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## ***Marsters Settlement Agreement Hailed By Dignity Alliance Massachusetts***

“We applaud the [\*Marsters Agreement\*](#) reached with the Commonwealth on behalf of the thousands of persons with disabilities who are nursing home residents and who want to return to living in the community,” said Paul Lanzikos, Coordinator of Dignity Alliance Massachusetts (DignityMA), a statewide voluntary organization advocating on behalf of older adults, person with disabilities, and caregivers. He added, “An array of essential residential support services, options counseling, and transition assistance are being made available as a result of the Agreement consistent with the requirements of the 1999 U. S. Supreme Court’s [\*Olmstead Decision\*](#).”

Bill Henning, Director of the Boston Center for Independent Living and co-founder of DignityMA commented, “We applaud the settlement and extend kudos to the plaintiffs, their attorneys, and the Healey-Driscoll Administration for taking the necessary bold steps to enhance independence, dignity, and well-being for people who have been isolated in nursing facilities.”

When the lawsuit was filed in October 2022, DignityMA adopted a “Statement of Support” which was approved by fifty-three organizational and individual members. The resolution noted that nearly 90 percent of persons aged 65 and older wish to stay in their home for as long as possible, and 80 percent believe their current residence is where they will always live (source: *Aging in Place: A State Survey of Livability Policies and Practices*, issued by the National Conference of State Legislatures in conjunction with the AARP Public Policy Institute.)

During the course of litigation, DignityMA advocated with Healey-Driscoll Administration and Attorney General Andrea Campbell to settle with the plaintiffs and to begin transitions back to the community as soon as possible.

Meg Coffin, Executive Director of the Center for Living and Work (CLW) and DignityMA’s Home and Community Based Services Workgroup Coordinator added, “CLW is thrilled with the settlement of the Marsters case. This will allow us to help even more individuals leave institutions and live in the community with dignity.”

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DignityMA member Margaret Gullette, Resident Scholar, Women's Studies Research Center at Brandeis University spoke for many advocates, “*Marsters* is a triumph, but it is only the first step to be taken over eight years. It would be better if it were faster with more people sooner.”

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Dignity Alliance Massachusetts is a state-wide, grass-roots coalition of aging and disability service and advocacy organizations and supporters dedicated to systemic transformation to ensure the dignity of older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers. We are committed to advancing new ways of providing long-term services, support, living options, and care while respecting choice and self-determination. Dignity Alliance works through education, legislation, regulatory reform, and legal strategies to realize this vision throughout the Commonwealth.