

Facilities without air conditioning should not be tolerated

By Margaret Morganroth Gullette, PhD

The nearly 33,000 residents of nursing facilities in Massachusetts are fragile older and disabled individuals. Global warming has made this long hot summer intolerable for people throughout the state. Nursing home residents are particularly vulnerable to dehydration, heatstroke, and even death from overheating.

The Legislature is sitting on a bill to “study” the question of putting air conditioning into the facilities that lack it. The funding could come from the Environmental Protection Agency, through the [Inflation Reduction Act Community Change Grants Program](#). A total of about \$2 billion is available to improve disadvantaged communities through environmental and climate justice projects.

Almost every district in Massachusetts suffers from poor-quality nursing homes, from the Berkshires to Cape Cod. They have been neglected for years.

This week temperatures reached 90 degrees. Our residents have no place else to go. Must their tiny, crowded rooms become living hells? Do legislators in their comfortable chambers think the elderly poor don't deserve that same luxury?