

# Strategic Framework for a National Plan on Aging Organization Response from Dignity Alliance Massachusetts – ADDENDUM

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- CMS should be encouraged to require that all nursing homes provide access to licensed social workers for the benefit of residents, staff, and families.

The dual micro/macro focus of social work education prepares social workers to be key contributors to multiple processes in the nursing home. Social work programs accredited by the Council on Social Work Education must prepare students to be competent in engaging, assessing, intervening, and evaluating practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The overarching framework taught in social work is an ecosystems framework with a strengths perspective.

Program evaluation and research competencies are also part of social work education. CSWE calls for programs to prepare students to engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice, the type of skills that are needed to lead process improvement plans around behavioral health and psychosocial care.

Social workers can provide leadership and program implementation at all points of care for behavioral health and well-being. From identification of expressions of distress to assessment, provision of care and services, and care planning, a professional social worker is trained in these areas. Social workers communicate with families regarding changes in condition, revisions to the care plan, discharge planning, and trauma-informed care.

Paul Lanzikos, ([paul.lanzikos@gmail.com](mailto:paul.lanzikos@gmail.com))

Coordinator, Dignity Alliance Massachusetts  
35 High Street  
Beverly, MA 01915

978-210-1331