



# The Dignity Digest

Issue # 243

July 17, 2025

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

	<b>*May require registration before accessing the article.</b>
<b>Editor's Note</b>	<p><i>This is a special issue of <b>The Dignity Digest</b>. It contains articles and reports about the tragic fire at the Gabriel House Assisted Living Residence in Fall River, MA</i></p> <p>Regular publication and distribution of <i>The Dignity Digest</i> will resume on Tuesday, July 22, 2025.</p>
<b>DignityMA Zoom Sessions</b>	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 <a href="mailto:info@DignityAllianceMA.org">info@DignityAllianceMA.org</a> .
<b>Guide to items in this week's Dignity Digest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Call to Action: The Fall River Assisted Living Fire Victims Deserve Meaningful Action</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Commentary</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Gabriel House Fire Synopsis: Comprehensive Analysis and Policy Reform Framework</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Statement by Governor Maura Healey</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Massachusetts Assisted Living Residence Regulations</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>News reports quoting DignityMA participants regarding the Gabriel House fire</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Other reports and articles regarding the Gabriel House fire</i></b></li> </ul>
<b>Call to Action</b> By Former State Senator Richard T. Moore DignityMA Legislative Workgroup Chair	<p><b>The Fall River Assisted Living Fire Victims Deserve Meaningful Action</b></p> <p>The 9 residents who died, the 30 who were injured, and all who lost their homes in the tragic assisted living fire in Fall River deserve to be remembered. Their sufferings will not be in vain if Massachusetts commits to reform and implements stronger regulations and more effective oversight of assisted living facilities and rest homes. The special commission currently working on assisted living reform must take strong action now if its efforts are to have any real meaning!</p> <p><b>Dignity Alliance Massachusetts</b> has proposed reforms such as licensing administrators, creating a board of registration to enforce regulations, set higher qualifications and ratios for staffing, training in fire and flood emergency response, setting meaningful financial penalties, making unannounced inspections, setting stringent rules for owners and operators, and many more. What happened in Fall</p>

	<p>River could happen in other long-term care facilities around the state unless such steps are taken, especially in places where residents have limited or no ability to self-evacuate.</p> <p>The Massachusetts Assisted Living Commission, and the Executive Office of Aging and Independence are due to report on reforms by August 1. However, if more time is needed to incorporate lessons learned from the Fall River tragedy, the study should be extended as necessary. Then the Healey Administration and the Legislature should take immediate action to implement common-sense, meaningful reforms that focus truly on quality and safety of assisted living residents over profits of facility owners.</p> <p>Older adults, especially those who are physically, cognitively, and financially challenged, need and deserve a home that is affordable, accessible, safe, and that serves their care needs.</p> <p><b>Massachusetts needs to get it right and do it now!</b></p>
<p><b>Commentary</b>  By James A. Lomastro,  PhD  Chair, DignityMA  Facilities Workgroup</p>	<p>The Gabriel House tragedy starkly illustrates the dangerous reality of Massachusetts's two-tiered assisted living system. While affluent seniors access high-quality care, middle- and lower-income residents are relegated to facilities operating under financial constraints that compromise safety and dignity.</p> <p>Massachusetts's average monthly assisted living cost of \$6,500 creates fundamental inequity. Medicaid's inadequate coverage forces seniors into nursing homes—more restrictive and expensive than necessary—simply because it's the only option covered. Meanwhile, middle-income seniors face a cruel choice: deplete life savings to qualify for Medicaid or forgo appropriate care entirely.</p> <p>This system failed the nine residents who died at Gabriel House. Financial pressures that led to operating with only two overnight staff for 70 residents represent systemic failures, not isolated incidents. When facilities market themselves as serving "seniors who cannot afford high-end assisted living," we create conditions where economic accessibility comes at the cost of basic safety.</p> <p>Massachusetts must act decisively. We need a middle-income support program with sliding-scale subsidies, ensuring assisted living isn't exclusively for the wealthy or destitute. The state should dramatically expand Medicaid waiver programs and streamline applications. Following successful intellectual disabilities housing models, we should use public financing and private partnerships to develop quality assisted living for middle-income and subsidized residents.</p> <p>Veterans deserve special attention—existing bonds should fund assisted living specifically for those who served our country. Additionally, providers must track and report access data by income,</p>

	<p>race, geography, and Medicaid status to ensure transparency and accountability.</p> <p>The Gabriel House victims deserved better. Without addressing affordability's role in creating unsafe conditions, we risk more preventable tragedies. Massachusetts must lead in creating a system where financial status doesn't determine safety and dignity in assisted living.</p>
<p><b>Gabriel House Fire Synopsis</b></p> <p><b>Comprehensive Analysis and Policy Reform Framework</b></p>	<p><b>The Tragedy: A Preventable Disaster</b></p> <p>On July 13, 2025, nine residents died and 30+ were injured when fire swept through Gabriel House Assisted Living in Fall River, Massachusetts. The victims—ranging from 61-year-old Ronald Codega to 86-year-old Eleanor Willett—died in what Fire Chief Jeffrey Bacon called an "unfathomable tragedy." This comprehensive analysis reveals the systemic failures that made this disaster not just tragic, but preventable.</p> <p><b>Critical Failures Exposed</b></p> <p><b>Dangerous Understaffing:</b> Only two staff members were working overnight for 70 vulnerable residents. Survivors reported that staff "didn't knock on one door" during the emergency, abandoning residents who needed assistance evacuating.</p> <p><b>Maintenance Negligence:</b> The building's elevator had been broken for nine months, creating accessibility barriers that may have contributed to evacuation difficulties.</p> <p><b>Regulatory Gaps:</b> Gabriel House operated with minimal oversight compared to nursing homes, despite serving similarly vulnerable populations requiring significant assistance.</p> <p><b>Questionable Ownership:</b> The owner, Dennis Etzkorn, previously paid a \$950,000 settlement to resolve kickback allegations related to his healthcare operations, raising questions about operator accountability.</p> <p><b>The Federal Oversight Gap: A Two-Tier System</b></p> <p>Recent Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (OIG) reports expose a fundamental policy contradiction. While nursing homes face extensive federal oversight—including minimum staffing requirements of 3.48 hours per resident day and mandatory data reporting—assisted living residences operate with virtually no federal standards.</p> <p>An October 2024 OIG report found 236 life safety, emergency preparedness, and infection control deficiencies at 20 Massachusetts</p>

nursing homes despite heavy regulation. This suggests that lightly regulated assisted living facilities face exponentially greater risks.

## The Human Cost of Regulatory Failure

The nine Gabriel House victims died in a facility that legally operated with staffing levels that would be illegal in a nursing home. The residents—many older, disabled, or requiring oxygen assistance—received less protection than nursing home residents despite similar vulnerabilities.

Gabriel House marketed itself as serving "seniors who cannot afford the high end of assisted living," highlighting how economic vulnerability compounds safety risks when regulatory protection is inadequate.

## The Economic Justice Imperative

Gabriel House's mission to serve low-income seniors should not have meant accepting substandard safety. Reform efforts must ensure enhanced safety standards don't price out vulnerable residents, requiring state subsidies or tax incentives to maintain accessibility while improving protection.

## State and National Implications

With over 17,000 Massachusetts residents in assisted living facilities and similar regulatory gaps nationwide, the Gabriel House tragedy represents a national crisis requiring federal intervention. The current state-only oversight system has failed to protect vulnerable residents from preventable deaths.

## Key Policy Recommendations

1. **Federal Standards:** Extend federal minimum staffing and safety standards to assisted living residences
2. **Enhanced Oversight:** Create assisted living equivalent to nursing home inspection and enforcement systems
3. **Financial Transparency:** Require public disclosure of finances, ownership structures, and safety records
4. **Operator Accountability:** Implement comprehensive background checks and ongoing monitoring of owners
5. **Emergency Preparedness:** Mandate nursing home-level emergency response capabilities and training

## The Call for Action


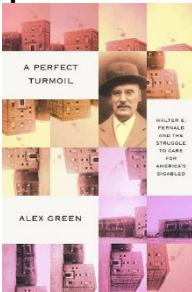
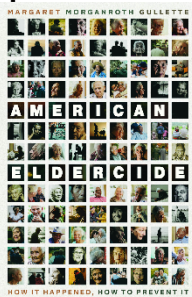
The Gabriel House fire stands as a stark reminder that dignity, safety, and quality care cannot be achieved through market forces alone. Comprehensive regulatory reform is essential to prevent future tragedies

	<p>and ensure that all residents—regardless of economic status—receive the protection they deserve.</p> <p><b>The time for incremental change has passed. Massachusetts must act now to transform assisted living oversight and lead national reform efforts before more families experience the devastating loss witnessed at Gabriel House.</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>More Information:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full report available at: <a href="http://www.dignityalliancema.org">www.dignityalliancema.org</a></li> <li>• Advocacy resources: <a href="http://www.dignityalliancema.org/advocacy">www.dignityalliancema.org/advocacy</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Sources:</b> This synopsis is based on comprehensive analysis incorporating Wikipedia documentation, OIG reports, Massachusetts regulatory framework, news coverage, and Dignity Alliance Massachusetts advocacy materials. Complete source list available in full report.</p>
<b>Statement by Governor Maura Healey</b>	<p><b>Governor Healey Issues Statement on Tragic Fall River Fire</b> July 14, 2025</p> <p>Governor Maura Healey issued the following statement on an overnight fire at Gabriel House, an assisted living facility in Fall River, which claimed the lives of several people and injured many more:</p> <p>"The fire at Gabriel House in Fall River is a tragedy. My heart goes out to those who are waking up to the most horrific news imaginable about their loved ones this morning. I'm grateful to the firefighters and first responders whose heroic efforts saved lives. We are all praying for those who lost loved ones and for the full recovery of those who were injured. I've expressed my condolences to Mayor Coogan and offered the full assistance of the state. A full investigation is already underway. I know the people of Fall River are strong and resilience, and now is the time for us to all come together to support one another through this terrible tragedy."</p> <p>A family notification center has been set up at the chapel of St. Anne's Hospital nearby. Families seeking information on residents can call 508-674-5741 or use the Emergency Room entrance to access the center.</p>
<b>Massachusetts Assisted Living Residence Regulations</b>	<p>Massachusetts Assisted Living Residence Regulations issued by the Executive Office of Aging and Independence can be viewed at:</p> <p><a href="https://www.mass.gov/doc/651-cmr-12-certification-procedures-and-standards-for-assisted-living-residences/download">https://www.mass.gov/doc/651-cmr-12-certification-procedures-and-standards-for-assisted-living-residences/download</a></p>
<b>News reports quoting DignityMA participants regarding the Gabriel House fire</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>State inspectors found violations in 2023 at Fall River assisted living facility where 9 died in fire</i> - CBS Boston <a href="https://share.google/LkJwUVPE1kCg3DDGz">https://share.google/LkJwUVPE1kCg3DDGz</a></li> <li>• <i>Fall River assisted-living home cited for late reports of safety incidents years before deadly fire</i> – Boston 25 News <a href="https://www.boston25news.com/news/local/fall-river-assisted-living-home-cited-late-reports-safety-incidents-years-before-deadly-fire/E24GH7RXEJC2BETNKUCY3BKSYA/">https://www.boston25news.com/news/local/fall-river-assisted-living-home-cited-late-reports-safety-incidents-years-before-deadly-fire/E24GH7RXEJC2BETNKUCY3BKSYA/</a></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>For people with limited mobility, Fall River fire renews fears: How would I escape?</i> – WGBH News <a href="https://www.wgbh.org/news/local/2025-07-15/for-people-with-limited-mobility-fall-river-fire-renews-fears-how-would-i-escape">https://www.wgbh.org/news/local/2025-07-15/for-people-with-limited-mobility-fall-river-fire-renews-fears-how-would-i-escape</a></li> <li>• <i>Assisted-living home cited for late reports of safety incidents years before fatal fire</i> – Washington Post <a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/2025/07/15/fatal-fire-massachusetts-assisted-living/f56494d8-6194-11f0-bf70-56d8888ebb94_story.html">https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/2025/07/15/fatal-fire-massachusetts-assisted-living/f56494d8-6194-11f0-bf70-56d8888ebb94_story.html</a></li> <li>• <i>Assisted-living home cited for late reports of safety incidents years before fire</i> – ABC News <a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/assisted-living-home-cited-late-reports-safety-incidents-123771483">https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/assisted-living-home-cited-late-reports-safety-incidents-123771483</a></li> <li>• <i>Assisted-living home cited for late reports of safety incidents years before fatal fire</i> – Salem News <a href="https://salemnews-cnhi.newsmemory.com/?publink=02379b238_134fa80">https://salemnews-cnhi.newsmemory.com/?publink=02379b238_134fa80</a></li> <li>• <i>What to look for when choosing an assisted living facility or nursing home</i> – WBZ News <a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/what-to-look-for-nursing-home-assisted-living-facility/">https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/what-to-look-for-nursing-home-assisted-living-facility/</a></li> <li>• <i>Deadly fire prompts scrutiny of assisted living homes that serve lower income adults</i> – The Boston Globe <a href="https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/07/15/metro/deadly-fire-prompts-scrutiny-assisted-living-homes-that-serve-lower-income-adults/?et rid=44022572&amp;s_campaign=todaysheadlines:newsletter">https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/07/15/metro/deadly-fire-prompts-scrutiny-assisted-living-homes-that-serve-lower-income-adults/?et rid=44022572&amp;s_campaign=todaysheadlines:newsletter</a></li> <li>• <i>Deadly Fall River fire highlights minimal regulations that govern assisted-living facilities</i> – MassLive.com <a href="https://www.masslive.com/news/2025/07/deadly-fall-river-fire-highlights-minimal-regulations-that-govern-assisted-living-facilities.html">https://www.masslive.com/news/2025/07/deadly-fall-river-fire-highlights-minimal-regulations-that-govern-assisted-living-facilities.html</a></li> </ul>
<b>Other reports and articles regarding the Gabriel House fire</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>After the Gabriel House fire, here's how to help keep your loved ones in assisted living safe</i> – Boston Globe <a href="https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/07/15/newsletters/starting-point-fall-river-fire-gabriel-house-assisted-living/">https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/07/15/newsletters/starting-point-fall-river-fire-gabriel-house-assisted-living/</a></li> <li>• <i>A timeline of the Fall River fire</i> – The Boston Globe <a href="https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/07/14/metro/fall-river-fire-timeline/?s_campaign=breakingnews:newsletter">https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/07/14/metro/fall-river-fire-timeline/?s_campaign=breakingnews:newsletter</a></li> <li>• <i>Residents recount harrowing escape from deadly Fall River fire: 'It was just a disaster'</i> – The Boston Globe <a href="https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/07/14/metro/fall-river-mass-fire-gabriel-house/?s_campaign=breakingnews:newsletter">https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/07/14/metro/fall-river-mass-fire-gabriel-house/?s_campaign=breakingnews:newsletter</a></li> <li>• <i>See photos of the scene of fatal Fall River assisted living facility fire</i> – The Boston Globe <a href="https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/07/14/multimedia/photos-multiple-people-dead-after-nursing-home-fire/?s_campaign=breakingnews:newsletter">https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/07/14/multimedia/photos-multiple-people-dead-after-nursing-home-fire/?s_campaign=breakingnews:newsletter</a></li> <li>• <i>Speculation Swirls After Deadly Fire at Massachusetts Assisted Living Facility</i> - The New York Times <a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/15/us/fire-gabriel-house-fall-river-massachusetts.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/15/us/fire-gabriel-house-fall-river-massachusetts.html</a></li> <li>• <i>Gabriel House defined by the state as an 'assisted living residence.'</i> Here's what it means – The Herald News</li> </ul>



	<p><a href="https://www.heraldnews.com/story/news/local/2025/07/15/assisted-living-residence-fire-fall-river-massachusetts-regulations/85207077007/">https://www.heraldnews.com/story/news/local/2025/07/15/assisted-living-residence-fire-fall-river-massachusetts-regulations/85207077007/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>9 dead, 30 injured in Fall River assisted living facility fire</i> – WBUR News <a href="https://www.wbur.org/news/2025/07/14/fall-river-fire-gabriel-house-assisted-living-fatalities">https://www.wbur.org/news/2025/07/14/fall-river-fire-gabriel-house-assisted-living-fatalities</a></li> <li>• <i>Flames tear through assisted-living facility in Massachusetts, killing 9 and trapping residents</i> – The Washington Post <a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/2025/07/14/fatal-fire-assisted-living-massachusetts/c08caf18-609d-11f0-bf70-56d8888ebb94_story.html">https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/2025/07/14/fatal-fire-assisted-living-massachusetts/c08caf18-609d-11f0-bf70-56d8888ebb94_story.html</a></li> <li>• <i>Relatives say Massachusetts assisted-living blaze gutted a tough community</i> – The Washington Post <a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/2025/07/15/fatal-fire-assisted-living-massachusetts-victims/a22465be-61b7-11f0-bf70-56d8888ebb94_story.html">https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/2025/07/15/fatal-fire-assisted-living-massachusetts-victims/a22465be-61b7-11f0-bf70-56d8888ebb94_story.html</a></li> <li>• <i>Deadly Massachusetts fire highlights the minimal regulations that govern assisted-living facilities</i> – The Washington Post <a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/2025/07/16/gabriel-house-fall-river-fire-assisted-living/47b44ea4-6262-11f0-bf70-56d8888ebb94_story.html">https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/2025/07/16/gabriel-house-fall-river-fire-assisted-living/47b44ea4-6262-11f0-bf70-56d8888ebb94_story.html</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>DignityMA Study Sessions</b></p> <p><i><b>Special Focus on Changes in Federal Policies, Programs, and Services</b></i></p>	<p>Unprecedented public policy changes have been occurring since the onset of the Trump Administration three months ago. Programs, policies, and initiatives of importance to older adults, persons with disabilities, and caregivers are not exempted. The implications are starting to become known. The impacts will be experienced in the months and years ahead.</p> <p>No sector is being spared. Health care, social services, Social Security, civil rights, housing, and more are all under historic attack. Some areas are being “downsized,” some are being disrupted or radically modified, and others are being eliminated outright.</p> <p>Dignity Alliance Massachusetts has invited three nationally known experts regarding public policy and programs affecting older adults, persons with disabilities, and caregivers to share up-to-the-minute information, their analysis, and strategies for individuals and organizations to adopt in response.</p> <p>The presenters are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bob Blancato, National Coordinator of the bipartisan 3000-member Elder Justice Coalition</li> <li>• James Roosevelt, JD, former Associate Commissioner, U.S. Social Security Administration</li> <li>• Steven Schwartz, JD, Special Counsel, Center for Public Representation</li> </ul> <p>Recordings of Jim Roosevelt’s and Steve Schwartz’s presentations are available at <a href="https://dignityalliancema.org/videos/">https://dignityalliancema.org/videos/</a>. Bob Blancato’s presentation is being rescheduled.</p>
DignityMA Study Session	<p><b><i>Aging Policy Update: What We Know, What We Don’t Know, and What We Should Fear</i></b></p> <p><del>Wednesday, May 21, 2025, 2:00 p.m.</del></p> <p>Unfortunately, this session is being rescheduled. Date to be announced.</p>

 <p>Bob Blancato, National Coordinator, Elder Justice Coalition</p>	<p>Presenter: Bob Blancato, National Coordinator of the bipartisan 3000-member Elder Justice Coalition</p> <p>Registration required:  <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/kQRVG7FiR2iVrmQWN52M6g">https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/kQRVG7FiR2iVrmQWN52M6g</a></p> <p>Bob discusses the current state of aging policy at the national level under the new Congress and Administration. This presentation will focus on key shifts in aging policy, identifies emerging challenges, and outlines advocacy opportunities that will protect and shape services for older Americans in the coming year.</p> <p>Bob is also the Executive Director of the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Service Programs. He spent 17 years on the staff of the U.S. House Select Committee on Aging and has participated in four White House Conferences on Aging, including as the Executive Director of the 1995 White House Conference on Aging.</p>
<p><b>Previously posted webinars and online sessions</b></p>	<p><b>Previously posted webinars and online sessions can be viewed at:</b>  <a href="https://dignityalliancema.org/webinars-and-online-sessions/">https://dignityalliancema.org/webinars-and-online-sessions/</a></p>
<p><b>Books by DignityMA Participants</b></p>  <p>About the Author:  <b>Alex Green</b> teaches political communications at Harvard Kennedy School and is a visiting fellow at the Harvard Law School Project on Disability and a visiting scholar at Brandeis University Lurie Institute for Disability Policy. He is the author of legislation to create a first-of-its-kind, disability-led human rights commission to investigate the history of state institutions for disabled people in Massachusetts.</p>	<p><b><u><a href="#">A Perfect Turmoil: Walter E. Fernald and the Struggle to Care for America's Disabled</a></u></b>  By Alex Green</p> <p>From the moment he became superintendent of the nation's oldest public school for intellectually and developmentally disabled children in 1887 until his death in 1924, Dr. Walter E. Fernald led a wholesale transformation of our understanding of disabilities in ways that continue to influence our views today. How did the man who designed the first special education class in America, shaped the laws of entire nations, and developed innovative medical treatments for the disabled slip from idealism into the throes of eugenics before emerging as an opponent of mass institutionalization? Based on a decade of research, <i>A Perfect Turmoil</i> is the story of a doctor, educator, and policymaker who was unafraid to reverse course when convinced by the evidence, even if it meant going up against some of the most powerful forces of his time.</p> <p>In this landmark work, Alex Green has drawn upon extensive, unexamined archives to unearth the hidden story of one of America's largely forgotten, but most complex, conflicted, and significant figures.</p> <p><a href="#">Buy the book here</a></p>
<p><b>Books by DignityMA Participants</b></p>  <p>About the Author:</p>	<p><b><u><a href="#">American Eldercide: How It Happened, How to Prevent It</a></u></b>  By <a href="#">Margaret Morganroth Gullette</a></p> <p><b>A bracing spotlight on the avoidable causes of the COVID-19 Eldercide in the United States.</b></p> <p>Twenty percent of the Americans who have died of COVID since 2020 have been older and disabled adults residing in nursing homes—even though they make up fewer than one percent of the US population. Something about this catastrophic loss of life in government-monitored facilities has never added up. Until now. In <i>American Eldercide</i>, activist and scholar Margaret Morganroth Gullette investigates this tragic public health crisis with a passionate voice and razor-sharp attention to detail, showing us that</p>



<p><b>Margaret Morganroth Gullette</b> is a cultural critic and anti-ageism pioneer whose prize-winning work is foundational in critical age studies. She is the author of several books, including <i>Agewise</i>, <i>Aged by Culture</i>, and <i>Ending Ageism, or How Not to Shoot Old People</i>. Her writing has appeared in publications such as the <i>New York Times</i>, <i>Washington Post</i>, <i>Guardian</i>, <i>Atlantic</i>, <i>Nation</i>, and the <i>Boston Globe</i>. She is a resident scholar at the Women's Studies Research Center, Brandeis, and lives in Newton, Massachusetts.</p>	<p>nothing about it was inevitable. By unpacking the decisions that led to discrimination against nursing home residents, revealing how governments, doctors, and media reinforced ageist or ableist biases, and collecting the previously little-heard voices of the residents who survived, Gullette helps us understand the workings of what she persuasively calls an eldercide.</p> <p>Gullette argues that it was our collective indifference, fueled by the heightened ageism of the COVID-19 era, that prematurely killed this vulnerable population. Compounding that deadly indifference is our own panic about aging and a social bias in favor of youth-based decisions about lifesaving care. The compassion this country failed to muster for the residents of our nursing facilities motivated Gullette to pen an act of remembrance, issuing a call for pro-aging changes in policy and culture that would improve long-term care for everyone.</p> <p><a href="#">Buy the book here.</a></p>
<p><b>Bringing People Home: The Marsters Settlement</b></p>	<p>Webpages:  <a href="https://www.centerforpublicrep.org/court_case/marsters-et-al-v-healey-et-al/">https://www.centerforpublicrep.org/court_case/marsters-et-al-v-healey-et-al/</a>  <a href="https://marsters.centerforpublicrep.org/">https://marsters.centerforpublicrep.org/</a></p>
<p><b>Support Dignity Alliance Massachusetts</b></p> <p><a href="#"><b>Please Donate!</b></a></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><b>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, <a href="http://www.DignityAllianceMA.org">www.DignityAllianceMA.org</a>, which has thousands of visits each month.</b></p> <p><b>Consider a donation in memory or honor of someone. The names of those recognized will be included in The Dignity Digest and posted on the website.</b></p> <p><a href="https://dignityalliancema.org/donate/">https://dignityalliancema.org/donate/</a></p> <p>Thank you for your consideration!</p>
<p><b>Dignity Alliance Massachusetts Legislative Endorsements</b></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: <a href="https://tinyurl.com/DignityLegislativeEndorsements">https://tinyurl.com/DignityLegislativeEndorsements</a></p> <p>Questions or comments can be directed to Legislative Work Group Chair Richard (Dick) Moore at <a href="mailto:rmooore8473@charter.net">rmooore8473@charter.net</a>.</p>
<p><b>Websites</b></p>	
<p><b>Blogs</b></p>	
<p><b>Podcasts</b></p>	
<p><b>YouTube Channels</b></p>	

Previously recommended websites	The comprehensive list of recommended websites has migrated to the Dignity Alliance MA website: <a href="https://dignityalliancema.org/resources/">https://dignityalliancema.org/resources/</a> . 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 <a href="https://dignityalliancema.org/funding-opportunities/">https://dignityalliancema.org/funding-opportunities/</a> .	
Websites of Dignity Alliance Massachusetts Members	See: <a href="https://dignityalliancema.org/about/organizations/">https://dignityalliancema.org/about/organizations/</a>	
Contact information for reporting complaints and concerns	<b>Nursing home</b>	<a href="#">Department of Public Health</a> 1. Print and complete the <a href="#">Consumer/Resident/Patient Complaint Form</a> 2. Fax completed form to (617) 753-8165 Or Mail to 67 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA 01752 <a href="#">Ombudsman Program</a>
MassHealth Eligibility Information	<a href="#">MassHealth / Massachusetts Medicaid Income &amp; Asset Limits for Nursing Homes &amp; Long-Term Care</a> <b>Table of Contents</b> (Last updated: December 16, 2024) <a href="#">Massachusetts Medicaid Long-Term Care Definition</a> <a href="#">Income &amp; Asset Limits for Eligibility</a> <a href="#">Income Definition &amp; Exceptions</a> <a href="#">Asset Definition &amp; Exceptions</a> <a href="#">Home Exemption Rules</a> <a href="#">Medical / Functional Need Requirements</a> <a href="#">Qualifying When Over the Limits</a> <a href="#">Specific Massachusetts Medicaid Programs</a> <a href="#">How to Apply for Massachusetts Medicaid</a>	
Money Follows the Person	<b>MassHealth</b> <a href="#">Money Follows the Person</a> 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. <b>Statistics as of March 31, 2025:</b> 344 people transitioned out of nursing facilities in 2024 49 transitions in January and February 2025 910 currently in transition planning <a href="#">Open PDF file, 1.34 MB, MFP Demonstration Brochure</a> <a href="#">MFP Demonstration Brochure - Accessible Version</a> <a href="#">MFP Demonstration Fact Sheet</a> <a href="#">MFP Demonstration Fact Sheet - Accessible Version</a>	
Nursing Home Closures	List of Nursing Home Closures in Massachusetts Since July 2021: <a href="https://dignityalliancema.org/2025/04/07/nursing-home-closures-since-july-2021/">https://dignityalliancema.org/2025/04/07/nursing-home-closures-since-july-2021/</a>	
Determination of Need Projects	List of Determination of Need Applications regarding nursing homes since 2020: <a href="https://dignityalliancema.org/2025/04/07/list-of-determination-of-need-applications/">https://dignityalliancema.org/2025/04/07/list-of-determination-of-need-applications/</a> Pending: <a href="#">Town of Nantucket – Long Term Care Substantial Capital Expenditure</a>	

<p>List of Special Focus Facilities</p>	<p><b>Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services</b>  <i>List of Special Focus Facilities and Candidates</i>  <a href="https://www.cms.gov/files/document/sff-posting-candidate-list-march-2025.pdf">https://www.cms.gov/files/document/sff-posting-candidate-list-march-2025.pdf</a>  <b>Updated March 26, 2025</b>          CMS has published a new list of <a href="#">Special Focus Facilities</a> (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.  <b>What can advocates do with this information?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Post the list on your program's/organization's website (along with the explanation noted above).</li> <li>• Encourage current residents and families to check the list to see if their facility is included.</li> <li>• Urge residents and families in a candidate facility to ask the administrator what is being done to improve care.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> <b>Massachusetts facilities listed (updated )</b>  <b>Newly added to the listing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salem Rehab Center, Salem  <a href="https://www.adviniacare.com/adviniacare-salem/">https://www.adviniacare.com/adviniacare-salem/</a>            Nursing home inspect information:  <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225644/">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225644/</a></li> <li>• Fall River Healthcare  <a href="https://www.nextstephpc.com/fallriver">https://www.nextstephpc.com/fallriver</a>            Nursing home inspect information:  <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225723/">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225723/</a></li> </ul> <b>Massachusetts facilities which have graduated from the program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marlborough Hills Rehabilitation and Health Care Center, Marlborough  <a href="https://tinyurl.com/MarlboroughHills">https://tinyurl.com/MarlboroughHills</a>            Nursing home inspect information:  <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225063">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225063</a></li> <li>• Somerset Ridge Center, Somerset  <a href="https://somersetridge rehab.com/">https://somersetridge rehab.com/</a>            Nursing home inspect information:</li> </ul> </p>
---	---

	<p><a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225747">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225747</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tremont Healthcare Center, Wareham <a href="https://thetremontrehabcare.com/">https://thetremontrehabcare.com/</a> Nursing home inspect information: <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225488/">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225488/</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Massachusetts facilities that are candidates for listing (months on list)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AdviniaCare Newburyport (13) <a href="https://www.adviniacare.com/adviniacare-country-center/">https://www.adviniacare.com/adviniacare-country-center/</a> Nursing home inspect information: <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225332">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225332</a></li> <li>• Brandon Woods of New Bedford (1) <a href="https://brandonwoodsnewbedford.com/">https://brandonwoodsnewbedford.com/</a> Nursing home inspect information: <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225264/">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225264/</a></li> <li>• Cape Cod Post Acute, Brewster (9) <a href="https://capecodrehabhc.com/">https://capecodrehabhc.com/</a> Nursing home inspect information: <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225667/">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225667/</a></li> <li>• Charwell House Health and Rehabilitation, Norwood (37) <a href="https://tinyurl.com/Charwell">https://tinyurl.com/Charwell</a> Nursing home inspect information: <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225208">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225208</a></li> <li>• Life Care Center of Merrimack Valley, Billerica (2) <a href="https://lcca.com/locations/ma/merrimack-valley/">https://lcca.com/locations/ma/merrimack-valley/</a> Nursing home inspect information: <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225546/">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225546/</a></li> <li>• Medway Country Manor Skilled Nursing &amp; Rehabilitation, Medway (1) <a href="https://www.medwaymanor.com/">https://www.medwaymanor.com/</a> Nursing home inspect information: <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225412">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225412</a></li> <li>• Pine Knoll Nursing Center, Lexington, (3) <a href="https://www.longtermcentersgroup.com/About-Pine-Knoll-Nursing-Center-Rehab">https://www.longtermcentersgroup.com/About-Pine-Knoll-Nursing-Center-Rehab</a> Nursing home inspect information: <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225049/">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225049/</a></li> <li>• RegalCare at Glen Ridge (20) <a href="https://www.genesishcc.com/glenridge">https://www.genesishcc.com/glenridge</a> Nursing home inspect information: <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225523">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225523</a></li> <li>• West Newton Healthcare, West Newton (9) <a href="https://www.nextstephc.com/westnewton">https://www.nextstephc.com/westnewton</a> Nursing home inspect information: <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225324/">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225324/</a></li> </ul> <p><b>No longer operating</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South Dennis Healthcare, South Dennis <a href="https://tinyurl.com/SpecialFocusFacilityProgram">https://tinyurl.com/SpecialFocusFacilityProgram</a></li> </ul>
<i>Nursing Home Inspect</i>	<p><b>ProPublica</b> <b>Nursing Home Inspect</b> <b>Data updated April 23, 2025</b> 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</p>

	<p>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).</p> <p>Massachusetts listing: <a href="https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/state/MA">https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/state/MA</a></p> <p><b>Deficiencies By Severity in Massachusetts</b> <a href="#">(What do the severity ratings mean?)</a></p> <table><tr><th>Deficiency Tag</th><th># Deficiencies</th><th># Facilities</th><th>MA facilities cited</th></tr><tr><td>B</td><td>315</td><td>222</td><td><a href="#">Tag B</a></td></tr><tr><td>C</td><td>106</td><td>82</td><td><a href="#">Tag C</a></td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>7,445</td><td>1,401</td><td><a href="#">Tag D</a></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>2,133</td><td>767</td><td><a href="#">Tag E</a></td></tr><tr><td>F</td><td>676</td><td>314</td><td><a href="#">Tag F</a></td></tr><tr><td>G</td><td>517</td><td>339</td><td><a href="#">Tag G</a></td></tr><tr><td>H</td><td>58</td><td>35</td><td><a href="#">Tag H</a></td></tr><tr><td>I</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td><a href="#">Tag I</a></td></tr><tr><td>J</td><td>53</td><td>28</td><td><a href="#">Tag J</a></td></tr><tr><td>K</td><td>27</td><td>9</td><td><a href="#">Tag K</a></td></tr><tr><td>L</td><td>9</td><td>3</td><td><a href="#">Tag L</a></td></tr></table> <p><b>Updated April 23, 2025</b></p>	Deficiency Tag	# Deficiencies	# Facilities	MA facilities cited	B	315	222	<a href="#">Tag B</a>	C	106	82	<a href="#">Tag C</a>	D	7,445	1,401	<a href="#">Tag D</a>	E	2,133	767	<a href="#">Tag E</a>	F	676	314	<a href="#">Tag F</a>	G	517	339	<a href="#">Tag G</a>	H	58	35	<a href="#">Tag H</a>	I	3	2	<a href="#">Tag I</a>	J	53	28	<a href="#">Tag J</a>	K	27	9	<a href="#">Tag K</a>	L	9	3	<a href="#">Tag L</a>
Deficiency Tag	# Deficiencies	# Facilities	MA facilities cited																																														
B	315	222	<a href="#">Tag B</a>																																														
C	106	82	<a href="#">Tag C</a>																																														
D	7,445	1,401	<a href="#">Tag D</a>																																														
E	2,133	767	<a href="#">Tag E</a>																																														
F	676	314	<a href="#">Tag F</a>																																														
G	517	339	<a href="#">Tag G</a>																																														
H	58	35	<a href="#">Tag H</a>																																														
I	3	2	<a href="#">Tag I</a>																																														
J	53	28	<a href="#">Tag J</a>																																														
K	27	9	<a href="#">Tag K</a>																																														
L	9	3	<a href="#">Tag L</a>																																														
Nursing Home Compare	<p><b>Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)</b> <i>Nursing Home Compare Website</i></p> <p>Beginning January 26, 2022, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is posting new information that will help consumers have a better understanding of certain staffing information and concerns at facilities.</p> <p>This information will be posted for each facility and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Staff turnover:</b> 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.</li><li>• <b>Weekend staff:</b> The level of weekend staffing for nurses and registered nurses at a nursing home over a three-month period.</li></ul> <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.</p> <p><a href="https://tinyurl.com/NursingHomeCompareWebsite">https://tinyurl.com/NursingHomeCompareWebsite</a></p>																																																
Data on Ownership of Nursing Homes	<p><b>Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services</b> <i>Data on Ownership of Nursing Homes</i></p> <p>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 <a href="https://data.cms.gov">data.cms.gov</a> and updated monthly.</p>																																																
DignityMA Call Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Advocate</b> for state bills that advance the Dignity Alliance Massachusetts' Mission and Goals – <a href="#">State Legislative Endorsements</a>.</li></ul>																																																



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Support</b> relevant bills in Washington – <a href="#">Federal Legislative Endorsements</a>.</li> <li>• <b>Join</b> our <a href="#">Work Groups</a>.</li> <li>• <b>Learn</b> to use and leverage social media at our workshops: <a href="#">Engaging Everyone: Creating Accessible, Powerful Social Media Content</a></li> </ul>		
Access to Dignity Alliance social media	Email: <a href="mailto:info@DignityAllianceMA.org">info@DignityAllianceMA.org</a> Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/DignityAllianceMA/">https://www.facebook.com/DignityAllianceMA/</a> Instagram: <a href="https://www.instagram.com/dignityalliance/">https://www.instagram.com/dignityalliance/</a> LinkedIn: <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/dignity-alliance-massachusetts">https://www.linkedin.com/company/dignity-alliance-massachusetts</a> Twitter: <a href="https://twitter.com/dignity_ma?s=21">https://twitter.com/dignity_ma?s=21</a> Website: <a href="http://www.DignityAllianceMA.org">www.DignityAllianceMA.org</a>		
<b>Participation opportunities with Dignity Alliance Massachusetts</b>  Most workgroups meet bi-weekly via Zoom.  Interest Groups meet periodically (monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly).  Please contact group lead for more information.	<b>Workgroup</b>	<b>Workgroup lead</b>	<b>Email</b>
	General Membership	Bill Henning Paul Lanzikos	<a href="mailto:bhenning@bostoncil.org">bhenning@bostoncil.org</a> <a href="mailto:paul.lanzikos@gmail.com">paul.lanzikos@gmail.com</a>
	Assisted Living	John Ford	<a href="mailto:jford@njc-ma.org">jford@njc-ma.org</a>
	Behavioral Health	Frank Baskin	<a href="mailto:baskinfrank19@gmail.com">baskinfrank19@gmail.com</a>
	Communications	Lachlan Forrow	<a href="mailto:lforrow@bidmc.harvard.edu">lforrow@bidmc.harvard.edu</a>
	Facilities (Nursing homes and rest homes)	Jim Lomastro	<a href="mailto:jimlomastro@comcast.net">jimlomastro@comcast.net</a>
	Home and Community Based Services	Meg Coffin	<a href="mailto:mcoffin@centerlw.org">mcoffin@centerlw.org</a>
	Legislative	Richard Moore	<a href="mailto:rmoore8743@charter.net">rmoore8743@charter.net</a>
	Legal Issues	Stephen Schwartz	<a href="mailto:sschwartz@cpr-ma.org">sschwartz@cpr-ma.org</a>
	<b>Interest Group</b>	<b>Group lead</b>	<b>Email</b>
	Housing	Bill Henning	<a href="mailto:bhenning@bostoncil.org">bhenning@bostoncil.org</a>
	Veteran Services	James Lomastro	<a href="mailto:jimlomastro@comcast.net">jimlomastro@comcast.net</a>
	Transportation	Frank Baskin Chris Hoeh	<a href="mailto:baskinfrank19@gmail.com">baskinfrank19@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:cdhoeh@gmail.com">cdhoeh@gmail.com</a>
	Covid / Long Covid	James Lomastro	<a href="mailto:jimlomastro@comcast.net">jimlomastro@comcast.net</a>
	Incarcerated Persons	TBD	<a href="mailto:info@DignityAllianceMA.org">info@DignityAllianceMA.org</a>
<b>Bringing People Home: Implementing the Marsters class action settlement</b>	Website: <a href="https://marsters.centerforpublicrep.org/">https://marsters.centerforpublicrep.org/</a> Center for Public Representation 5 Ferry Street, #314, Easthampton, MA 01027 413-586-6024, Press 2 <a href="mailto:bringingpeoplehome@cpr-ma.org">bringingpeoplehome@cpr-ma.org</a> Newsletter registration: <a href="https://marsters.centerforpublicrep.org/7b3c2-contact/">https://marsters.centerforpublicrep.org/7b3c2-contact/</a>		
<b>REV UP Massachusetts</b>	REV UP Massachusetts advocates for the fair and civic inclusion of people with disabilities in every political, social, and economic front. REV Up aims to increase the number of people with disabilities who vote. Website: <a href="https://revupma.org/wp/">https://revupma.org/wp/</a> To join REV UP Massachusetts – go to the <a href="#">SIGN UP page</a> .		
<b>The Dignity Digest</b>	For a free weekly subscription to <i>The Dignity Digest</i> : <a href="https://dignityalliancema.org/contact/sign-up-for-emails/">https://dignityalliancema.org/contact/sign-up-for-emails/</a> 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> :		

	<p>Special thanks to the MetroWest Center for Independent Living for assistance with the website and MailChimp versions of <i>The Dignity Digest</i>.</p> <p><i>If you have submissions for inclusion in <u>The Dignity Digest</u> or have questions or comments, please submit them to <a href="mailto:Digest@DignityAllianceMA.org">Digest@DignityAllianceMA.org</a>.</i></p>
<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>  <a href="https://dignityalliancema.org/dignity-digest/">https://dignityalliancema.org/dignity-digest/</a></p> <p><i>For more information about Dignity Alliance Massachusetts, please visit <a href="http://www.DignityAllianceMA.org">www.DignityAllianceMA.org</a>.</i></p>	