



## **Raising the Personal Needs Allowance**

### **Dignity Alliance Massachusetts**

### **Legislative Briefing Transcript**

**March 10, 2025**

0:01

Welcome to this program on the Massachusetts Personal Needs Allowance. I'm Paul Lanzikos,

0:03

I'm coordinator of Dignity Alliance Massachusetts, a statewide advocacy group that was formed literally five years ago at the beginning of the pandemic to advocate on behalf of older adults, people with disabilities and their caregivers.

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Each year we have introduced legislation to be considered that either addresses concerns or pursues opportunities for those populations.

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This year we have a package of 13 bills that we have submitted to the legislature and we're grateful that we have sponsors for each of them.

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Today, we are going to be speaking about our number one priority this session, an increase in the personal needs allowance for nursing home and rest home residents, which has not been increased in over 18 years.

1:01

Currently it stands at \$72.80 per month

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Our proposal brings it up to \$113.48' which again is quite modest, but if inflation had been

considered each year over the last 18 years, that's approximately the amount that it would be today.

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We're going to be hearing how the personal allowance works, about its sources of funding and which is actually the president's own income.

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It's not something that's given to them.

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It's just less that's taken away from them since for most of them, the personal needs allowance comes from Social Security primarily and some other income sources that go towards the payment of the nursing home care.

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And each year, while there has been increased and their income, they have not seen any change in their allowance.

2:00

Our speakers this afternoon is going to be talking in great detail of what the personal needs allowance means, both as a matter of public policy, what it means from the point of people who operate nursing homes and restaurants, and most importantly, the people who are dependent on those allowances, the residents themselves.

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We'll be hearing first from Professor Monica Aswani, who is a professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, along with her colleague Professor Paul Schafer of Boston University, recently published a scholarly article in the Journal of the American Medical Association on this very topic.

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We will then have a video presentation from the Vice President for legislation for Signature Healthcare, Kathy Gallin, who is has spearheaded increases in personal needs allowances in a number of southern states including Florida.

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Then we'll hear from a former, Secretary of Elder Affairs Mike Festa, followed by I think perhaps most importantly, residents, that Hale House, which is a rest home here in Boston.

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And we're going be hearing first-hand about how what the person needs allowance needs to them and how they use it.

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Then we will hear from our legislative sponsors on the four lead sponsors on the bills that are pending.

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And we hope that we will be gathering as a result of this presentation, many more Co-sponsors to these bills.

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So with no further ado, I'm going to turn it over to Professor Aswani.

3:57

Monica, hi, thank you so much for having me.

4:01

Hopefully you can hear me.

4:02

Yes, yes.

4:04

Great.

4:05

So I'm Monica Aswani, I'm an assistant professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

4:11

And that will become very important for this narrative, even though you are all in Massachusetts.

4:15

Because as we talk about the personal needs allowance, Alabama is one of two states that still maintains the federal floor of only \$30.00 a month.

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And so let's just sort of backtrack.

4:26

I'd like to give you some idea of how this research paper even came to be.

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I'm a Medicaid researcher for a living and a lot of what I study is different pathways through which people can become eligible for Medicaid.

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So income and eligibility, asset limits, things like that.

4:42

And once people get Medicaid, there's a whole other set of policies that we don't discuss, things like the personal needs allowance that vary by state that really impact how nursing home resident's fare.

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And why don't we discuss these?

4:57

And even in the academic literature, you don't see something like the personal needs allowance really discussed for some reason.

5:03

And I found this quite unnerving because when we talk about Medicaid as a program, this is a big part of it, right?

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So there are over 1,000,000 nursing home residents across the country.

5:16

And the high cost of long-term care really puts a financial pressure on them and their loved ones.

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And so because of this, Medicaid serves as a primary payer for nursing home care.

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About 2/3 of these residents tend to be covered by Medicaid for nursing home, and they relinquish their income to Medicaid in exchange for this care, save a small monthly stipend known as the personal needs allowance.

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That income includes things like Social Security benefits and pension payments.

5:46

Now, the small amount that residents are allowed to keep goes to things like clothing, shoes, cell phone bills, haircuts, small comforts like preferred foods and snacks.

5:59

I don't know about you all, but every time I go to the grocery store out to purchase anything, I'm floored by how expensive things are today.

6:08

Even if we consider the current \$72.80 value of the Massachusetts Personal Needs Allowance, that's equal to about \$2.40 some cents a day.

6:15

That's really not a lot!

6:17

You know, a cell phone bill, it's probably going to take up most of that just on its own, perhaps.

6:22

And so how do we really go about thinking about what this is meant to do?

6:28

And some people might say, well, Medicaid provides a lot of things residents might need.

6:33

Well, it provides the basics, a toothpaste, toothbrush, soap, etcetera, but that's about it.

6:39

And there's also no quality guarantee.

6:42

So for example, I've had a nursing home resident tell me they provide tissues, but the tissues they provide hurt my nose.

6:48

So I use my personal needs allowance to purchase tissues that don't hurt my skin, right.

6:53

And so these are the types of conversations that are being had about the trade-offs when it comes to the personal needs allowance.

7:01

Now, something that's really frustrating is that the personal needs allowance varies wildly by state.

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I mentioned that Alabama has the lowest at \$30.

7:11

That's the federal floor.

7:13

That minimum was set in 1987, almost 4 decades ago, and it has not been raised since then.

7:23

Now, there are other states like Alaska that has a personal needs allowance of \$200 a month.

7:28

And so there's wide variation across states as to what this amount can look like.

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I think one of the things that is perhaps most frustrating is because the personal needs allowance wasn't indexed to inflation, states are left to do this on an ad hoc basis.

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And so one of the things we worry about as we move forward is it's great that, you know, Massachusetts is a considering this now.

7:51

But also as we move forward, how do we consider a way for a federal floor to get raised and indexed to inflation as well?

7:59

So nursing home residents aren't left to, you know, rely on their states to do this every couple of years.

8:04

For example, one of the great things about the bills being introduced right now is they're sort of already taking that cost-of-living adjustment into account.

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And that's something that's really wonderful to see.

8:16

So, you know, there's also a history of nursing homes being cited for withholding the personal needs allowance from residents, for example.

8:24

So there's been states that have, for example, raised the personal needs allowance and yet nursing home residents haven't received that.

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These types of things are problematic when this is already such little money.

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This is a way for residents to connect with their loved ones, purchase personal essentials.

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It's also more than likely going to be cost effective for the program itself.

8:47

So one of the really frustrating things when we wrote this piece, we had a reviewer sort of come back and suggest, well, if you raise the personal needs allowance, you know, maybe you could recover the amount that you raised it by through the estate process.

9:01

And we were like, we don't understand this comment.

9:07

And so we had to go through and really explain to the reviewer that this is the residents' own income.

9:13

They're retaining.

9:14

This is not taxpayer dollars you're giving to them.

9:17

This is not a stipend.

9:18

I think the term allowance is almost a misnomer in some ways.

9:22

It gets misinterpreted.

9:23

I wish it was actually just termed like something else so that folks could understand that this is their own income.

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They're simply being allowed to keep more of it, so that they can live a better, healthier life.

9:37

And I'll sort of lastly end on the fact that, you know, it's just when it comes to aging issues, unfortunately, one of the really sad things is I've spoken about this issue to so many people and they've asked what's a personal needs allowance?

9:53

I've never heard of it.

9:55

And so I worry that until someone either has a loved one in a nursing home or has to consider these issues themselves, they don't hear about it.

10:03

And so I'm really thankful there are advocacy groups like Dignity Allowance that are really thoughtful about this and advocating for these issues.

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But this is something that's so important.

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Just because someone's in a nursing home doesn't mean that they should be forgotten and that their needs don't matter.

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And so I just, I really, I want to encourage you all to consider these proposals.

10:25

Please ask any questions.

10:27

But, you know, inadequate personal needs allowance where someone you know, can't afford a cell phone to contact their family, can't afford snacks or something else that it, it comprises their human rights and their basic needs.

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And it forces them to make these tough trade-offs that we should just never expect from someone when they're already in a nursing home and having to deal with that aspect of isolation and loneliness potentially.

10:52

And so I'll end on that note and I'm happy to take any questions.

11:02

Well, thank you very much.

11:03

I wanted to put that introduction.

11:06



Paul Lanzikos: I do have one question to lead off and then anybody who is either online or in the room, we welcome your questions.

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You know, we're aware that there are several other states who through their legislators are considering increases, at least New York and Iowa.

11:22

Are you aware of other states that you know, have this the consideration of this session?

11:28

No, but I do know Tennessee just increased theirs, I believe from 50 to \$70.00.

11:32

And so what's interesting is I had a nursing home administrator in Tennessee actually for the like documentation they had received because nursing home residents weren't receiving the increase to say, you know, we've increased it here.

11:45

And yet for some reason most nursing home residents haven't been receiving that difference.

11:50

So there may be other states that are trying to increase the personal needs allowance than the ones you mentioned.

11:56

I don't know about them necessarily, but I do know there are ones that have also just increased it that are still trying to ensure that their residents are receiving the increased amount.

12:05

New Jersey too, and, and we're hearing in New Jersey and we know that that's something that you and the Professor Shafer have noted in your work is that even though there are states that might have allowances right now lower than Massachusetts, Massachusetts does have one of the highest costs of living amounts in the entire country.

12:29

So when you relate the, the allowance to cost of living that we're actually rank quite low.

12:36

Yes.

12:36

So I mean, you are among the top five states for cost of living, which I think really dampens how far that personal needs allowance is going to go for purchasing power.

12:45

And then something that just to highlight, you know, I mentioned that the federal floor minimum was set almost 40 years ago and that's \$30.00.

12:53

That \$30 is worth \$80.00 today.

12:55

So folks of Massachusetts are actually still technically receiving less than what the \$30 federal minimum was worth almost 40 years ago.

13:03

Do we have any questions either in the room here or online?

13:07

And if you have a question online, I can't see you raise the hand.

13:10

So just speak up.

13:15

OK, well, we see none, but we, we look forward to continuing to working with you and Professor Schafer, Monica and I know that you've already drafted an op-ed that we will be circulating to various media outlets here in Massachusetts.

13:33

And as we go forward, especially as we have legislative hearings on this, and we just heard today that the, the we have 3 different bills that have been filed.

13:46

Two of them will be heard before healthcare finance and 1 will be heard before the newly named age committee.

13:54

So we will let everybody online as well as you and Professor Schafer know when those hearings are so you can provide a testimony that time also.

14:03

Perfect.

14:04

And I'm sorry, I just want to highlight one last thing.

14:06

There's a comment in the chat that's an observation about how someone's aunt was recently in a nursing home and that allowance allowed her aunt to get her hair done, see a podiatrist, etcetera, things that were important for her mental health.

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And so that's what I mean by being cost effective for the program, right?

14:24

Being able to have a higher allowance to use things that improve physical and mental well-being are likely going to be cost savings for the program.

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Now, that's sadly one of those things that's a bit hard to research in some ways.

14:35

You know, I'm hopeful we'll be able to do that in the long run, but you know, I think that's a really important point and I'm so glad she showed it in the chat.

14:44

But I just want to highlight that raising the personal needs allowance by a small amount could have a really big impact on how someone is doing both physically and mentally.

14:52

And that actually in the long run is important for the Medicaid program.

14:56

Paul Lanzikos - And could you repeat what that that daily amount is to get \$2.00 and \$2.42 a day is what it works out to in Massachusetts.

15:05

If I'm how many went out today and bought a cup of Dunkin' Donuts coffee for \$2.42?

15:12

I don't think you can do that.

15:14

You definitely can't buy it from Starbucks.

15:16

And actually I'd like to mention too, as you talked about a comment in the chat, we have produced a one-page fact sheet that we both have handed out here physically, but also, we circulated online and we're going to be posting it on our website.

15:32

And we have set up a Google form where people can share their own stories, their own

perspectives about the personal needs allowance, both whether they're a community resident and resident of a nursing home, a family member or staff member.

15:48

So we really encourage folks to do that because we like to compile as many live experiences as possible.

15:55

So when we do go before the legislative committees, we have that testimony to provide and we'll be also posting this on our website.

16:03

So there are copies of Professor Aswani's article on the tables if you haven't picked up the material, there is a copy for those of you here, we have high copies of their article as well posted on the Dignity Alliance Massachusetts website.

16:20

We're actually going to be setting up a a dedicated page just to collect all the information about personal needs allowance.

16:27

It is our number one priority.

16:30

OK, with that being said, we're going to move on to another out-of-state presentation.

16:36

The Kathy Gallin, who is the vice president of legislative affairs and health policy of Signature Healthcare, which operates nursing homes primarily in the southeastern part of the state, has pretty much single-handedly led the effort where she's now getting increases in five states over the last several years.

16:56

She could not participate live, but she was generous enough to videotape her comments.

17:03

I'm now going to be asking to be played.

17:06

Go ahead, Ben.

17:27

Kathy Gallin: Thank you for the opportunity to be here with you today via video as unfortunately I will be in Indiana during this meeting, hopefully getting our legislature in Indiana to pass the increase in the personal needs allowance there as well.

17:43

My name is Kathy Gallin, and I'm Vice President of Legislative Affairs and Health Policy for Signature Healthcare out of Louisville, KY.

17:51

I'd like to share with you today some of my journey to be a real difference maker in the lives of our elders.

17:59

My journey began in 2012 when we were holding a resident town hall meeting in one of our Kentucky facilities and a resident came up to me, hugged me after the meeting and said, Miss Kathy, can you help me get some more money and funding in my personal needs allowance account?

18:18

Being naive to what the PNA was, I inquired as to what it meant for our residents and realized that it does make a difference in the lives of those that we care for.

18:32

So I put it in my memory bank and actually being naive, I left it alone for a while and then it surfaced again in 2014.

18:44

Signature operated, at that time, in 10 states.

18:49

Right now, currently we are in five states, but we've been successful in raising the personal needs allowance in five states across this country.

18:59

In 2014, we had a legislative visit to one of our facilities in Florida and the President of the Senate was there meeting with our Resident Council President.

19:11

She said to him, Mr.

19:12

President, I don't have enough money in my account at the end of the month to even buy birthday cards for my grandchildren.

19:20

He heard that message loudly and clearly, and took it back to the Florida State Legislature and they passed an increase in the personal needs allowance from \$35.00 a month to \$105.00 a month for our residents.

19:36  
Huge.

19:37  
It was wonderful.

19:39  
Subsequently, Florida then increased it to 130 and today it's at \$165 a month for nursing home residents.

19:48  
And if you think about this, back in 1965 when President Lyndon Johnson instituted Medicare and Medicaid, they put a stipend in that that legislation that passed for a personal needs allowance amount of \$30.00 a month.

20:06  
That was 1965.

20:09  
We're now in 2024.

20:11  
Ladies and gentlemen, I tell you that without this little stipend for our residents, the quality of life for them would be very different than what it is.

20:23  
So after we did this in Florida, I thought this might be something that we can do in all of our states of operation.

20:34  
So we took it to Georgia.

20:36  
We met with bipartisan legislators, talked about the need to increase in Georgia and subsequently they raised the personal needs allowance from \$40 to \$60.00 a month and ultimately to \$70.00 a month where it is right now.

20:54  
I then decided, OK, if we did this in two states, we can do it and more.

21:00  
We took the initiative to Kentucky and I met with many of our legislative leaders in the state and guess what happened?

21:10  
COVID.

21:12  
Wow, COVID hit.

21:14  
I spoke with our legislators and they said, Kathy, we can't do this now.

21:17  
We don't know how this is going to affect us.

21:21  
Fast forward to 2024 when I resurrected the personal needs allowance, grassroots advocacy for our residents in Kentucky.

21:31  
We were successful.

21:32  
It passed in the state.

21:34  
We got a \$20.00 a month increase for our residents.

21:38  
At the same time, I was on the Tennessee Healthcare Association board, took it to Tennessee, and they also increased the personal needs allowance by \$20.00 a month.

21:49  
Right now, as I said, I'm in Indiana working to increase the personal needs allowance in Indiana as well.

21:56  
So I urge you all in Massachusetts to please look at this through a different lens.

22:03  
This is so critical to the needs of our residents.

22:07  
It allows them to do some of the things that they wouldn't be able to do, to purchase some of the goods and things that they desire.

22:15

A haircut, a special shampoo, a little birthday gift for a loved one.

22:21

All the things that we don't provide because, while we are prescribed by the government to provide room and board and care, there are certain things that our residents do not have.

22:34

Cell phones, things like that.

22:37

A lady desires to get her hair done in the in the beauty salon.

22:41

Just the little things that enrich the lives and the quality of life for our elders.

22:47

So I urge you to please make a difference in Massachusetts and raise your personal needs allowance.

22:56

It's the right thing to do.

22:59

Thank you for your time today.

23:01

God bless.

23:01

Paul Lanzikos: It's a very powerful statement.

23:17

I think you heard her say that Florida now has their allowance at \$170.

23:25

How many of us in this room are proud to say that Florida has an allowance more than twice what Massachusetts has?

23:32

Almost \$90.00 more.

23:34

Raise your hand if you're proud of that.



23:36  
I'm not.

23:38  
I'm ashamed, but we can do better, right?

23:40  
Right.

23:43  
OK.

23:44  
Now we're back to live action right here in the city of Boston.

23:48  
We have a terrific rest home where a lot of folks take residence.

23:56  
It's called the Hale House.

23:57  
It's been around for decades and decades.

23:59  
I'll get back.

24:00  
I'll ask either Tracy H, who's the executive director, or Jill, who's the administrator.

24:06  
I'm not sure who's going to be speaking.

24:08  
Correct.

24:09  
You know how long a little history about Hale House to begin with.

24:13  
And then they'll be talking about the personal needs allowance from their perspective as management and of a resident.

24:22

And then we'll be hearing from Elizabeth Lippett, who is the president of the Residents' association.

24:31

And I, I know there's a number of residents gathered in the common room there and I know that they, they're not.

24:39

Shrinking violets, I'm sure they'll be speaking up and sharing their experience too.

24:43

So we'll now turn it over live from Hale House.

25:01

You need to turn your violent up in Hale House.

25:03

Can you hear us?

25:07

Tracey: So, while Jill's figuring this out because we are trying so hard, Paul to make sure that the residents are all is represented down there.

25:16

My name's Tracy Crevadi.

25:17

I'm the executive director at Hale House.

25:19

I have been the executive director going on 16 years.

25:23

And this is a fight to increase the Personal Needs Allowance, that I've been trying to fight for on behalf of my residents for almost as long as I've been here for the 16 years it's been \$72.80.

25:35

And I really think hearing it from the residents is going be probably the most powerful.

25:40

I had asked our politicians to hop on this call today too.

25:46

And I saw our legislator has hopped on the call because it's something that they hear every time they come to Hale House.

25:52

They hear my residents talk about this for the reasons that has already been talked about.

25:58

Haircuts, special shampoos, special anything, co-pays are not covered as much as they once were.

26:06

You name it.

26:06

I really want them to be the voice.

26:08

It's really something that they're living it every day.

26:10

And I just wanted to share who I was and let's see if we have a little bit more volume down there still.

26:16

Paul Lanzikos: OK, Tracy, before we turn it over to Jill, can you just give us a, just a brief introduction to Hill House itself because a lot of folks aren't familiar with it.

26:25

How long has it been existent?

26:27

Where you are located, how many residents?

26:30

I would love to.

26:31

So we are a Level 4 rest home located in the Back Bay.

26:35

So as you spoke to cost of living here is very expensive.

26:39

We have been here for over 52 years.

26:43

We house 56 residents and they are almost all of them are on a subsidy which would then turn over their finances to live here.

26:55

The state pays the remainder amount and they live on a fixed income of \$72.80 a month which if the winters are hard, we all know how much a winter jacket could cost.

27:06

That alone could take a year of savings.

27:09

I feel like to get some good boots and a hat and gloves and all that stuff.

27:15

And could you just give a free profile of a typical resident is unlike nursing home residents, rest home residents are often out and about in the community, correct?

27:24

Certainly.

27:24

So at Hale House, every rest home is different.

27:27

But at Hale House you have to be independent and ambulatory.

27:30

That is a typical rest home.

27:32

And so our residents can come and go all day long and they in fact do.

27:38

And so they are going up to CVS and maybe to a coffee shop.

27:44

But yes, they are independent and ambulatory.

27:47

And although we do provide 3 meals a day and a snack bag to go in the evening, we are still

as management, we still have a budget and we're still fighting for our own daily rate increase, which that's a whole other conversation for a whole other day.

28:03

But that does allow us to pay for certain things above and beyond, whether it be in the activities department or whatnot.

28:13

But yes, that again, that's it.

28:16

That's a whole other another conversation, I would say.

28:20

Paul Lanzikos: Well, we'll work with you on setting up another briefing for that.

28:24

So it looks like Jill and the gang are ready in the common room, right?

28:30

Yes, OK, we still don't have your voice, Jill.

28:48

Yes, yeah, perfect.

28:50

We had a Bluetooth speaker on to expand the volume, but I'll just talk into the iPad.

28:58

So I guess to follow up with what Tracy said and Monica and all the presentations that have been there so far, I mean, everything, everyone has had amazing points.

29:09

And you can't, I think say it too many times as to how important this money is for the individuals living here.

29:17

I've been at Hale House for 15 years and it's been 17 years based on the information that we have since this has been raised.

29:27

And even prior to that, it was I think 60 to 80.

29:30

So they, it was a small adjustment prior to my coming on at Hale House.

29:34

And it's been brought up over the years multiple times, but always sort of hits a wall and nothing happens.

29:40

So I really want to advocate and thank you for the work that you're doing to really promote this and bring it more into the public eye and help everyone to understand how important it is.

29:53

I mean, 17 years is a long time as everyone has talked about the cost of living going up.

29:59

Can you imagine being at your employer, your job, whatever might be, and working off the same salary that you were 17 years ago as everything has increased to live.

30:10

And although a lot of things are provided to the residents, everyone has their personal preferences and everyone has things that they like to do on their own independently aside from where they're living or what's being provided to them.

30:23

And our residents use these funds to do those things, whether it be using the MBTA ride account to fund put funds on there so they can go visit their children or go to a museum or take a trip to the movies or go to the coffee shop and meet their friend for, for lunch or cup of coffee or whatever it might be.

30:44

All of those things end up getting prioritized and some things aren't able to be done.

30:52

We do really do our best to try to ensure that our residents are never without something that they need so that they can use these funds for things that they want.

31:05

And I think toiletries, transportation, clothing, so many things can fall into that category of what is important to you as a person and what does that mean to your life in order to be able to go out to the store and buy that for yourself and be able to do it without worrying about what does that mean?

31:24

I can't have this month.

31:26

So like Tracy said, I think that it it'll be more to hear it from them.

31:31

So I will introduce our resident council President Elizabeth, and have her come and speak, and then we'll open it up to any other residents as well that may want to make a comment.

31:43

But we'll absolutely also utilize that QR code that you provided so that we can try to get as many residents as possible and families to speak to this topic because it is really important.

31:55

And Jill, just our vending machine alone.

31:57

So we can't, no one can go into your refrigerator at night like we all can at home.

32:03

They're really cornered into mealtimes and their snack bags.

32:07

But Jill, what, what was our vending machine cost when we first started?

32:11

Elizabeth, you might remember like a snack and a soda would cost what, \$1.50?

32:17

Well, it's more now.

32:18

So when we, the vending machine we were initially contracted with, I think the sodas were maybe \$0.75 for a can, a 12 ounce can.

32:29

And, you know, everything in the vending machine I think was under a dollar.

32:33

But at this point, drinks are upwards of \$2.00, snacks are upwards of \$2.00.

32:38

I mean, everything has gone up and every people have to raise their rates, but our residents are stuck living off of the same amount and trying to figure out what does that mean for me, which is hard.

32:50

Just a little example.

32:52

Hi, Elizabeth.

32:53

Hi, I want to tell you a story.

32:56

This is not my real hair color.

32:59

I'm actually Gray.

33:03

I have never gone all Gray at Hale House because in my PNA I budget every month to have a box of something that's on sale at the CVS, and I also take care to have a good haircut once a year from a good salon outside of Hale House.

33:21

We have a wonderful hairdresser here named Mitzi, but I go in for a master cutter and then that has to last me the whole year.

33:31

And then I have to tip my friend Mitzi \$5 for each wonderful haircut we get here.

33:37

So that goes into my plan.

33:39

So it's a hair-raising problem for all of us.

33:42

It's PNA.

33:46

I want to tell you that as president of the Resident Council for about 3 years, elected, I am not king.

33:55

I find myself thinking about PNA because I love everybody in this whole house.

34:01

And those that come to the meetings represent the others that don't come to the meetings.

34:06



And one of the things that we discuss at times are things like having ice cream and being able not only to have it in the house, but to go out to maybe get to see a Broadway show that's come here.

34:21

And then we arrange it with our special help in the house.

34:24

But we also might want to do something else, like go to the Art Museum.

34:29

And that costs money.

34:31

So does the T to visit my cousin in Arlington.

34:35

And the ride cost money.

34:37

Even the ride is not free.

34:39

So we have to think carefully about where our \$70.00 goes.

34:44

I don't like the fact that PNA choices are all about choices and feeling poor at times and vulnerable because our purchasing power is not enough per month to give us a feeling of security because the money ends before the month ends.

35:05

My PNA is already thought out and gone.

35:10

Some of us like to watch TV in our rooms and we get the streaming television.

35:15

First we have to get Xfinity Internet at a low cost.

35:19

Guess what the low cost is \$30.00 a month.

35:24

There goes half of your PNA almost.

35:27

And the rest of us think about those boxes of hair color or maybe saving up for a pair of shoes.

35:34

It took me 3 months to get the shoes I'm wearing now because my feet as an older person need a different kind of shoe than what you can just buy at TJ Maxx.

35:45

So all these little things count a lot.

35:48

And trying to be creative month to month, I make a wish list for the year of what I need.

35:55

I got a new coat last year.

35:57

I got a new hat and a new muffler.

36:00

But that took many, many months of putting away \$20 and toothpaste.

36:06

It may be supplied in places, but I have a special need with my teeth, which are sensitive.

36:13

So I have to look for sales at CVS for Sensodyne.

36:17

And guess what else?

36:19

They don't always have things I want to read here.

36:23

And so I joined an online a dollar a week, \$4.00 a month, The New Yorker for \$4.00 a month.

36:32

But that's part of my PNA.

36:35

Sometimes you find yourself sad at the end of the month thinking, well maybe this next month I can get something.

36:43

And the whole thing is about self-esteem.

36:46

I want that box of hair color to make me look pretty and I don't want to feel old.

36:52

Old doesn't connote wisdom and being a good Crone.

36:57

Old can mean vulnerable and helpless, and not having money makes you feel vulnerable and helpless, so this PNA means a lot to all of us.

37:08

We were trying to fundraise on the council and each of our calendars for sale were \$15.

37:16

And I'm proud to say I finally have enough PNA to buy myself the calendar that I've been selling for fundraising.

37:24

So this month, I will give my friend Tracy \$15.00 for myself, \$15 from another person who saved up for PNA so that we could fundraise for the resident council.

37:37

I'm going to end with something important in my life.

37:40

Hale House was the name Edward Everett Hale, the minister, Reverend Edward Everett Hale of Boston.

37:47

He had a saying, look up, not down, look out, not in and lend a hand.

37:56

You all will be lending us a hand if you think out the money for the PNA.

38:02

Thank you very much.

38:04

Paul Lanzikos: But Elizabeth, that was both very informative.

38:07

Don't go, don't go.

38:09

Yeah, Elizabeth, that was, well, very informative and very inspirational.

38:13

Can I just ask you one personal question?

38:16

Of course, during your life before you moved into Hale House as a resident and perhaps you were raising a family not did you have the same experience month to month in terms of spending \$72.80 making it?

38:33

What was your life like before you moved in?

38:36

Well, I am a minister and my training was at the church that Edward Everett Hale was minister of.

38:44

In fact, my great grandfather knew Edward Everett Hale.

38:48

So for 40 years I've been a minister and I've lived like a church mouse.

38:53

I've taken churches because I love them and some of them paid me only \$13,000 a year and no pension.

39:00

So I have lived from hand to mouth and I've taught preschool where the money is \$18.00 an hour for a 40-hour week and by the end of the month you've paid your rent and maybe you can have a pizza.

39:15

So I have been careful with my money all my life, but I don't have any savings.

39:20

I've worked hard to contribute to society as a minister and a teacher.

39:25

I've given back in charitable institutions and I have nothing to show for it financially.

39:31

So you're saying now, now that you're a resident at Hale House and you find the necessity of relying on, on public funding to support you there?

39:41

You're there not because you had hundreds of thousands of dollars of annual income that you went on speers.

39:47

Is that correct?

39:49

Well, I never had a hundred of thousands of dollars, but I did have in choosing Hale House, I chose it.

39:56

There were other places I could go to, but my great grandfather knew Edward Everett Hale, and there was a personal connection to this place.

40:06

I taught as a student minister down the street.

40:09

And at age 21, I came here to have Sherry hour with the elders.

40:14

So I've known this place for almost half my life, and it's a special place for me.

40:21

I hope that answers your question.

40:22

I'm not.

40:24

Yeah.

40:24

Very well.

40:25

Very well.

40:25

So there are other residents who would like to share their stories.

40:28

Yes.

40:28

Peter Banos.

40:29

Peter Banos has a special sharing.

40:33

Peter: Do I?

40:33

Peter: Hi Paul.

40:34

As the residents change over there, as we get the next resident up there, I just want to highlight to you all that from an administration perspective, and we hear a lot about the housing crisis and homelessness in Boston, predominantly when we sell ourselves as a viable great option to help.

40:57

Many folks don't want to come to long term care because the alternative is I'm going to get \$72.80 a month.

41:07

So you're telling me I can have a house with three meals a day but I have to turn over my \$1000 that I get in funding every month?

41:16

I'm using a blanket amount.

41:19

They would rather be homeless with their \$1000 than to have a home because \$72.80 sounds so low to them.

41:27

That year over year we lose admissions.

41:31

It is the city's problem.

41:33

It is not our problem because we will usually become full house.

41:37

But it is.

41:38

It is the city's problem because people don't want to come live because 7280 dollars is so unattainable to them.

41:46

In their mind, they can't rationalize living on that amount and nor should they have to.

41:53

Peter's been here for a while now.

41:54

I want to introduce Peter Banos to the team to the give you the floor.

41:59

Hello Peter.

42:00

Before you tell us about your personal needs allowance experience, just give us a tell us who you are.

42:07

Tell us a little bit about yourself.

42:09

OK.

42:09

First, can you explain to me what I'm supposed to talk into so they'll hear me?

42:14

You're.

42:14

You're doing great.

42:15

Yeah.

42:16  
Doing perfect.

42:17  
My voice carries.

42:21  
I'm Peter Bonos.

42:22  
I'm 73 years old.

42:24  
Everyone tells me I don't look it.

42:26  
I've surrounded myself with good friends who compliment me and my youthful appearance, so I know how to look after my emotional needs.

42:35  
I have an ego, you know, as for Hale House, as I said, I've never been wealthy.

42:42  
I've had the kind of life that where I've been free.

42:46  
Luckily starting with small.

42:50  
My father was a Greek immigrant, where he came from you save.

42:57  
So by the by the time my father passed away about 50 odd years ago, he had a small nest egg.

43:04  
Not a lot of money, but whatever he had, he put into.

43:07  
He saved for me, his only kid.

43:10  
So I've always had something so that I didn't have to go out and earn a lot of money.



43:17

I've had relatively low-paying jobs as an assistant and I could follow my own interests.

43:24

For instance, I play with dead languages.

43:27

I hardly confess, don't like to confess this in public, but it's some weird thing about me.

43:31

Greek, Latin, Sanskrit.

43:33

So for a while I was working for Columbia University Library as an assistant specializing in books from South and Southeast Asia.

43:42

Because I could pick up a book and identify it.

43:47

I was the squiggly alphabet expert.

43:50

Then for a while I was working for my Unitarian Universalist church down the street, which Elizabeth also is a member of and was an intern at a long time ago before beginning her own ministerial career.

44:05

So you consider can consider me also a kind of disciple of Edward Everett Hale, whom this house is named after.

44:13

In fact, only this morning I was helping a friend sort through some of the books in the church library.

44:21

And we have a whole shelf of Edward Everett Hale.

44:25

So yeah, that's me.

44:26

I've, I've never had a lavish lifestyle, but I've always been able to support myself more or less.

44:35

So I came to Hale.

44:40

I always resisted it because a friend of mine who moved in here about 10 years before I 20 years before I did was never happy with the food.

44:51

But even she admits that it's better now and I never felt I was old and decrepit enough to anyone here is really decrepit.

45:00

We're all a very as has been said, we're ambulatory.

45:04

We get around town.

45:07

It was COVID that made the difference.

45:09

I had this, they were paying me for some services at the church and they couldn't afford that anymore so they had to retire me.

45:18

And with COVID, I couldn't graze for food around town.

45:23

I love food.

45:24

I like to graze.

45:25

I like to go into different try out restaurants and types of cuisine and food trucks.

45:32

I can eat, I can live off.

45:34

I used to be able to live off like food truck offerings and it wasn't safe to do that anymore.

45:42

So I finally gave in to my ministers and ministers long time insistence that I belonged in the Hale house.

45:51

So here I am.

45:53

Yeah.

45:53

Peter, we have so many people in this room.

45:57

Could we maybe I really want to give.

45:59

I'm looking at our room and I, I see so many faces and I just, if we could just maybe give them a couple sentences about how PNA impacts your housing now that you're here.

46:12

We have good stories here.

46:14

You too.

46:14

The housing is free, housekeeping is free, 3 meals a day are free.

46:21

Or they're paid for by the money that we're all paying in to be here in the 1st place, which is mostly at this point through the state.

46:30

So it's the extras, a little extras as Tracy has explained, we are most of, we have to be ambulatory, most of us.

46:41

What do you buy, get around.

46:43

OK, so I've been adding things up, little snack foods, as has been mentioned, I'm hooked on cookies and coffee and stuff that isn't covered.

46:55

So yeah, maybe \$30.00 a month goes into cookies and tea and little marmalade to bring in and have with the breakfast they serve me here.

47:07

Transportation.

47:08

This is the one thing, yeah, to get around to.

47:11

I discovered that I say in the last two months to 10 weeks or so, I've spent \$27.00 on T fare.

47:24

That's a, you know, that's almost \$10 a week probably just getting around.

47:31

No, not \$10 a month, \$10.

47:35

OK.

47:35

I take one round trip on the T every week plus another one every month just to participate in the voluntary activity out in Cambridge that I go to.

47:47

And just to be clear, that's what the senior discount, correct?

47:50

I could have seen your discount exactly.

47:53

I get a lot of help, you know, I'm, I'm not my, my life isn't miserable.

47:58

Transportation, food.

48:03

Elizabeth mentioned subscription services.

48:06

I have \$110.00 a month classical music streaming service and I'm still on an introductory offer that gives me a digital subscription to the New York Times for only \$4.00 a month.

48:20

My hometown newspaper.

48:21

I grew up in the city.

48:22

I never really grew up.

48:24

Peter, I'm going to make the thing is clothing.

48:27

The big thing is clothing.

48:29

I'm lucky that way.

48:31

Maybe it's a guy thing, but I've always hated shopping for clothing, so I put it off as long as I can anyway.

48:37

But really, I need lots.

48:40

I, I, I can think of several hundreds of thousands, several hundreds of dollars a year that I could wisely spend just looking presentable when I go around town.

48:51

Shoes, footwear.

48:53

It's expensive.

48:55

Thank you.

48:56

Thank you, Peter.

48:57

That's what.

48:58  
Yeah.

48:58  
If you give me the raise, most of it'll go into clothing.

49:00  
There you go.

49:01  
Thank you, Peter.

49:02  
Thank you, Jill.

49:04  
As you get our next person, I'm going to talk so you can get the next person out there.

49:09  
Some of these things, you hear them talking about.

49:11  
What we might not think as Chang is that it required or, you know, necessary.

49:19  
But it's to age with dignity, right?

49:21  
It's having choices, having options.

49:24  
And they don't always have choices or options.

49:27  
And I think that's really important.

49:29  
And Peter did bring up rides.

49:31  
One of the things I want to highlight is maybe the city tries to do great things.

49:35

You, Paul, you just mentioned, you know, discounts for senior rides, the amount and Jill was actually pulled from this meeting because she was walking on the intercom.

49:46

A resident is stranded at an appointment.

49:48

I cannot begin to tell you the number of times that a transportation service that we utilize through their insurance doesn't come through and therefore they need to seek out another means to get home upwards.

50:01

Sometimes, you know, \$15.00 for like an Uber or a Lyft unexpectedly because the services that were, you know, set up did not come through.

50:13

So we have Kathy and she has been a resident here for a while and I would love to hear and have her share with you folks her story.

50:23

Hello, Kathy.

50:23

Hello.

50:24

Hello.

50:25

I just wanted to say that my daughter, I am a grand grandmother and I have a daughter here nearby in Melrose, which is a suburb of Massachusetts and she has three sons.

50:47

And my daughter's birthday is March 14th this Friday and I cannot afford to get my daughter a birthday present.

50:56

I feel bad about I, I feel it makes me feel very bad and insecure and just very self-loathing and I she would not care but I do I.

51:20

I have 3 grandsons that I have to keep up with their birthdays and toys are very expensive so I always buy them art supplies which are I don't know what happens to them but I don't see them use them that much.

51:41

But our supplies are the lowest costing gifts I can think of and hopefully someday they'll show some interest in art.

51:53

They are into sports.

51:55

And so my three grandsons, that's what I care about, my family.

52:01

I have a mother that lives here with me at Hale House.

52:06

She's sitting right behind me and she is 90.

52:10

She is 92.

52:13

And I would love to be able to buy her gifts.

52:17

And it's just demoralizing to not be able to in the summertime when we go walking down the streets, we're in a wonderful neighborhood to walk.

52:37

But they sell these beautiful mangoes and a cup.

52:43

And I just like, like you would see in Mexico and I, they're expensive.

52:51

They're like \$8 a cup, but I always want to buy one, but I can't because I'm always low on cash or I think I better not spend it.

53:02

And then of course, there's ice cream and hot chocolate.

53:07

They, we, we have one of the most famous chocolate places right down the street from us and we pass it every time we go to CVS.

53:22



So CVS is kind of the popular place to go, but they're expensive and usually very low stocked on things.

53:30

But I just want to say that just spending it on people I love and buying clothes for myself.

53:40

I love clothes and, and I, I, that's all I wanted to say is that it would make me feel a lot better about myself if I had a little more money, a lot more money.

53:59

Well, we, we hope when this legislation passes and the allowance goes up, you'll have that try to and I will share.

54:08

Yeah, and I will share.

54:09

Kathy is very involved in her three grandchildren, one who's an infant just born and she is caring for those grandchildren as a caretaker, which means she is paying for transportation to get to Melrose and back just so that she can be a grandmother and to babysit those two other children so that her daughter and son-in-law can go to the hospital overnight to have this child.

54:36

And one something that was really profound is has anyone watching or listening today has had those words ever come out of your mouth, \$8?

54:47

It's just so expensive to hear Kathy say that she wanted something.

54:51

But \$8 was so expensive.

54:54

If you have paused and if you have said that sentence that you know that that was profound, Kathy, to hear you say that today.

55:02

And I've known you for many, many years, yes.

55:07

And while we get and while we get the next speaker, one of the other things that Kathy talks about and all my residents do the calls.

55:13

Thank you very much.

55:15

Kathy, as you're leaving when what do your grandsons call you?

55:18

Just they call me.

55:20

I'm from Mississippi originally.

55:24

I've lived in many places, but they call me Sippy Granny from Mississippi, so they shortened it to Sippy.

55:34

There you go, SIPPI.

55:37

Yeah, I'm very good.

55:38

I'm Sippy and my mother is Grandma.

55:43

And as the next resident comes up, Paul, you know the again, it could be a whole other meeting on this.

55:50

But the Back Bay is so beautiful, but our bricks are not great and our sidewalks are not safe.

55:55

And the importance of shoes and having good shoes because they do, they walk.

56:01

My residents go out and they walk all day on the sidewalks.

56:05

And so shoes are so important.

56:09

And now we have and Tracy, as you're talking about, you know, the safety in terms of going

on the sidewalks and crosswalks, you should be aware that one of AARP's legislative priorities this year is improving the safety on sidewalks and crosswalks.

56:25

So you should connect with them.

56:29

Certainly I would love that.

56:30

And now we have Chang is a resident here at Hale House. Chang just a couple words, just we know we're getting close on time.

56:38

So a couple words from you.

56:40

Well, I just want to piggyback and what the head of the council here ladies had stated about allowances.

56:51

My thing is that I needed for things such as distilled water for my machine for sleep machine.

56:58

I also need body wash, also need samples and as well as food.

57:05

I'm a vegetarian, so I'm purchasing food for my diet.

57:11

And also, I like to also say that this amount it seemed evident prayer that the legislators would pass the law instead of having to keep coming up, pass the law for us to get more spending money.

57:29

They keep coming up and I don't know what's happening.

57:32

So I'm just saying we, we're here advocating for increase for spending for all of us.

57:40

And I include the managers here who themselves have to go using funds to spend for themselves as well that we are here as a family and we're struggling.

57:50

We really need the extra money, spending money close to maybe 100 and something.

57:56

Yes, be fine for right now, but we're dealing with inflation and this way it is, we want more money to be spent.

58:05

Bless you all and your families.

58:08

Hope you all pass the law please.

58:11

Thank you.

58:14

Then that was very powerfully said.

58:17

In fact, what we hope to do now is take your message and all the messages of not only the residents at Hill House, but residents throughout the all the facilities in Massachusetts and derive it here in the House of the State House.

58:30

So you don't have to go year after year begging.

58:33

So, so we'll have time for one more and then we'll need to wrap it up.

58:42

Hello, my name is Charlie Stevens.

58:45

I'm Charlie.

58:46

I've been living here for a little over 10 years and I tell you now that the only new clothes I've gotten have been gifts from relatives and that type of thing.

59:06

I haven't been able to buy presents for anybody or even a card.

59:13

Card now is about \$8 in the store here.

59:19

It's and I've been diabetic since I was 7, so I do need some extra things that I have to get from Amazon or whatever company will deliver to me because I have difficulty walking in the area.

59:37

But I love being here.

59:38

This is a great place to live.

59:42

They everybody is so nice and cheat this with respect, but I think when we go out to buy something, I think you can't walk into CVS.

59:53

What I buy like body lotion to put on my back and my leg and, and it's, you can spend \$20 without blinking an eye on a bottle of lotion.

1:00:11

It's, it's really unbelievable the price of things this these days.

1:00:18

I mean, I, I grew up in Boston.

1:00:20

I've lived here all my life and I'm glad to be living in Boston now, but it is, like you said, it's one of the highest cost of living in the country.

1:00:32

And with an increase in our PNA would be such a help for everyone in this room as well as the rest of the rest.

1:00:44

The rest of the state of Massachusetts.

1:00:48

And it is the rest of the state of Massachusetts that the baby boomers are getting old now.

1:00:55

So there are more of us.

1:00:58

And we do carry the vote.

1:01:00

So we can we can vote for the people who pay, who cover this and vote for this in the legislature.

1:01:08

And they seem to know that because we get visits every once in a while, legislators.

1:01:18

But I want to thank you for taking up this cause.

1:01:22

And I wish you all the luck in the world.

1:01:26

And that would be I'm wishing myself luck too with that same day.

1:01:30

Yeah.

1:01:31

Well said, Charlie.

1:01:33

Take care of yourselves and get to work.

1:01:39

Yes, Sir.

1:01:40

We got our orders.

1:01:41

Thank you.

1:01:41

I want to thank all the residents at Hill House.

1:01:44

And Tracy, if you wrap it up, I just have one question for you.

1:01:49

Yes.

1:01:50

Well, and I think I know the answer to this, but do residents ever run out of their allowance before the end of the month?

1:01:57

And if so, what happens?

1:01:59

Oh, certainly.

1:02:00

So I would say, I just wanted to say there are 17 folks that you cannot see that are in this room today, just the way our camera angle is.

1:02:08

I just wanted to let everyone there know that's how many folks that we have.

1:02:12

I think I could have counted wrong, but I'm watching my camera as on the room.

1:02:17

Yes, there are.

1:02:18

I would say probably confidently, unless they're saving, they have either one, they've run out of funds and we're not aware of it too.

1:02:28

If they need something, they come to Jill and I and they ask for an advancement.

1:02:33

If they needed something that we sometimes have advanced them money and then they've slowly pay us back depending on the ticket cost of what it is that they need.

1:02:44

And we try to identify whether or not it's a, you know, it's a want or a need and we will advance them.

1:02:50

Most of the time they'll if there's anything leftover, it's because they're saving as a, as Elizabeth spoke to.

1:02:57

But I want to just end with one thing that is very profound is that our pharmacy will send cash form.

1:03:05

So if something, if a doctor has prescribed a residence, something that they can get over the counter and there's a cash form, they actually have to weigh whether or not they want this item.

1:03:19

So they will have to determine, do I want to actually pay out of pocket from my PNA for something my doctor is saying I need, or do I want to keep the PNA for other things?

1:03:32

So I can't share with you how often residents will decline an intervention that a primary care physician has ordered because they don't want to pay and insurance isn't covering it.

1:03:47

Well, thank you.

1:03:48

Very, very, very powerful testimony on everyone's part.

1:03:52

And we'll keep you informed when the hearings are scheduled up here before both committees.

1:03:57

And you already mentioned this, but you, you get the QR codes.

1:04:01

We'd love to get the personal anecdotes, not only from the residents, but families and staff.

1:04:08

That's wonderful.

1:04:08

Thank you so much for inviting us today.

1:04:10

Thank you, Thank you.

1:04:12

And feel free to stay on for the rest of the presentation when we hear from the legislators.



1:04:18

OK, now what we're going to do is turn to actually a former legislator, former secretary of Elder Affairs and you can tell Kathy, Melrose resident Mike Festa, he'll have a couple comments.

1:04:34

And after Mike. Dick Moore, who's a former state senator here, at the State House.

1:04:41

But more importantly for us right now, chair of the Dignity Alliance Legislative Work group will come up and introduce the sponsors of the legislative sponsors of the bills.

1:04:55

Thanks, Paul.

1:04:59eWell, the first thing I want to observe is you in the rooms that might not be seen by the Hall House residents.

1:05:09

I'm looking at you and I'm thinking, I wonder how it feels to hear about this issue as someone who probably have your own grandparents, people that you know are seniors.

1:05:27

And when it comes down to the basics, we're talking about something that is so profoundly unfortunate.

1:05:36

This is about dignity, isn't it?

1:05:38

I mean, we're hearing stories.

1:05:40

We heard those good people from Hale House talk about things that are fundamentally basic in our lives and the idea that we continue to have to fight for what can only be described as crumbs in the nature of the cost associated with living.

1:06:01

I don't know you, but I'm, I don't mean to respond to you, but I'm hoping because you represent senators and reps and I want to thank you for being in this room.

1:06:10

This is a message that needs to be driven home really hard this year because as it was a mentioned before and I'm, I was the secretary of Federal affairs the last time they increased it 15 years ago.

1:06:24

OK, the idea that you have to fight this fight every year in and of itself is upsetting to me personally.

1:06:34

And I'm looking at Representative Tom Stanley.

1:06:35

I want to give Tom a shout out.

1:06:37

I want to give Pat Jalen and Senator Lovely and Senator Montigny, I think that's right.

1:06:45

Yeah.

1:06:45

And, longevity.

1:06:47

These are legislative heroes.

1:06:49

They are carrying water on this.

1:06:50

They're fighting the good fight, but they need the allies in the building.

1:06:55

You are the ones that can take that message back.

1:06:58

This is not a heavy lift in one respect.

1:07:01

But ironically, if you define heavy lift as something you have to keep doing all the time, this is a heavy lift.

1:07:07

15 years.

1:07:08

Come on.

1:07:09

Fighting in a budget process instead of making this part of the law.

1:07:14

So I just want to end by saying thank you for everyone in the room, our friends, our heroes in the Hale House.

1:07:20

Great stories, a reminder of about what dignity is all about, what family is all about, what our future is all about, and making sure that we don't have to be, I'll say it, we don't have to be embarrassed that we are telling folks to live on 72 1/2 almost.

1:07:45

You know the number we're talking about.

1:07:46

It's just beyond belief.

1:07:47

So I want to end by mentioning that the Dignity Alliance brought this together.

1:07:54

I think it's important to remember the first word, dignity.

1:07:59

This is what this whole conversation has been about.

1:08:02

So do what you can to persuade your bosses.

1:08:05

And certainly for Tom and for our other legislative heroes, we wish you the best of luck because you know what?

1:08:12

This could very well be the year.

1:08:14

It's been alluded to more than once.

1:08:16

There are big fights going on in Washington that will make this issue dwarfed, right.

1:08:24

But if we don't, in our own state where we're proud to live, if we can't do this, what's the message we're sending to the federal government?

1:08:32

So thank you for being attentive, Paul.

1:08:36

Thank you for the invitation.

1:08:37

And, Senator Dick Moore, it's a joy, a real pleasure for me to just get you up.

1:08:42

Oh, thank you, my dear friend.

1:08:44

Thank you.

1:08:49

And we, we're fortunate this this year we actually have three bills.

1:08:54

They're basically very similar.

1:08:57

They all call for the same amount of money to be raised from \$72. 80 to \$113.42.

1:09:02

And they all, all three include within it the provision for an inflation factor so that if the bill gets passed, which we hope it will, and hopefully with your help and your senators and representatives who you represent and others will actually happen.

1:09:21

And that way it'll become an automatic.

1:09:24

I.

1:09:24

I think the, the point every year, I think people assume was they get a Social Security increase.

1:09:30

And that has happened almost every year.

1:09:31

There's been a couple of years it was flat.

1:09:33

Almost every year it's been increased and they've been good years.

1:09:37

Every, every time a budget comes out, it's a tough budget year.

1:09:40

And this is certainly no exception with what's going on in Washington.

1:09:45

But there, there's, there were good years too that nothing happened as well.

1:09:49

So it's important that we really dig in and it's individually it's not a lot of money and very little money actually collectively, it's still in the proportion of a of a \$45 billion budget.

1:10:01

It's still not a lot of money overall, but I don't want to.

1:10:05

We have some of the we have 4 lead sponsors of legislation.

1:10:11

I'll start with the House first because Chairman Stanley's being patient and sitting here listening, Representative Tom Stanley from Waltham, Chair of the Joint Committee on Aging Independence.

1:10:22

If the joint rules get adopted, it might still be elder affairs if they don't get adopted.

1:10:27

But nevertheless, he is one of our champions of dignity and care as we designated this past year, but also has been a leader particularly in the aging network and the lead sponsor along with Senator Jehlen of the very important bill Chapter 197 of the Acts of 2024/.

1:10:46

The act that has made a major step forward in the reforms that are needed originally in long term care.

1:10:57

I'd like to ask Chairman Stanley and then Senator Jehlen.

1:11:00

They saw her flash on at one point there and she will be our clean up here if she's still with us.

1:11:07

So here's Tom Stanley.

1:11:15

That's a standing ovation if you can't see from home.

1:11:20

Thank you very much.

1:11:21

Thank you, Former Senator Moore and Secretary 2, two former secretaries said.

1:11:28

It's great to have your support and guidance in fighting for issues for seniors.

1:11:37

I know I've leaned on your expertise and experience and I greatly appreciate it, as the senator said, that we aren't, we really are in a difficult financial defense of what's happening in Washington.

1:11:54

It's unprecedented and but we are focused on fighting for all of you.

1:12:02

So great to see everyone there at the Hale House. Last term we were able, it took a long time, but we were able to pass the long-term care reform bill and assisted living reform bill.

1:12:17

Combined it together and it was historical first time in over 1/4 of a century.

1:12:23

A lot of great stuff in there designed to protect our residents from harm, abuse.

1:12:30

They have better quality care and, and to prevent bad actors, which there are a few from doing business in our state and taking care of our loved ones.

1:12:48

So I don't want to talk long because I know we were talking a lot about probably serious issues here, but I am committed 100% in passing this PNA bill.

1:13:03

And, you know, I've been around long enough to know that I would see a bill proposed over and over and over, often times my bills and not get passed.

1:13:15

And I wondered like, well, I don't think it's ever going to get passed.

1:13:18

And then all of sudden things change.

1:13:21

And you know, our job is to continue to push. Speak with your legislators, the legislators and staff that are on line right now.

1:13:29

We need your support.

1:13:31

This is really a no brainer to get behind.

1:13:34

We need your support in getting legislators to Co-sponsor these three bills.

1:13:40

We greatly appreciate it and we look forward to success at this session.

1:13:44

Thank you.

1:13:45

Thanks very much, Mr.

1:13:51

Chairman.

1:13:52

And I would ask if there are legislators online or staff of legislators online, perhaps you could put in the chat to identify yourself so we can understand that.

1:14:04

And also while a number of people have signed on to the different bills, there's still time.

1:14:10

It'll be actually be some weeks, but the bills are being referred to committees today.

1:14:17

House document 830.

1:14:19

We'll have a number for our right permanent number, but that would that's going to health care financing as is the Senate 2385 is going to health care financing and House Senate four O 1.

1:14:32

Senator Jehlen and Senator Montigny of the lead sponsors.

1:14:36

It's actually going to aging and independence.

1:14:40

So we'll have a couple of opportunities at the hearings on that all the way.

1:14:44

They presumably if they're all very similar in amounts and very similar in fact that they have an inflation factor, it makes it easy for the staff by the way, to kind of put two bills on one or merge them in in some form to get that bill out of committee.

1:15:03

And presumably the hearings will be probably in the fall.

1:15:08

But whenever it happens, very important to do that.

1:15:11

So with that, my former colleague in the Senate, I could see her picture online there.

1:15:17

And Senator Pat Jehlen, who's been on both with ribbons and Rep/ Stanley have been a long-time champion of issues affecting older adults and people with disabilities.

1:15:26

And so they're another of our champions of dignity here.

1:15:29

Senator Pat Jehlen, thank you.

1:15:33

I, you know, I'm just so grateful that Dignity exists and is advocating and bringing people together on an issue that has been important for a long time.



1:15:42

Folks who know about it.

1:15:45

I like the name Dignity Alliance because I think this is an example of a bill that would give people a chance at dignity.

1:15:56

And I think you've heard good stories from people about how their lives would be more dignified if they had an adequate PNAI think it's that we haven't been able to do it despite the committee's interest over the years, haven't been able to get it passed is just the general lack of prioritization of the needs of older people.

1:16:23

And it's an issue that continues to be not understood that, but I want to say that.

1:16:29

So I think that when people learn about it, when legislators learn about it, I've seen people turn from "eh" to "we got to do this" when the people gave testimony like you all did today.

1:16:46

But I think that the issue partly people sort of think that people in nursing homes have everything taken care of for them, but people in rest homes really do not.

1:16:58

And making the point that if you're in a nursing home, you get your medication, you get you. Food.

1:17:08

So I, I remember one time, a man came into speak at a hearing and it, I saw it change legislators minds.

1:17:15

He said, I have to buy my diapers out of my PNA and that's a big expense for him.

1:17:24

And then they were having their Medicaid co-pays go up for their drugs.

1:17:29

So I think telling stories is yours is the most powerful thing people can do and educating legislators about what it really means.

1:17:39

I, I think the barrier is that we don't have as much money as we should these days to pay for the needs we have.

1:17:48

Nursing homes feel we or say, and I believe it's true, nursing homes and wrist homes don't necessarily get all the money that they need to provide a dignified and safe life for people.

1:18:04

But there's not a lot of money to go.

1:18:06

There's no there's we have to find other places to get money.

1:18:10

I do want to recognize Senator Mark Montigny and Senator Joan Lovely for filing the bill.

1:18:17

So you have 3 senators on this and I'm very excited to have both of their support.

1:18:25

So anyway, thank you all very much.

1:18:31

Thank you very much.

1:18:31

About just in closing, they we have already in addition to the Co-sponsors that have signed up, there are a number of organizations in support, and we welcome even more.

1:18:59

We've heard from many of the groups, it's a number of their residents leading age Massachusetts, which represents the nonprofit sector primarily in nursing homes and assisted living, as well as the let me say Mass aging access, which is the home care organization largely access care partners National Association of social workers in the mass chapter NE Justice Center Lawrence and South Shore senior services and Braintree and stop blowing coalition and beauty.

1:19:30

So a number of other organizations that speak out for the needs of old adults and people with disabilities have joined in this coalition and we certainly would welcome additional organizations to join in that between now and the hearing.

1:19:45

So I, I thank the staff and represent Rep. Stanley and Senator Jalen for being with us for this. Event.

1:19:52

I think it was an excellent forum and a very powerful statements from the residents, particularly in support of this.

1:19:59

And I thank the staff since the staff, the for members of the Senate and of the House.

1:20:04

I know the staff do an awful lot of the work.

1:20:06

So I'm glad that they were able to join with us and spend some time with us today.

1:20:11

With that, I think we're, we're said we have this one thanks to the Hale House folks.

1:20:15

Oh, we thank the residents.

1:20:17

We are still with us for this program as well.

1:20:21

This will be on the Dignity Alliance website in a few days at least probably later this week.

1:20:27

We will be upgrade updating the new bill numbers because the House docket on Senate docket numbers as the staff knows change once it gets referred to committee and we have a more at least somewhat more permanent number than to indicate that will be posted on our website and also sent out to those that have signed up in our sign-up sheet and anyone else.

1:20:47.

1:20:48

We will follow us and let people know when the hearings are held.

1:20:52

Hopefully some of the folks at Hale House could join in that and other residents and we hope everyone will take advantage of the scan was on the QR code.

1:21:05

It's on the flyer will be on the website to give us more stories like the stories that we heard, the compelling stories that we heard from the folks at Hale House today.

1:21:16

We'd like to have a good range from around the state.

1:21:19

It's important to the legislators to know that their constituents are in support of this and why it's so important to them.

1:21:26

Thank you everybody for saying I just want to thank Vicki Halal for her assistance and Ben from the Legislative Information Services would like to help.

1:21:37

It's been we have that done with the technology that is involved in this.

1:21:42

Really, it's out of state and out of at least out of the building participation today as well.

1:21:48

And it's a wonderful facility that we have now here at the State House to be able to put a put on a program like this to inform legislators and the public.

1:21:55

We know a number of people from staff, from legislators, we're tuned in and this will be unavailable.

1:22:02

Further viewing and note taking and whatever else is necessary as we go along and we'll be updated.

1:22:08

There are copies of the article that Monica Aswani talked about on the table.

1:22:15

There are also a couple of other handouts, the one pager on the poison of PNA and a more a fact sheet on PNA.

1:22:23

So if you haven't picked those up, I'd encourage you to do that command and please grab a beverage or snack or something before you leave so that Paul doesn't take them home and feed his family.

1:22:35

Thank you everybody.