



The Dignity Digest

Issue # 206

October 8, 2024

The Dignity Digest is information compiled by Dignity Alliance Massachusetts concerning long-term services, support, living options, and care issued each Tuesday.

***May require registration before accessing the 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

This correspondence was sent on September 13, 2024. The text with 27 footnotes can be found at <https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/warren-blumenthal-sanders-schakowsky-follow-up-letter-to-for-profit-nursing-homes-on-exec-pay.pdf>

Correspondence to:

- Lucinda M. Baier
President, Chief Executive Officer, and Director
Brookdale Senior Living, Inc.
- Christopher Christensen
President, Chief Executive Officer, and Executive Chairman
Ensign Group, Inc.
- Stephen F. Flatt
Chief Executive Officer and Inside Director
National HealthCare, Corp.

From:
Senators Elizabeth Warren, Bernard Sanders, Richard Blumenthal and Representative Jan Schakowsky

Dear Ms. Baier, Mr. Christensen, and Mr. Flatt:

I write regarding new public U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filings revealing that you and other nursing home executives were paid nearly \$70 million in 2023, while at the same time claiming that you cannot afford to meet new minimum staffing requirements put in place by a Biden-Harris administration policy to improve quality of care for nursing home residents. On May 5, 2024, I wrote to your companies – three of the largest, publicly-owned, for-profit nursing homes in the United States – to seek an explanation for the discrepancy between your massive payouts in executive salaries, stock buybacks and dividends, and your companies’ simultaneous opposition to the Biden-Harris administration’s nursing home staffing rule on the grounds that it would be too expensive. Implementation of this rule will save 13,000 lives annually;4 yet, industry opposition to this rule continues. The FY 2025 Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, which passed the House Appropriations Committee in July 2024 included language that would prevent CMS from using funds to “administer, implement, or enforce” the staffing rule and any future rule like it, and a Congressional Review Act (CRA) resolution to overturn the

rule could come up in the Senate imminently. The nursing home industry has supported both legislative attempts to overturn the rule.

My May 2024 investigation found that your companies paid out a staggering \$650 million in dividends, buybacks, and compensation to top executives between 2018 and 2022. You attempted to reconcile your receipt of these massive payouts with your opposition to this life-saving rule by telling my office there are not enough nurses available to meet the Biden-Harris administration's new standards. But this industry argument ignores the fact that the primary problem appears to be that nurses in nursing homes are not being paid enough.

While the pandemic played a role in nurses leaving health care positions, in nursing homes, it only accelerated an existing problem. For years, the nursing home industry has had a chronic inability to provide good pay and conditions for nursing home staff. Indeed, the average nursing home loses more than half of its nursing staff within a year due to poor pay, lack of benefits, high workloads, inadequate training, poor management, and lack of career advancement. Nursing homes pay Certified Nurse Assistants (CNAs) and Registered Nurses (RNs) less than other health care providers. Nearly two-thirds of nursing home staff report that they do not have paid leave, 40 percent of CNAs do not have health insurance through their employer, and nurses widely report receiving inadequate training. To top it off, the workloads of nurses and other nursing home staff are far too high: on average, CNAs in nursing homes provide care to 13 residents per shift, with 1 in 10 CNAs in the United States responsible for 19 or more residents at a time.

These conditions make it impossible to provide high-quality care and create a vicious cycle in which nursing homes with higher staff turnover contribute to poor nursing home conditions, leading to even more turnover. All the while, executives get rich – regardless of whether the nursing homes they oversee provide high-quality care.

It is insulting that the for-profit nursing home industry, which receives billions of taxpayer dollars annually to run its operations, appears to prefer lining the pockets of its executives and shareholders rather than creating sustainable working conditions for nurses and staff. New public SEC filings for your companies reveal that in 2023, top executives at your companies received nearly \$70 million in compensation – a nearly 30 percent increase over their 2022 pay (\$54 million). Over the past five years, your companies have paid senior executives and directors over \$250 million.

Despite cries throughout the industry that nursing homes cannot meet the Biden-Harris administration's staffing standards because the nursing home industry has not recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic, nursing homes have demonstrated "powerful positive progress toward full recovery from the impact of the pandemic," in the words of Brookdale's CEO and President, Lucinda Baier. Executives' pay at each of these companies has surpassed their pre-pandemic values. In 2023, the Ensign Group alone paid its executives nearly double what it paid them at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

	<p>In their second quarter 2024 earnings announcements, executives at your companies touted the immense profits you have already made this year. National HealthCare Corporation (NHC) reported over \$15 million in profits in the second quarter of 2024, up from \$12 million for the same period in 2023, representing an increase of 25 percent. As a result, NHC announced it will increase the value of common dividends paid to shareholders this quarter by 3.4 percent. Meanwhile, the Ensign Group announced an increase in its estimated annual revenue of at least \$4.20 billion. The company reported having approximately \$477.3 million cash on hand – money that could be reinvested into worker salaries and improved conditions at their facilities. Ensign further bragged about cutting costs in order to achieve these higher margins: “[o]ne of the foundational elements of our consistent performance has been to insist that the prices we pay will result in a cost structure that allows us to achieve high margins over a long period of time,” the company said. Without a national staffing minimum in place, the for-profit nursing home industry can continue to shovel profits to its executives and shareholders at the expense of patient lives.</p> <p>The basis of your opposition to minimum staffing standards appears to be quite simple: greed. My office’s May 2024 investigation found that your companies paid out nearly \$650 million in stock buybacks, dividends, and salaries to executives and shareholders, all the while claiming nursing homes could not afford to meet the new standards. New revelations that your companies collectively increased their executive pay by nearly 25 percent just last year, combined with the record-high profits your companies touted in the first two quarters of 2024, reveal once again that you have plenty of money available to provide high-quality care – but instead are using it to enrich yourselves and other executives. The Biden-Harris administration’s nursing home staffing rule will ensure that the nursing home industry prioritizes the patients it is intended to serve. I hope you will rethink your opposition to this rule.</p>
<p>Quotes</p>	<p><i>People in the “forgotten middle” — those who have too much income or too many assets to qualify for Medicaid but can’t afford to pay out-of-pocket for an extended period — are left to face daunting financial challenges when the need for [long-term] services arises.</i></p> <p><u>Massachusetts can and must advance long-term services</u>, *Boston Business Journal, September 20, 2024</p> <p><i>“This bill makes sure that no matter where you choose to age – at home, at an assisted living facility or at a long-term care facility – you can know that you will receive the care that you deserve. That includes having your civil rights protected, no matter who you are or how you identify.</i></p>

Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll, [Governor Healey Signs Bill Improving Access to High-Quality Care for Older Residents](#), Office of Governor Maura Healey and Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll, September 26, 2024

“While [Chapter 197 of the Acts of 2024] improves the quality of long-term care, it also should increase the availability of residential living options such as small nursing or green homes and assisted living.”

Leo Sarkissian, Executive Director, The Arc of Massachusetts, [Governor Healey Signs Bill Improving Access to High-Quality Care for Older Residents](#), Office of Governor Maura Healey and Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll, September 26, 2024

The audience — made of citizens and taxpayers and people with loved ones in the [nursing] home — would also have liked to hear the presentation. That this was not allowed was typical of the entire process, in which the public was given less information about the sale of the home for 48 Sauk County residents than it was about replacing a damaged squad car.

[Nursing home sale shows why transparency matters](#), Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council, October 1, 2024

Legislative Champions of Dignity and Care – 2024

Tuesday, October 1
Room 428
State House, Boston



Honored Legislators



Honored Legislative Staff members

[Photos by Sue Rorke]

On Tuesday, October 1, 2024, at a State House ceremony Dignity Alliance Massachusetts honored Legislators and Legislative Staff for their exemplary public service that addressed the needs and concerns of older adults, people with disabilities and their caregivers during the 193rd sitting of the Massachusetts General Court.

Legislator Champions of Dignity and Care

Senator Joan Lovely, presented by Senator Patricia Jehlen

Representative Thomas Stanley, presented by Representative Ruth Balser

Legislative Career Champions of Dignity and Care

Senator Marc Pacheco

Representative Ruth Balser

Representative Denise Garlick

Representative Kay Khan

Special thanks for leadership on the passage of Chapter 197 of the Acts of 2024

Senator Patricia Jehlen

Legislative Staff Champions of Dignity and Care

Brian Rosman Office of Senator Jo Comerford – Career Recognition

Senate Staff Members

Gabe Adams-Keane, Office of Senator John Velis

Victoria Halal, Office of Senator Patricia Jehlen

Mary Anne Padien, Office of Senate President Karen Spilka

House Staff Members

Whitney Ferguson, Office of Speaker Ronald Mariano

Dmitriy Gridnev, Office of Representative Ruth Balsler
Mark Phillips, Office of Representative Thomas Stanley

Boston Center for Independent Living 50th Anniversary



[Photos courtesy of Boston Center for Independent Living]

BCIL's 50th Anniversary!

Saturday, September 21, 2024, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Reggie Lewis Track and Athletic Center, 1350 Tremont Street, Boston

DignityMA Asks the Candidates

To inform older adults, persons with disabilities, family members, and caregivers about legislative candidates' positions on issues of interest, Dignity Alliance Massachusetts (DignityMA) has prepared [The Dignity Dozen](#), twelve questions regarding key issues and proposals. Questionnaires have been distributed to all **candidates who have competitive general election contests**. Questionnaires will be distributed to candidates with opposition later in September. Candidate responses will be posted on the DignityMA website. *Election Day is Tuesday, November 5th.*

	<p>Responses received (click on the name to view responses):</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Candidate</td> <td>District</td> <td>Website</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Michelle Badger</td> <td>Rep: 1st Plymouth</td> <td>Badger website</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Susanne H. Conley</td> <td>Rep: 2nd Barnstable</td> <td>www.CapeCodConley.com</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Steven J. Ouellette</td> <td>Rep: 8th Bristol</td> <td>OuelletteFacebook</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Patricia Haddad</td> <td>Rep: 5th Bristol</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Candidate	District	Website	Michelle Badger	Rep: 1st Plymouth	Badger website	Susanne H. Conley	Rep: 2 nd Barnstable	www.CapeCodConley.com	Steven J. Ouellette	Rep: 8 th Bristol	OuelletteFacebook	Patricia Haddad	Rep: 5 th Bristol	
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Steven J. Ouellette	Rep: 8 th Bristol	OuelletteFacebook														
Patricia Haddad	Rep: 5 th Bristol															
<p>Ageism Day October 9</p>	<p><i>Let's Prepare to Tackle Ageism</i> <i>Reframing Aging</i></p> <p>Reframingaging.org has resources to promote Ageism Awareness Day on October 9, 2024. Check them out. These include a Quick Start Guide, Best Practices Guide, and other tools. These will prove valuable as we approach the annual Ageism Awareness Day on October 9. As hosted by our colleagues at the American Society on Aging (ASA), this observance is an opportunity to draw attention to the impact of ageism in our society and how we can reframe aging in our communities. ASA has plenty of tools you can use to get involved. And we can all benefit from an assessment of the ageism we may find within ourselves; Harvard University's Implicit Association Test has a questionnaire related to aging. Ageism is entrenched in our society, but thankfully more people are taking notice. It is heartening to see many reporters acknowledging that ageism is a problem to solve. The movement to reframe aging is a long-term social change endeavor. But we continually see signs that the needle can be moved, and it's up to all of us to use our collective strength to ensure a just future for all. All Dignity Alliance participants are encouraged to play a part in bringing attention to Ageism Awareness Day inside your respective organizations, and to promote Ageism Awareness Day on October 9th.</p>															
<p>Guide to news items in this week's <i>Dignity Digest</i></p>	<p>An Act to improve quality and oversight of long-term care (Chapter 197 of the Acts of 2024) Governor Healey Signs Bill Improving Access to High-Quality Care for Older Residents (Office of Governor Maura Healey and Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll, September 26, 2024)</p> <p>Long-Term Care Public Policy Massachusetts can and must advance long-term services (*Boston Business Journal, September 20, 2024)</p> <p>From around the Country More Than 50 Iowa Nursing Homes Have Agreed To Repay Taxpayers \$13.9 Million (Iowa Capital Dispatch, October 4, 2024) Man fatally shoots his 81-year-old wife at a Connecticut nursing home (The Associated Press, October 4, 2024) Nursing home sale shows why transparency matters (Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council, October 1, 2024) Nursing home COVID lawsuit against Cuomo dismissed (News 10, October 1, 2024)</p> <p>Public Sessions Personal Care Attendant Workforce Council Tuesday, October 8, 2024, 2:30 p.m. Massachusetts Commission for the Blind Statutory Advisory Board Wednesday, October 9, 2024, 12:00 p.m.</p>															

	<p>Workforce Supports Subcommittee of the Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities Thursday, October 10, 2024, 10:00 a.m.</p> <p>Business and Employment Opportunities Committee of the State Rehabilitation Council Thursday, October 10, 2024, 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Community Behavioral Health Commission Thursday, October 10, 2024, 3:00 p.m.</p>
<p>Accessibility and Voter Rights</p> <p>Sign Up to receive emails. Stay educated on your rights, and on the Issues, Candidates and Ballot Questions in Massachusetts!</p>	<p>Rev Up Massachusetts <i>REV UP – Register! Educate! Vote! Use your Power!</i> https://revupma.org/wp/</p> <p>Learn more about the issues, and how you can help advance the disability agenda at our 2024 Disability Voting Rights Week post.</p> <p>2024 Election Calendar Visit the Secretary of State’s Upcoming Elections page.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 5 – Election Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ October 19 – First day of in-person early voting for state election ○ October 26 – Last day to register to vote for state election ○ October 29 5:00 p.m. – Deadline to apply for mail-in ballot for state election ○ November 1 – last day of in-person early voting for state election
<p>Events</p>	<p>1. Somerville Cambridge Elder Services Wednesday, October 9, 2024, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Boston University Metcalf Trustee Center, One Silber Way, Boston Future of Aging Forum Focus on aligning social and health care to advance health, equity, and independence. Keynote: Rishi Manchanda, MD, MPH, CEO and Founder, HealthBegins Housing and Livable Communities Secretary Augustus delivers remarks. Panels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving Health Outcomes for Dual-Eligible Populations through Integrated, Data-Focused Models • Advancing Health Equity Through Innovative Housing Partnerships • Building Age-Friendly Communities: A Strategic Framework for a National Plan on Aging <p>https://eldercare.org/forum/</p>
<p>Webinars and Online Sessions</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>Chapter 197 of the Acts of 2024, An Act relative to Quality and Oversight of Long-Term Care and Assisted Living</p>	<p>2. Office of Governor Maura Healey and Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll September 26, 2024 Governor Healey Signs Bill Improving Access to High-Quality Care for Older Residents Today, Governor Maura Healey, Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll, House Speaker Ronald J. Mariano, Senate President Karen E. Spilka, elected officials and advocates came together for a ceremonial signing of An Act to improve quality and oversight of long-term care, which improves oversight and standards at Long Term Care (LTC) and assisted living facilities to ensure that older adults are receiving high quality care delivered by</p>

	<p>qualified providers. The bill also takes steps to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities. . .</p> <p>Governor Healey signed the bill on September 6th. Some key provisions of the bill include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limits MassHealth estate recovery to the minimum required by federal law and removes estate recovery for residents receiving assistance under CommonHealth and Personal Care Attendant (PCA) services. • Requires the Department of Public Health (DPH) to inspect LTCs annually. • Requires MassHealth to review nursing facility rates every two years and provide additional funding for bariatric nursing facilities and 1-on-1 staffing for nursing facility residents requiring 24-hour monitoring and supervision. • Establishes a new fund to support grants to develop new Certified Nursing Assistants and Licensed Practical Nurses, along with leadership and supervisory training for nursing home leaders. The fund also establishes a no interest or forgivable capital loan program to off-set certain capital costs, including the development of specialized care units. • Requires LTCs to develop individualized outbreak response plans and DPH to establish and implement training and education programs on topics such as infection prevention and control, resident care plans, and staff safety programs. • Requires staff training on the rights and care of LGBTQ+ older adults and older adults living with HIV and forbidding LTCs from discriminating based on a person’s sexual orientation, gender identity, or HIV status. • Requires DPH to promulgate regulations related to “small house nursing homes,” which are facilities for no more than 14 residents that are designed to look and feel like a home. • Requires MassHealth to study the cost and feasibility of changes to the eligibility requirements for Medicaid long-term care services with the goal of reducing the time applicants spend awaiting discharge from acute care
<p>Long-Term Care Public Policy</p>	<p>3. *Boston Business Journal September 20, 2024 Massachusetts can and must advance long-term services By Marc Cohen, Audrey Shelto, and Elissa Sherman Eighteen years ago, Massachusetts leaders enacted a health reform law that would transform the way that health care coverage is provided and serve as a model for national reform. That same spirit of collaboration is needed today to confront another serious challenge for our residents and the greatest single threat to financial security during retirement: the ability to afford long-term services and supports, or LTSS, for older adults and people with disabilities.</p> <p>We have no comprehensive system of LTSS coverage and most people are woefully unprepared for what may await them as they age. LTSS can be defined as anything from light assistance in the home with essential tasks (like food preparation) to skilled care in a nursing facility, and everything in between (such as help at home with bathing and dressing). In fact, a recent study found that well over half of people 65 and over thought that Medicare and private insurance cover LTSS, when the reality is that both cover only a sliver of this expense and for a limited duration.</p>

	<p>About 16% of people in Massachusetts are 65 or older. Over the next 20 years, this population is projected to grow 31%, nearly three times the projected growth rate of the total population (11%). Also, 70% of adults who survive to age 65 will develop severe LTSS needs before they die.</p> <p>The wealthiest among us never have to worry about the cost of long-term care, and those living in poverty have access to comprehensive coverage through Medicaid. People in the “forgotten middle” — those who have too much income or too many assets to qualify for Medicaid, but can’t afford to pay out-of-pocket for an extended period — are left to face daunting financial challenges when the need for services arises. Fewer than 10% of Massachusetts residents have private long-term care insurance.</p> <p>Numerous attempts, none successful, have been made to remedy our country’s broken approach to paying for long-term care. Where the federal government has been unable to develop a solution, state governments have jumped into the fray. Washington is the first state to create a public long-term care social insurance program, which will offer \$36,000 in coverage (indexed to inflation) — to be used in a variety of long-term care settings — a significant benefit for most middle-income individuals. Benefits will begin in 2026 (as long as the program survives a ballot initiative this November aimed at undermining it). According to MIT CoLab’s new resource hub, a handful of other states have begun to explore whether a similar program would make sense for them.</p> <p>Massachusetts has an opportunity to become a leader in helping individuals and families afford LTSS; critical foundation work is already underway. Building on a call for reform by the Massachusetts Long-Term Care Financing Advisory Committee from more than 10 years ago, the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation laid out five key priorities in 2022 for a new governor and legislature, including the recommendation to improve access to long-term care and to develop a program that helps Massachusetts residents finance their LTSS needs.</p> <p>And just last year, advocacy organizations (including LeadingAge Massachusetts), policy analysts, and other stakeholders collaborated with legislative champions to secure state funding for a study that will determine an approximate cost for providing comprehensive coverage of LTSS and identify options to create a funding stream for this care.</p> <p>What we can’t afford to do is kick the can down the road and let the next generation worry about this. Our state needs to be a reformer once again.</p>
<p>From around the Country</p>	<p>4. Iowa Capital Dispatch October 4, 2024 More Than 50 Iowa Nursing Homes Have Agreed To Repay Taxpayers \$13.9 Million By Clark Kauffman</p> <p>The Iowa Capital Dispatch reported that 52 nursing homes in Iowa owed the state over \$13.9 million in unpaid fees. The Iowa Department of Health and Human Services said they had entered into payment plans with many of the care facilities. These payment plans total \$13.9 million, with most of the agreements calling for the companies to have their debt paid off by September 2025. Two of the nursing homes that accrued a large amount of debt are owned by Pacifica Health Services, which operates the Carlisle Center for Wellness and Rehabilitation and the Fleur Heights Center for Wellness and Rehabilitation. The nursing home chain that accrued the largest debt is Accura Healthcare, which operates 19 care facilities in Iowa. The company said that it is "fully committed to fulfilling its repayment</p>

	<p>obligations." DHHS is characterizing some of the financial arrangements with nursing homes as the repayment of "loans," rather than the collection of unpaid fees. In some cases, the documents show, the state is charging the facilities interest, but in other cases the payment plans speak only to the amount of principal that will be paid, with no mention of interest.</p> <p>5. Associated Press October 4, 2024 Man fatally shoots his 81-year-old wife at a Connecticut nursing home By The Associated Press A tragic incident occurred at an Apple Rehab nursing home in Cromwell, Connecticut. An 82-year-old man fatally shot his 81-year-old wife, who had been a resident there for three years. The man then took his own life. The shooting happened in the woman's private room, and no one witnessed the event. Staff members heard gunshots, rushed to the room, and called 911. Counselors have been brought in to support staff and residents who are deeply affected by the tragedy. The motive for the shooting is unclear, and there were no known threats prior to the incident. Police are investigating the case, and the medical examiner's office is involved.</p> <p>6. Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council October 1, 2024 Nursing home sale shows why transparency matters By Jeff Seering Key points from the article:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency disparity: The board was significantly more transparent about purchasing a new sheriff's vehicle than selling the county-owned nursing home. • Hidden sale price: The sale price of the nursing home was not disclosed until after the sale was approved. • Buyer's care rating: The buyer, Aria, had a poor care rating, contradicting the county's stated desire for a high-quality buyer. • Public exclusion: The public was largely kept in the dark about the sale process and negotiations. • Public outcry: Citizens expressed strong opposition to the sale due to concerns about the buyer's care quality. <p>The article highlights the importance of open government and the negative consequences of a lack of transparency, especially when it comes to decisions that significantly impact the community.</p> <p>7. News 10 October 1, 2024 Nursing home COVID lawsuit against Cuomo dismissed A federal judge has dismissed a wrongful death lawsuit against former New York governor Andrew Cuomo. The case centered on Cuomo's handling of nursing home deaths during the COVID-19 pandemic. Filed in 2022 by family members of relatives who died from COVID-19 in nursing homes, the lawsuit accused the Cuomo administration of intentionally undercounting reported fatalities.</p>
Public Sessions	<p>8. Personal Care Attendant Workforce Council Tuesday, October 8, 2024, 2:30 p.m. "Emergency" meeting Zoom</p>

	<p>9. Massachusetts Commission for the Blind Statutory Advisory Board Wednesday, October 9, 2024, 12:00 p.m. <i>Virtual meeting</i> Zoom</p> <p>10. Workforce Supports Subcommittee of the Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities Thursday, October 10, 2024, 10:00 a.m. Two guest speakers: Caroline Ryan, Administration for Community Living Stephanie Gibbs, National Council on Aging. The subcommittee is tasked with analyzing the workforce crisis for people who provide services to people with disabilities. Zoom Legislative Livestream CART Interpretation URL</p> <p>11. Business and Employment Opportunities Committee of the State Rehabilitation Council Thursday, October 10, 2024, 1:00 p.m. Virtual meeting Zoom</p> <p>12. Community Behavioral Health Commission Thursday, October 10, 2024, 3:00 p.m. Virtual meeting More Info</p>
<p>Support Dignity Alliance Massachusetts</p> <p>Please Donate!</p>	<p>Dignity Alliance Massachusetts is a grassroots, volunteer-run 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to transformative change to ensure the dignity of older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers. We are committed to advancing ways of providing long-term services, support, living options and care that respect individual choice and self-determination. Through education, legislation, regulatory reform, and legal strategies, this mission will become reality throughout the Commonwealth.</p> <p>As a fully volunteer operation, our financial needs are modest, but also real. Your donation helps to produce and distribute <i>The Dignity Digest</i> weekly free of charge to almost 1,000 recipients and maintain our website, www.DignityAllianceMA.org, which has thousands of visits each month.</p> <p>Consider a donation in memory or honor of someone. Names of those recognized will be included in The Dignity Digest and posted on the website.</p> <p>https://dignityalliancema.org/donate/</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration!</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: https://tinyurl.com/DignityLegislativeEndorsements Questions or comments can be directed to Legislative Work Group Chair Richard (Dick) Moore at rmoores8473@charter.net.</p>
<p>Websites</p>	<p>MIT CoLab</p>

<https://www.transformlongtermcare.com/progress-by-state>

Transforming the Provision of Long-Rem Care

Reports, factsheets, guides, and publications to help you on your long-term care journey. These can be helpful both to learn more about the care crisis, building a planful long-term care financing system, worker-owned cooperatives, private equity's impact on care, and the Mel King Community Fellows.

[Care Crisis](#)

[Planful System](#)

[Worker Co-ops](#)

[State Progress](#)

[Mel King Fellows](#)

[USAging](#)

<https://www.usaging.org/>

Mission

USAging represents and supports the national network of Area Agencies on Aging and advocates for the Title VI Native American Aging Programs that help older adults and people with disabilities live with optimal health, well-being, independence and dignity in their homes and communities.

Vision

USAging believes that every person should be able to age with optimal health, well-being, independence and dignity in their homes and communities. To achieve this, we are committed to building a society that values and supports people as they age

[The Massachusetts Medicaid Policy Institute](#)

<https://www.bluecrossmafoundation.org/programs/massachusetts-medicaid-policy-institute>

The Massachusetts Medicaid Policy Institute (MMPI)—a program of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation—is an independent and nonpartisan source of information and analysis about the Massachusetts Medicaid program, “MassHealth.” MMPI’s mission is to promote the development of effective Medicaid policy solutions through research and policy analysis. MMPI promotes broad understanding of MassHealth and its interrelatedness with other health care programs for low-income people and seeks to create a rigorous and thoughtful public discussion of the program’s successes and the challenges ahead. It collaborates with a wide spectrum of policy makers, legislators, researchers, providers, advocacy groups, consumer organizations, business and other stakeholders.

[National Center on Reframing Aging](#)

<https://www.reframingaging.org/>

The National Center to Reframe Aging is dedicated to ending ageism by advancing an equitable and complete story about aging in America. The center is the trusted source for proven communication strategies and tools to effectively frame aging issues. It is the nation’s leading organization, cultivating an active community of individuals and organizations to spread awareness of implicit bias toward older people and influence policies and programs that benefit all of us as we age. Led by The Gerontological Society of America (GSA), the National Center acts on behalf of and amplifies efforts of the ten Leaders of Aging Organizations.

Blogs			
Podcasts			
Previously recommended websites	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> .		
Previously posted funding opportunities	For open funding opportunities previously posted in <i>The Tuesday Digest</i> please see https://dignityalliancema.org/funding-opportunities/ .		
Websites of Dignity Alliance Massachusetts Members	See: https://dignityalliancema.org/about/organizations/		
Contact information for reporting complaints and concerns	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Nursing home</td> <td> Department of Public Health 1. Print and complete the Consumer/Resident/Patient Complaint Form 2. Fax completed form to (617) 753-8165 Or Mail to 67 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA 01752 Ombudsman Program </td> </tr> </table>	Nursing home	Department of Public Health 1. Print and complete the Consumer/Resident/Patient Complaint Form 2. Fax completed form to (617) 753-8165 Or Mail to 67 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA 01752 Ombudsman Program
Nursing home	Department of Public Health 1. Print and complete the Consumer/Resident/Patient Complaint Form 2. Fax completed form to (617) 753-8165 Or Mail to 67 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA 01752 Ombudsman Program		
Money Follows the Person	MassHealth Money Follows the Person The Money Follows the Person (MFP) Demonstration helps older adults and people with disabilities move from nursing facilities, chronic disease or rehabilitation hospitals, or other qualified facilities back to the community. Statistics as of September 27, 2024: 710 people enrolled, most in nursing facilities 173 people transitioned out of nursing facilities 10 people through the cycle since 2023, off the program, living independently in the community. 38 people approved for AHVP (Alternative Housing Voucher Program) nursing home vouchers, 14 currently in use Open PDF file, 1.34 MB, MFP Demonstration Brochure MFP Demonstration Brochure - Accessible Version MFP Demonstration Fact Sheet MFP Demonstration Fact Sheet - Accessible Version		
Nursing Home Closures (pending)	Massachusetts Department of Public Health <i>None pending</i> Massachusetts Nursing Home Survey Performance Tool and the CMS Nursing Home Compare website .		
Nursing Home Closures	Massachusetts Department of Public Health <i>Marion Manor, South Boston</i> <i>Closure date: September 11, 2024</i> <i>Bridgewater Nursing & Rehab, Bridgewater</i> <i>Closure date: May 24, 2024</i> <i>Savoy Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, New Bedford</i> <i>Closure date: April 3, 2024</i> <i>New England Sinai Hospital Transitional Care Unit</i> <i>Closure date: April 2, 2024</i> <i>South Dennis Health Care, Dennis</i> <i>Closure date: January 30, 2024</i> <i>Arnold House Nursing Home, Stoneham</i> <i>Closure date: September 22, 2023</i>		

	<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 & Country Health Care Center, Lowell</i> Closure date: July 31, 2021</p>
Nursing homes with admission freezes	<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>
Massachusetts Department of Public Health Determination of Need Projects	<p>Massachusetts Department of Public Health <i>Determination of Need Projects: Long Term Care 2023</i> <u>Navigator Homes of Martha's Vineyard, Inc. – Long Term Care Substantial Capital Expenditure</u> <u>Royal Wayland Nursing Home, LLC – Conservation Long Term Care Project</u> 2022 <u>Ascentria Care Alliance – Laurel Ridge</u> <u>Ascentria Care Alliance – Lutheran Housing</u> <u>Ascentria Care Alliance – Quaboag</u> <u>Berkshire Healthcare Systems, Inc. – Windsor Long Term Care Conservation</u> <u>Fairlawn Rehabilitation Hospital-Hospital/Clinic Substantial Capital Expenditure</u> <u>Long Term Centers of Lexington – Pine Knoll – Long Term Care Conservation</u> <u>Long Term Centers of Wrentham – Serenity Hill – Long Term Care Conservation</u> <u>Next Step Healthcare LLC-Conservation Long Term Care Project</u> <u>Royal Falmouth – Conservation Long Term Care</u> <u>Royal Norwell – Long Term Care Conservation</u></p>

	<p><u>Wellman Healthcare Group, Inc</u> 2020 <u>Advocate Healthcare, LLC Amendment</u> <u>Campion Health & Wellness, Inc. – LTC - Substantial Change in Service</u> <u>Heywood Healthcare, Inc. – Hospital/Clinic Substantial Capital Expenditure</u> <u>Notre Dame Health Care Center, Inc. – LTC Conservation</u> 2020 <u>Advocate Healthcare of East Boston, LLC.</u> <u>Belmont Manor Nursing Home, Inc.</u></p>
<p>List of Special Focus Facilities</p>	<p>Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services <i>List of Special Focus Facilities and Candidates</i> https://tinyurl.com/SpecialFocusFacilityProgram Updated April 24, 2024 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. 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) Newly added to the listing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somerset Ridge Center, Somerset https://somersetridge rehab.com/ Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225747 • South Dennis Healthcare https://www.nextstephc.com/southdennis Nursing home inspect information:

<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225320>

Massachusetts facilities not improved

- None

Massachusetts facilities which showed improvement

- 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>

Massachusetts facilities which have graduated from the program

- 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>

Massachusetts facilities that are candidates for listing (months on list)

- AdviniaCare Newburyport (3)
<https://www.adviniacare.com/adviniacare-country-center/>
Nursing home inspect information:
<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225332>
- Charwell House Health and Rehabilitation, Norwood (27)
<https://tinyurl.com/Charwell>
Nursing home inspect information:
<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225208>
- Fall River Healthcare (9)
<https://www.nextstephc.com/fallriver>
Nursing home inspect information:
<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225723/>
- Glen Ridge Nursing Care Center, Medford (13)
<https://www.geneshcc.com/glenridge>
Nursing home inspect information:
<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225523>
- Mill Town Health and Rehabilitation, Amesbury (26)
No website
Nursing home inspect information:
<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225318>
- Parkway Health and Rehabilitation Center, West Roxbury (7)
<https://www.bearmountainhc.com/locations/parkway-health-rehabilitation-center/>
Nursing home inspect information:
<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225497>
- Pioneer Valley Health & Rehabilitation Center, South Hadley (24)
<https://pioneervalleyhealth.com/>
Nursing home inspect information:
<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225757>
- Plymouth Harborside Healthcare (4)
<https://www.nextstephc.com/plymouth>
Nursing home inspect information:
<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225284/>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plymouth Rehabilitation and Health Care Center (22) https://plymouthrehab.com/ Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225207 • Royal Norwell Nursing & Rehabilitation Center (4) https://norwell.royalhealthgroup.com/ Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225482/ <p>Massachusetts Facilities that have graduated from the program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marlborough Hills Rehabilitation & Health Care Center, Marlborough https://marlboroughhillsrehab.com/ Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225063/ • Oxford Rehabilitation & Health Care Center, Haverhill https://theoxfordrehabhealth.com/ Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225218/ <p>No longer operating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Dennis Healthcare, South Dennis https://tinyurl.com/SpecialFocusFacilityProgram 																																																
<p><i>Nursing Home Inspect</i></p>	<p>ProPublica <i>Nursing Home Inspect</i> Data updated April 24, 2024 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="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Deficiency Tag</th> <th># Deficiencies</th> <th># Facilities</th> <th>MA facilities cited</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>B</td> <td>284</td> <td>198</td> <td>Tag B</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C</td> <td>108</td> <td>85</td> <td>Tag C</td> </tr> <tr> <td>D</td> <td>7,496</td> <td>1,469</td> <td>Tag D</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>1,965</td> <td>788</td> <td>Tag E</td> </tr> <tr> <td>F</td> <td>656</td> <td>317</td> <td>Tag F</td> </tr> <tr> <td>G</td> <td>568</td> <td>384</td> <td>Tag G</td> </tr> <tr> <td>H</td> <td>44</td> <td>33</td> <td>Tag H</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>Tag I</td> </tr> <tr> <td>J</td> <td>57</td> <td>27</td> <td>Tag J</td> </tr> <tr> <td>K</td> <td>8</td> <td>5</td> <td>Tag K</td> </tr> <tr> <td>L</td> <td>5</td> <td>2</td> <td>Tag L</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Updated April 24, 2024</p>	Deficiency Tag	# Deficiencies	# Facilities	MA facilities cited	B	284	198	Tag B	C	108	85	Tag C	D	7,496	1,469	Tag D	E	1,965	788	Tag E	F	656	317	Tag F	G	568	384	Tag G	H	44	33	Tag H	I	3	2	Tag I	J	57	27	Tag J	K	8	5	Tag K	L	5	2	Tag L
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<p><i>Nursing Home Compare</i></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</p>																																																

	<p>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>		
Data on Ownership of Nursing Homes	<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 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.</p>		
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>	Workgroup	Workgroup lead	Email
	General Membership	Bill Henning Paul Lanzikos	bhenning@bostoncil.org paul.lanzikos@gmail.com
	Assisted Living	John Ford	jford@njc-ma.org
	Behavioral Health	Frank Baskin	baskinfrank19@gmail.com
	Communications	Lachlan Forrow	lforrow@bidmc.harvard.edu
	Facilities (Nursing homes and rest homes)	Jim Lomastro Arlene Germain	jimlomastro@comcast.net agermain@manhr.org

Interest Groups meet periodically (monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly). Please contact group lead for more information.	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
	Housing	Bill Henning	bhenning@bostoncil.org
	Veteran Services	James Lomastro	jimlomastro@comcast.net
	Transportation	Frank Baskin Chris Hoeh	baskinfrank19@gmail.com cdhoeh@gmail.com
	Covid / Long Covid	James Lomastro	jimlomastro@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 • Bill Henning • Dick Moore Special thanks to the MetroWest Center for Independent Living for assistance with the website and MailChimp versions of <i>The Dignity Digest</i> . If you have submissions for inclusion in <u><i>The Dignity Digest</i></u> or have questions or comments, please submit them to Digest@DignityAllianceMA.org .		
<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>			