possible Solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase construction of affordable senior housing options. • Build more single-family homes to meet rising demand. <p>Overall, baby boomers' preference for aging in place creates a housing conundrum. Policymakers need to address the senior housing gap to encourage movement and free up larger homes for younger generations.</p>
<p>Private Equity</p>	<p>20. State House News April 12, 2024 <u>Regional Meetings On Steward Impacts Will Be Closed</u> By Sam Drysdale Massachusetts is concerned about Steward Health Care, a for-profit hospital system facing financial troubles. To prepare for potential patient care disruptions, the state is holding private meetings with healthcare leaders. These meetings will focus on maintaining access to medical services if Steward closes hospitals. The first forum will be held Thursday, April 18 where the department will provide an update about preparations for various transition scenarios. The initial meetings will focus on access and care for patients,</p> <p>21. State House News April 8, 2024 <u>Rodrigues Sends Strong Signal On Health Care</u> By Colin A. Young <i>W&M Chair Wants For-Profit, Equity-Based Companies "Out Of The Health Care System"</i> Massachusetts Senator Pushes for Healthcare Reform Amidst Steward Crisis Massachusetts Senator Michael Rodrigues is urging the state to take bold action to address the healthcare crisis, specifically focused on the struggling Steward Health Care network. Steward's financial woes threaten access to care for many residents. Rodrigues blames private equity firms like Cerberus Capital Management, which previously owned Steward. He argues that Cerberus prioritized profit over patient care and urges the removal of for-profit, equity-based companies from the healthcare system entirely. This proposal comes amidst national scrutiny of private equity's role in healthcare. While some argue such investments can support struggling hospitals, research suggests they often lead to higher costs, lower quality care, and staffing cuts. The Massachusetts legislature is considering reforms to address private equity's influence. While some, like Senator Rodrigues, favor a more</p>

<p>Workforce</p>	<p>drastic restructuring, others advocate for stricter regulations on these firms.</p> <p>22. Brookings April 2, 2024 <u>Immigration to address the caregiving shortfall</u> By Benjamin H. Harris and Liam Marshall In the upcoming years, a confluence of factors will produce an unprecedented shortfall in the necessary supply of caregivers. If left unchecked, this shortfall will result in a series of harmful economic outcomes—including sharply raised caregiving costs, outsized burdens on informal caregivers, and subpar quality of care. Since demand for care is largely out of policymakers’ control, the most promising way to address these challenges is by expanding the supply of caregivers. And one of the best strategies for expanding the supply of caregivers is through expanded pathways for legal immigrants. . . The United States’ aging population is the primary driver of an increased demand for care. . .</p> <p>America Faces Shortfall of Caregivers for Aging Population: Immigration Seen as a Solution The Problem: The US is experiencing a growing shortage of caregivers due to an aging population and a preference for in-home care. This shortfall will lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased costs of care • Lower quality of care for the elderly • Burden on family caregivers, particularly women <p>Why is There a Shortfall?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging population: The number of elderly Americans needing care is rapidly growing. • Preference for in-home care: Many seniors want to stay at home rather than move to nursing homes. • Tight labor market: There are fewer available workers overall. • High turnover rates: Caregiving jobs are demanding and often poorly paid. <p>The Impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher costs for families and government programs like Medicaid. • Increased strain on family caregivers, leading to potential health and financial problems. • Lower quality of care for seniors, with overworked caregivers struggling to meet patient needs. <p>Immigration as a Solution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigrants make up a significant portion of the caregiving workforce already. • Proposals include creating special visas for caregivers and a path to citizenship for those who work with seniors. • Studies show increased immigration leads to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More caregivers, resulting in lower costs and better-quality care. ○ More seniors being able to age in place at home. ○ Reduced burden on family caregivers. <p>Potential Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower wages for existing caregivers, especially if there's a large influx of immigrant workers.
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	<p>Overall, an aging population creates a critical need for more caregivers. Expanding immigration opportunities for caregivers is a promising solution to address the looming caregiving crisis.</p>
<p>Covid / Long Covid</p>	<p>23. New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM) <u><i>Infection Prevention Compendium for Long-Term Care Facilities</i></u> Healthcare-associated infections are a major cause of morbidity and mortality in long-term care facilities. Evidenced-based information is the key to preventing devastating outcomes from infection outbreaks and combating future pandemics. This toolkit, developed in partnership with the Yale School of Nursing, is a unique compendium of resources targeted for health care facilities, administrators and direct providers, families, and global communities and partners. Click below to access the resources in each section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u><i>Infection Prevention Tools & Resources for Direct Care Providers, Administrators, and Support Staff</i></u> • <u><i>International and US Infection Control Resources</i></u> • <u><i>Summary of NYAM Reports</i></u> <p>Teaching Tools A set of five teaching tools on infection prevention information with specific questions focused on the roles of various important members of the long-term care community: an administrator, family member, nurse, resident, and specialized contract provider. The questions are designed to test knowledge and generate an informative discussion that will promote common shared core principles regarding infection prevention and control.</p>
<p>Behavioral Health</p>	<p>24. Health Affairs Forefront March 4, 2024 <u><i>Suicide Rates Are High And Rising Among Older Adults In The US</i></u> By Chloe Zilkha, Vani Agarwal, Richard G. Frank In November 2023, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) <u>reported</u> an increase in the age-adjusted suicide rate since 2021. The report details that in 2021 and 2022, people ages 75 and older had the highest suicide rate among all age groups, largely driven by males. This report is a salient indicator of the challenge of identifying and addressing suicide risk among older adults amidst the well-publicized mental health crisis in the United States. Underpinning this profound challenge are the <u>direct connections</u> among social isolation, neglect, and suicide.</p> <p>Suicide Risk And Older Adults On average, men have substantially lower rates of mental illness than women but higher rates of suicide—and this difference is particularly pronounced at older ages. . .</p> <p>The Impact Of Unique Age-Related Stressors Among older adults, a confluence of factors—such as social isolation, physical impairment, and economic circumstances—all appear to contribute to higher risks of depression, compromised well-being, and suicide. Depression is often a chronic, recurring illness. Therefore, many people arrive at older age having a history of depression that leaves them <u>less economically secure</u>, with less stable family and social relations, and more prone to subsequent mental health struggles. Older adults with depression in the past year are more likely to have suicidal thoughts than those without depression. . .</p>

	<p>Behavioral Health In Older Adulthood: Definitions And Access To Care</p> <p>In 2021, about 11.5 percent of adults ages 65 and older were estimated to meet diagnostic criteria for any mental illness (AMI) in the past year (appendix note 4). Slightly more than 1 percent were estimated to meet diagnostic criteria for a serious mental illness (SMI), a mental illness that resulted in substantial impairment carrying out major life activities. About 8 percent experienced substance use disorder (SUD) in the past year.</p>
<p>Disability Topics</p>	<p>25. *Washington Post April 12, 2024 My daughter excluded my disabled partner from a family gathering By Amy Dickinson [My wife] had Polio long ago (as a child), completely paralyzing both of her legs; and she uses long-leg braces and aluminum forearm crutches to walk. I was told that “some” of last year’s attendees were “worried” that she’d trip over the young children scurrying about, but we believe that wasn’t the real reason. At last year’s party, somebody asked [her] if she had been vaccinated against polio as a child. She replied that her mother would not allow her to get the polio vaccine. She described it like this: “Even way back then, some people were crazy anti-vaxxers.” Evidently, there are some (or at least one) anti-vaxxers in my son-in-law’s family; and Siena’s comment must have offended one or more of them. Or perhaps they just don’t like being around people with disabilities.</p>
<p>Demographics</p>	<p>26. MoneyWatch CBS News January 29, 2024 America is hitting "peak 65" in 2024 as record number of boomers reach retirement age. Here's what to know. By Anne Marie Lee 2024: A Record Year for Retirement in the US The year 2024 is expected to see a surge in retirement with an unprecedented 4.1 million Americans turning 65. This demographic wave, known as "peak 65" or the "silver tsunami," presents both challenges and opportunities. Key Points for Those Turning 65: Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inflation and rising interest rates are top financial concerns for many Americans. • Many lack adequate retirement savings, with credit card debt outweighing emergency savings for a significant portion of the population.
<p>Climate Change</p>	<p>27. Reuters April 9, 2024 Swiss women win landmark climate case at Europe top human rights court By Gloria Dickie, Kate Abnett and Christian Levau Europe's top human rights court ruled on Tuesday that the Swiss government had violated the human rights of its citizens by failing to do enough to combat climate change, in a decision that will set a precedent for future climate lawsuits. The European Court of Human Rights’ ruling, in favor of the more than 2,000 Swiss women who brought the case, is expected to resonate in</p>

	<p>court decisions across Europe and beyond, and to embolden more communities to bring climate cases against governments. . .</p> <p>The Swiss women, known as KlimaSeniorinnen and aged over 64, said their government's climate inaction put them at risk of dying during heatwaves. They argued their age and gender made them particularly vulnerable to such climate change impacts. . .</p> <p>The verdict in the Swiss case, which cannot be appealed, will have international ripple effects, most directly by establishing a binding legal precedent for all 46 countries that are signatories to the European Convention on Human Rights.</p>
<p>From Around the Country</p>	<p>28. McKnights Long Term Care News April 15, 2024 Nursing home fights for right to end temporary bonuses, avoid \$369K payout By Kimberly Marselas Can a nursing home end an emergency bonus program for unionized workers without negotiating after a contract has expired? That's the question before a federal appeals court as it considers a now-closed New Jersey facility's request to overturn a National Labor Relations Board decision. The case involves a tactic used by many providers during the pandemic: bonus pay for employees who continued to report to work during such uncertain times. Attorneys for Alaris Health at Boulevard East last week told the US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit that it had the right to end its bonus program under a previous collective bargaining agreement. A late 2022 NLRB panel ruling found the opposite and would force Alaris' owners to pay more than five dozen former employees a combined \$369,000, plus interest, for what the NLRB called "unlawful unilateral changes" to its COVID-19 bonus program.</p> <p>29. McKnights Long Term Care News April 15, 2024 Troubled nursing home in contempt over non-payment of \$2.65 million for staff healthcare By Josh Henreckson One of New York's largest nursing homes was held in contempt by a state Supreme Court Justice Tuesday for failing to make court-ordered payments to ensure that staff can continue receiving healthcare benefits. Justice Lisa Cairo initially ordered Cold Spring Hills Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation to pay \$2.65 million in a "timely manner" to an SEIU benefit fund in October 2023. The payment was to ensure the 606-bed facility's more than 400 union employees would not lose their guaranteed benefits. New York has joined federal regulators in an active push for heightened oversight of long-term care providers in recent years. . . This is not the first high-profile case against a New York nursing home pursued by James this year — a Long Island facility was ordered to pay more than \$8 million in early march for staffing and fraud violations.</p> <p>30. *Times Union April 14, 2024 Health advocates decry changes to long-term home care program By Raga Justin</p>

New York in Budget Standoff Over Popular Home Care Program

Key Issue: New York lawmakers are debating changes to the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP), a Medicaid program allowing residents to choose family or friends as caregivers.

Arguments for Keeping CDPAP:

- Popular with many New Yorkers, especially those who prefer familiar faces as caregivers.
- Provides flexibility and control over care decisions for participants.
- Independent Living Centers play a crucial role in managing the program for complex cases.

Arguments for Changes to CDPAP:

- Rising costs are unsustainable for the state budget.
- Governor Hochul's administration proposes:
 - Limiting the number of fiscal intermediaries (middlemen) to manage the program.
 - Eliminating a pay supplement for home care aides.
- These changes aim to save the state money and ensure program sustainability.

Health Care Advocates' Concerns:

- Proposed changes could dismantle Independent Living Centers, jeopardizing support for those with complex needs.
- They advocate for addressing "wasteful administrative spending" within the managed long-term care system instead.

Overall, a budget stalemate exists in New York regarding the CDPAP program. Balancing cost concerns with the program's benefits and the needs of participants remains a challenge.

31. WFAA.com (video report)

April 14, 2024

[Texas nursing home residents given days to relocate after Feds pull Medicaid funding](#)

32. Fort Worth Star Tribune

April 10, 2024

[Feds pull Medicaid funding from Fort Worth nursing home. What's next for its residents?](#)

By Ciara McCarthy

The federal government will no longer pay a Fort Worth nursing home to care for adults who need long-term nursing or rehabilitative care, according to a notice from the federal government. . .

Jennifer Ruffcorn, a spokesperson for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, said in an emailed statement that the nursing facility was not closed by the state. "HHSC did not mandate this closure," Ruffcorn said in an email. "The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is terminating the facility's contract due to its poor record of survey/inspection performance. This means the facility can no longer receive federal funding."

The nursing home has been on the federal government's watch list for months. Last year, it was named a Special Focus Facility by CMS, considered a last-ditch effort to encourage troubled nursing homes to improve their safety and quality or else be terminated from the program.

33. New York Post

March 17, 2024

	<p><u>NY lawmakers fight gov's plan to reform murky \$6B Medicaid program: 'I don't know why Hochul hates me'</u></p> <p>By Vaughn Golden</p> <p>Albany lawmakers are rejecting Gov. Kathy Hochul's efforts to rein in a popular \$6 billion Medicaid homecare program that <u>critics say is extremely susceptible to abuse.</u> . .</p> <p>As part of her \$233 billion state budget proposal, Hochul is calling for several new reforms for CDPAP. These include limiting the number of hours a single caregiver can work in a week as well as giving the state Department of Health broader authority to regulate how the financial middlemen in the system operate.</p> <p>Hochul estimates these regulatory changes could save the state \$100 million per year.</p> <p>Additionally, Hochul wants to eliminate the \$1.55-per-hour boost to the minimum wage for CDPAP aides in New York City and Westchester, Nassau and Suffolk counties. The governor's budget office estimates that cut would also save the state around \$100 million per year.</p> <p>The governor has made reigning in Medicaid spending — the second costliest part of the state's discretionary budget behind school funding — a major priority.</p>
<p>Public Sessions</p>	<p>34. PUBLIC HEALTH COUNCIL: Public Health Council meets virtually. The agenda calls for an update from Public Health Commissioner Robbie Goldstein, and votes on determination of need requests from Cape Cod Healthcare and Mass General Brigham. (Wednesday, 9 a.m. <u>Agenda and Livestream</u>)</p> <p>35. ADA GRANTS: Massachusetts Office on Disability holds an information session on its Municipal ADA Improvement Grant program. Cities and towns can be reimbursed for accessibility planning and projects that look to remove architectural or communication barriers. (Wednesday, 1 p.m. <u>Register</u>)</p>
<p>Dignity Alliance Massachusetts Legislative Endorsements</p>	<p>Information about the legislative bills which have been endorsed by Dignity Alliance Massachusetts, including the text of the bills, can be viewed at: <u>https://tinyurl.com/DignityLegislativeEndorsements</u></p> <p>Questions or comments can be directed to Legislative Work Group Chair Richard (Dick) Moore at <u>rmoores8473@charter.net</u>.</p>
<p>Websites</p>	<p>New York Academy of Medicine Center for Healthy Aging <u>https://www.nyam.org/our-expertise/center-healthy-aging/</u></p> <p>The Center for Healthy Aging works to improve the health and well-being of older adults. And because they're equally concerned about the needs of today's older adults as they are about the needs of tomorrow's, they work to make both immediate and long-term systemic changes to ensure a healthy life for generations to come.</p> <p>Their work is focused on improving critical elements of healthy living for older adults including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social, physical, and economic participation • Positive perceptions of well-being, quality of life, and autonomy • Improved functional ability and minimized activity limitations • Excellent healthcare and services <p>The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Center for Elder Justice <u>https://theweinbergcenter.org/</u></p> <p>"Our mission is to champion justice and dignity for older adults.</p>

	<p>Our multidisciplinary professional team brings together expertise in the law, therapeutic and social services and public health. Together, we work to identify existing knowledge and service gaps and develop nuanced techniques and strategies.</p> <p>The voices of older adults continuously inform our work.”</p>		
Blogs			
Podcasts	<p>The Consumer Voice maintains an extensive library of podcasts covering an array of long-term care topics.</p> <p>Consumer Voice Podcast Library</p>		
Previously recommended websites	<p>The comprehensive list of recommended websites has migrated to the Dignity Alliance MA website: https://dignityalliancema.org/resources/. Only new recommendations will be listed in <i>The Dignity Digest</i>.</p>		
Previously posted funding opportunities	<p>For open funding opportunities previously posted in <i>The Tuesday Digest</i> please see https://dignityalliancema.org/funding-opportunities/.</p>		
Websites of Dignity Alliance Massachusetts Members	<p>See: https://dignityalliancema.org/about/organizations/</p>		
Contact information for reporting complaints and concerns	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Nursing home</td> <td> <p>Department of Public Health</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Print and complete the Consumer/Resident/Patient Complaint Form 2. Fax completed form to (617) 753-8165 <p>Or</p> <p>Mail to 67 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA 01752</p> <p>Ombudsman Program</p> </td> </tr> </table>	Nursing home	<p>Department of Public Health</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Print and complete the Consumer/Resident/Patient Complaint Form 2. Fax completed form to (617) 753-8165 <p>Or</p> <p>Mail to 67 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA 01752</p> <p>Ombudsman Program</p>
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Nursing Home Closures (pending)	<p>Massachusetts Department of Public Health <i>Benjamin Healthcare Center, Roxbury</i> Closure date: July 1, 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice of Intent to Close (PDF) (DOCX) • Draft of Closure and Relocation Plan (PDF) (DOCX) <p><i>Bridgewater Nursing & Rehab, Bridgewater</i> Closure date: May 24, 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice of Intent to Close (PDF) (DOCX) • Draft of Closure and Relocation Plan (PDF) (DOCX) <p>For more information about each individual facility, please use the Massachusetts Nursing Home Survey Performance Tool and the CMS Nursing Home Compare website.</p>		
Nursing Home Closures	<p>Massachusetts Department of Public Health <i>Savoy Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, New Bedford</i> Closure date: April 3, 2024 <i>New England Sinai Hospital Transitional Care Unit</i> Closure date: April 2, 2024 <i>South Dennis Health Care, Dennis</i> Closure date: January 30, 2024 <i>Arnold House Nursing Home, Stoneham</i> Closure date: September 22, 2023 <i>Willimansett East, Chicopee</i> Closure date: June 6, 2023 <i>Willimansett West, Chicopee</i> Closure date: June 6, 2023 <i>Chapin Center Springfield</i></p>		

	<p>Closure date: June 6, 2023 <i>Governors Center, Westfield</i> Closure date: June 6, 2023 <i>Stonehedge Rehabilitation and Skilled Care Center, West Roxbury</i> Closure February 10, 2022 <i>Heathwood Healthcare, Newton</i> Closure date: January 5, 2022 <i>Mt. Ida Rest Home, Newton</i> Closure date: December 31, 2021 <i>Wingate at Chestnut Hill, Newton, MA</i> Closure date: October 1, 2021 <i>Halcyon House, Methuen</i> Closure date: July 16, 2021 <i>Agawam HealthCare, Agawam</i> Closure date: July 27, 2021 <i>Wareham HealthCare, Wareham</i> Closure date: July 28, 2021 <i>Town & Country Health Care Center, Lowell</i> Closure date: July 31, 2021</p>
<p>Nursing homes with admission freezes</p>	<p>Massachusetts Department of Public Health <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>Massachusetts Department of Public Health <i>Determination of Need Projects: Long Term Care 2023</i> Navigator Homes of Martha's Vineyard, Inc. – Long Term Care Substantial Capital Expenditure Royal Wayland Nursing Home, LLC – Conservation Long Term Care Project 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 2020 Advocate Healthcare, LLC Amendment Campion Health & Wellness, Inc. – LTC - Substantial Change in Service</p>

	<p><u>Heywood Healthcare, Inc. – Hospital/Clinic Substantial Capital Expenditure</u> <u>Notre Dame Health Care Center, Inc. – LTC Conservation 2020</u></p> <p><u>Advocate Healthcare of East Boston, LLC.</u></p> <p><u>Belmont Manor Nursing Home, Inc.</u></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> <u>https://tinyurl.com/SpecialFocusFacilityProgram</u> 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: <u>https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225747</u> • South Dennis Healthcare <u>https://www.nextstephc.com/southdennis</u> Nursing home inspect information: <u>https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225320</u> <p>Massachusetts facilities not improved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None <p>Massachusetts facilities which showed improvement</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>Massachusetts facilities which have graduated from the program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>Massachusetts facilities that are candidates for listing (months on list)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.geneshihcc.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 • Vantage at South Hadley (12) No website Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225757 <p>https://tinyurl.com/SpecialFocusFacilityProgram</p>
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<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>Nursing Home Compare</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>																								
<p>Data on Ownership of Nursing Homes</p>	<p>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</p>																								

	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	<p>Massachusetts Department of Public Health <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>Table of Contents</p> <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	<p>Email: info@DignityAllianceMA.org Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/DignityAllianceMA/ Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/dignityalliance/ LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/dignity-alliance-massachusetts Twitter: https://twitter.com/dignity_ma?s=21 Website: www.DignityAllianceMA.org</p>		
<p>Participation opportunities with Dignity Alliance Massachusetts</p> <p>Most workgroups meet bi-weekly via Zoom.</p> <p>Interest Groups meet periodically (monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly).</p> <p>Please contact group lead for more information.</p>	Workgroup	Workgroup lead	Email
	General Membership	Bill Henning Paul Lanzikos	bhenning@bostoncil.org paul.lanzikos@gmail.com
	Behavioral Health	Frank Baskin	baskinfrank19@gmail.com
	Communications	Lachlan Farrow	lforrow@bidmc.harvard.edu
	Facilities (Nursing homes and rest 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
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	Housing	Bill Henning	bhenning@bostoncil.org
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	Transportation	Frank Baskin Chris Hoeh	baskinfrank19@gmail.com cdhoeh@gmail.com
	Covid / Long Covid	James Lomastro	jiplomastro@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"> • Wynn Gerhard • Chris Hoeh • Dick Moore • Norma Swenson 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.</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 The Tuesday Digest and The Dignity Digest are available at:</i> https://dignityalliancema.org/dignity-digest/</p> <p><i>For more information about Dignity Alliance Massachusetts, please visit www.DignityAllianceMA.org.</i></p>	