



The Dignity Digest

Issue # 244

July 22, 2025

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

	*May require registration before accessing the article.
DignityMA Zoom Sessions	Dignity Alliance Massachusetts participants meet via Zoom every other Tuesday at 2:00 p.m. Sessions are open to all. To receive session notices with agenda and Zoom links, please send a request via info@DignityAllianceMA.org .
Spotlight	<p><u>In Fall River, our promise to the elderly went up in smoke</u> By Richard T. Moore, Chair, DignityMA Legislative Workgroup Commonwealth Beacon July 19, 2025</p> <p>The smell of smoke should never be the last thing a person experiences in their own home. Yet for residents of the Gabriel House assisted living facility in Fall River, that nightmare became a reality this week. The fire that tore through their building wasn't just a tragic accident; it was a catastrophic failure of a system that promised safety and delivered a death trap.</p> <p>Governor Healey's emergency safety orders for all 273 assisted living residences are a necessary first step. But let's be clear: they are an admission of a colossal failure. Why did it take bodies being carried from a smoldering building to mandate that evacuation routes be posted on a resident's door? Why did it take a fatal blaze for the state to demand that facilities simply report the age of their fire safety systems?</p> <p>These aren't just uncomfortable questions. They are an indictment.</p> <p>A Paper-Thin Promise of Safety</p> <p>For too long, we have mistaken compliance paperwork for a culture of safety. We trusted that profit-driven facilities and overstretched state agencies were upholding their end of the bargain. The fire at Gabriel House burned that illusion to the ground.</p> <p>The fact that the state must now <i>order</i> facilities to communicate safety plans to families reveals a terrifying gap in transparency. The mandate for immediate fire safety assessments confirms what many have feared: that the agencies tasked with oversight may have been flying blind, unaware of the crumbling infrastructure and inadequate</p>

protocols inside the very buildings they were supposed to monitor.

This isn't just about one facility. It's about a statewide system where the well-being of our parents and grandparents has been subordinated to bureaucratic convenience and the bottom line. The COVID-19 pandemic already exposed the fragility of our elder care systems. We learned nothing if we are now facing a fire safety crisis that was just as predictable and just as deadly.

Reform Is Not a Suggestion Box—It's a Demand

If we are serious about preventing the next Fall River, our response cannot end with the Governor's press conference. Real reform is not a suggestion box; it is a set of non-negotiable demands. The industry's pledges of cooperation are welcome, but trust must be earned through action, not press releases. We must demand:

- **Aggressive, Unannounced Inspections.** End the charade of facilities self-assessing their way to a passing grade. We need surprise inspections with real teeth and steep, public fines for non-compliance.
- **Mandatory Staffing-to-Resident Ratios for Evacuations.** A perfect evacuation plan is worthless without enough staff to execute it. We must establish and enforce staffing levels sufficient to get every resident out in a crisis, not just on a sunny afternoon.
- **A "Safe Buildings" Fund and Mandate.** The state must create a fund to help older facilities modernize with critical upgrades like sprinkler systems, while also mandating that all facilities meet modern fire codes within a strict timeframe. No more grandfather clauses for safety.
- **A Public Safety Dashboard.** Every family has the right to know the safety record of a facility before they entrust their loved one to its care. All inspection results, violations, and staffing levels must be published online in an easily accessible database.

The Moral Cost of Hitting Snooze

The residents of Gabriel House were more than statistics. They were mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers. They were people who trusted the

	<p>Commonwealth of Massachusetts to keep them safe in their final years. We broke that trust.</p> <p>We cannot bring them back. But we can honor their memory by ensuring no other family has to receive that horrific phone call. The true test of our leadership will not be in the flurry of activity this week, but in the sustained, relentless oversight months and years from now, long after the cameras have moved on.</p> <p>The ashes in Fall River are a stain on our conscience. The wake-up call has sounded. We cannot afford to hit snooze again.</p>
Quotes	<p><i>"We believe that the existing regulations are grossly inadequate, and the [Assisted Living Residence] Commission must extend its deadline to spend time reviewing post-investigation findings to expand upon its current draft."</i></p> <p>State Senator Mark Montigny, After deadly fire, Massachusetts orders safety plans from assisted living centers (BBC News Hour, July 20, 2025)</p> <p><i>"This emergency initiative is a step in the right direction, but asking facilities to self-report compliance with fire safety requirements only reaffirms the urgency of further strengthening our regulations."</i></p> <p>State Senator Mark Montigny, Mass. seeks info on assisted living fire protocols (*Boston Globe, July 19, 2025)</p> <p><i>"The regulations are minimal."</i></p> <p>Liane Zeitz, an attorney who is a member of the state Assisted Living Residences Commission and DignityMA's Assisted Living Workgroup, Lack of preparation said cause of deaths in care home blaze (Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette, July 20, 2025)</p> <p><i>Gabriel House had seen better days, but for residents and their families it was the center of a caring community.</i></p> <p>Fire at Massachusetts assisted-living community gutted a tough community, victims' relatives say (PBS News Hour, July 16, 2025)</p> <p><i>Genesis HealthCare, one of the nation's largest skilled nursing chains, filed for Chapter 11</i></p>

bankruptcy . . . The bankruptcy filing follows months of speculation about Genesis, after the company missed \$4.2 million in rent payments . . . Genesis operates 218 facilities across 19 states.

[Genesis HealthCare files for bankruptcy, nearing sale](#) (McKnights Long-Term Care News, July 10, 2025)

“I’ll have couples come to me and they’ll have a million dollars, and they think they have a lot of money, but that’s really not a lot of money if someone’s in their late 70s or even early 80s.”

Malka Young, an aging consultant and director of Allies in Aging JFS Elder Care Solutions, [What is an assisted living facility — and how does it differ from a nursing home?](#) (*Boston Globe, July 17, 2025)

But [the recently enacted reform legislation] left open a big loophole. The Massachusetts law not only still permits private equity firms to own hospitals, but it also leaves intact their other, more widespread strategy of taking over independent physician practices.

[The loophole that could allow another private equity debacle in Mass. health care](#) (*Boston Globe, July 13, 2025)

“I don’t want to be in a locked-down facility. I would like some peace.”


Ernest Coupe, 70, a resident of Gabriel House who was rescued from the fire and since the fire, has been placed in a nursing home in Fall River, [Oversight of homes for elders too light?](#) (*Boston Globe, July 20, 2025)

“Even as an attorney, I didn’t really understand what assisted living was until my own parents lived there. It’s only when something happens that you find the limitations.”

Elder law attorney Kathleen Lynch Moncata, who is a member of DignityMA’s Assisted Living Workgroup, [Oversight of homes for elders too light?](#) (*Boston Globe, July 20, 2025)

“People think [an assisted living residence] is a nursing home with chandeliers and it isn’t.”

	<p>Elder law attorney Kathleen Lynch Moncata, who is a member of DignityMA's Assisted Living Workgroup, Oversight of homes for elders too light? (*Boston Globe, July 20, 2025)</p> <p><i>Dignity Alliance Massachusetts is pushing for mandated staffing ratios, more frequent inspections, and more power for state regulators to impose penalties.</i></p> <p>Oversight of homes for elders too light? (*Boston Globe, July 20, 2025)</p> <p><i>"[Assisted living residences] were never envisioned to evolve into de facto nursing homes."</i></p> <p>Paul Lanzikos, Coordinator, Dignity Alliance Massachusetts and a former Massachusetts elder affairs secretary who helped craft the state's first assisted living law in the early 1990s, Oversight of homes for elders too light? (*Boston Globe, July 20, 2025)</p>
Recruitment	See: Listings on MASterList.com's Job Board for all current listings
Guide to news items in this week's <i>Dignity Digest</i>	<p>Gabriel House Fire</p> <p>Oversight of homes for elders too light? (*Boston Globe, July 20, 2025)</p> <p>After deadly fire, Massachusetts orders safety plans from assisted living centers (BBC News Hour, July 20, 2025)</p> <p>Lack of preparation said cause of deaths in care home blaze (Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette, July 20, 2025)</p> <p>Mass. seeks info on assisted living fire protocols (*Boston Globe, July 19, 2025)</p> <p>Fire at Massachusetts Assisted Living Facility Claims a 10th Life (*New York Times, July 19, 2025)</p> <p>Fire at Massachusetts assisted-living community gutted a tough community, victims' relatives say (PBS News Hour, July 16, 2025)</p> <p>Nursing Homes</p> <p>Genesis HealthCare files for bankruptcy, nearing sale (McKnights Long-Term Care News, July 10, 2025)</p> <p>Assistive Living</p> <p>What is an assisted living facility — and how does it differ from a nursing home? (*Boston Globe, July 17, 2025)</p> <p>Long-Term Care</p> <p>What Can We Learn About Long-Term Care Models from Home and Abroad? (The Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, July 17, 2025)</p> <p>Private Equity</p> <p>The loophole that could allow another private equity debacle in Mass. health care (*Boston Globe, July 13, 2025)</p>
DignityMA Study Sessions	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

<p>Special Focus on Changes in Federal Policies, Programs, and Services</p>	<p>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"> • Bob Blancato, National Coordinator of the bipartisan 3000-member Elder Justice Coalition • James Roosevelt, JD, former Associate Commissioner, U.S. Social Security Administration • Steven Schwartz, JD, Special Counsel, Center for Public Representation <p>Recordings of Jim Roosevelt’s and Steve Schwartz’s presentations are available at https://dignityalliancema.org/videos/. Bob Blancato’s presentation is being rescheduled.</p>
<p>DignityMA Study Session</p>  <p>Bob Blancato, National Coordinator, Elder Justice Coalition</p>	<p><i>Aging Policy Update: What We Know, What We Don’t Know, and What We Should Fear</i></p> <p>Wednesday, May 21, 2025, 2:00 p.m.</p> <p>Unfortunately, this session is being rescheduled. Date to be announced.</p> <p>Presenter: Bob Blancato, National Coordinator of the bipartisan 3000-member Elder Justice Coalition</p> <p>Registration required: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/kQRVG7FiR2iVrmQWN52M6g</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>Previously posted webinars and online sessions</p>	<p>Previously posted webinars and online sessions can be viewed at: https://dignityalliancema.org/webinars-and-online-sessions/</p>
<p>Gabriel House Fire</p>	<p>1. *Boston Globe July 20, 2025 <i>Oversight of homes for elders too light?</i> By Jason Laughlin, Kay Lazar, and Shelley Murphy <i>Push to regulate assisted living more as needs of residents intensify</i></p>

The recent fatal fire at Gabriel House in Fall River, which killed 10 residents, has spotlighted critical safety and oversight concerns in Massachusetts's 273 assisted living facilities. Experts, like elder law attorney Kathleen Lynch Moncata, who is a member of DignityMA's Assisted Living Workgroup, highlight how these facilities, originally designed for largely independent seniors, are increasingly housing frail individuals with significant medical needs—a population once typically found in nursing homes.

Unlike nursing homes, which are highly regulated with mandated staffing levels and frequent state inspections by the Department of Public Health, assisted living residences (ALRs) are less regulated, with oversight by the Executive Office of Aging & Independence (AGE) providing less frequent recertifications and minimal staffing requirements. Although a new state law allows ALRs to offer basic medical care, advocates argue this blurs the line between ALRs and nursing homes without commensurate oversight, leading to concerns about inadequate staffing, care, and emergency preparedness.

The tragedy at Gabriel House, a lower-income facility with many Medicaid residents, further underscores this gap, as survivors reported a lack of staff assistance during the fire. While the Massachusetts Assisted Living Association asserts existing procedures ensure resident care, advocates point to a surge in reported abuse, neglect, and exploitation incidents in ALRs from 2019-2024.

In response, Governor Maura Healey has mandated a fire safety assessment survey for all ALRs and requires them to communicate emergency plans to residents. However, critics like Paul Lanzikos and Senator Mark Montigny argue for stronger measures, including independent safety reviews, mandated staffing ratios, more frequent inspections, and greater state penalty powers.

Several initiatives are underway to address these issues, including a new long-term care law, a state commission (including Kathleen Lynch Moncata) examining ALR regulations, and anticipated new regulations from the Attorney General to protect residents from deceptive business practices. These efforts aim to make ALRs more affordable, safe, and transparent, acknowledging that while ALRs serve a vital purpose, they are not "nursing homes with chandeliers" and require more robust oversight to ensure resident safety and quality of care.

2. **BBC News Hour**

July 20, 2025

[After deadly fire, Massachusetts orders safety plans from assisted living centers](#)

By Colin A. Young /State House News Service

In response to a fatal fire at Gabriel House in Fall River that killed nine residents, Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey announced new statewide fire safety mandates for all 273 assisted living facilities. By next week, facilities must send residents and families letters detailing fire safety protocols and evacuation plans, and complete a state fire safety assessment survey covering sprinklers, drills, and fire-rated doors. The Executive Office of Aging & Independence will oversee this initiative and is also finalizing broader regulatory amendments. While Senator Mark Montigny called the measures a "step in the right direction," he stressed the need for stronger regulations, citing concerns

about self-reporting and the lack of evacuation plans or drills at Gabriel House despite prior inspections.

3. Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette

July 20, 2025

[Lack of preparation said cause of deaths in care home blaze](#)

By Michael Casey and Michelle R. Smith, The Associated Press

The fatal July 13th fire at Gabriel House in Fall River, Massachusetts, which killed 10 residents, has exposed critical safety and staffing gaps in the assisted living industry. Unlike nursing homes, assisted living facilities like Gabriel House, which often care for residents with significant medical needs, lack federal regulations and have inconsistent state oversight. Advocates, including Richard Mollot of the Long Term Care Community Coalition, describe the sector as the "Wild West," with minimal regulations that haven't kept pace with the increasing frailty of residents. This allows facilities to operate with limited requirements for staffing, training, or inspections, leading to concerns about both safety and potential financial exploitation. Senator Elizabeth Warren and other advocates have long called for increased oversight of assisted living facilities, highlighting the stark contrast in regulation compared to federally governed nursing homes.

4. *Boston Globe

July 19, 2025

[Mass. seeks info on assisted living fire protocols](#)

By Jason Laughlin and Kay Lazar

Following a deadly fire at Gabriel House in Fall River that killed nine seniors and injured 30, Massachusetts is implementing new statewide fire safety measures for its 273 assisted living facilities. These include a mandatory fire safety assessment survey, due within 30 days, to collect data on sprinkler systems, drills, and evacuation plans, as well as building age and key systems. Additionally, all facilities must, within five days, send letters to residents and families detailing fire safety protocols and emergency contacts, and post evacuation information in all units and common areas.

While Governor Maura Healey emphasized these as crucial steps for resident safety, advocates like Paul Lanzikos and Senator Mark Montigny argue that self-reporting is insufficient. They call for independent safety reviews, assessments of residents' evacuation capabilities, more frequent drills, and enhanced staff training, highlighting that assisted living facilities are far less regulated than nursing homes, despite increasingly caring for residents with significant mobility or cognitive limitations. The cause of the Gabriel House fire, which housed a low-income population with many MassHealth enrollees, remains under investigation, with survivors reporting staff abandoning them and a lack of prior fire drills.

5. *New York Times

July 19, 2025

[Fire at Massachusetts Assisted Living Facility Claims a 10th Life](#)

By Ashley Ahn

Brenda Cropper, 66, died at a hospital after being in critical condition all week after the fire erupted on Sunday, officials said.

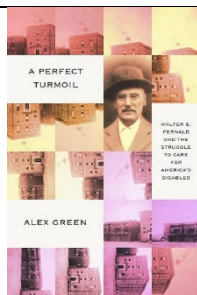
A tenth person, Brenda Cropper, 66, has died following a fire at Gabriel House assisted living facility in Fall River, Massachusetts, on Sunday.

The blaze, the deadliest in the state in 40 years, injured over two dozen

	<p>and its cause remains under investigation. The local firefighters' union, IAFF Local 1314, claims inadequate staffing due to unheeded warnings from city leaders may have contributed to the fatalities. Fall River Mayor Paul Coogan refutes this, stating recent staffing requests were met and deployment is the fire department's responsibility. The building reportedly had sprinklers and working alarms, though their function at the time of the fire is still being verified.</p> <p>6. PBS News Hour July 16, 2025 Fire at Massachusetts assisted-living community gutted a tough community, victims' relatives say By Corey Williams, Ben Finley, and Patrick Whittle, Associated Press The fatal fire at Gabriel House, a 100-unit assisted living facility in Fall River, Massachusetts, which killed ten residents, has highlighted the complex role the facility played in its community. Despite having an aging appearance and a history of citations for delayed incident reporting, Gabriel House was a central hub for many residents, particularly those with limited financial means, offering a supportive environment. The tragedy has deeply impacted Fall River, a city known for its resilience and close-knit, historically immigrant community, which has rallied in support. However, the incident has also drawn criticism towards the facility's owner for his absence in the aftermath. The fire is the latest in a long history of hardships for the economically challenged city, prompting reflections on the need for improved affordable housing and care options for its vulnerable population.</p>
Nursing Homes	<p>7. McKnights Long-Term Care News July 10, 2025 Genesis HealthCare files for bankruptcy, nearing sale By Kimberly Marselas Genesis HealthCare, a major skilled nursing chain, has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy to address its significant "legacy debt structure," estimated between \$1 billion and \$10 billion. The filing includes a proposed acquisition by a current affiliate, ReGen Healthcare, which is subject to higher bidding. Genesis operates approximately 175-218 facilities across 18-19 states and assures that operations, employment, and vendor contracts will continue seamlessly throughout the reorganization. The company, which has struggled for years and especially during COVID-19, aims to emerge as a stronger entity focused on clinical and operational excellence.</p>
Assistive Living	<p>8. *Boston Globe July 17, 2025 What is an assisted living facility — and how does it differ from a nursing home? By Srah Rahal Assisted living residences (ALRs) in Massachusetts provide housing, meals, and support for daily activities to older adults, prioritizing independence for those who don't require complex medical care. Unlike nursing homes, which offer 24/7 medical care and are federally regulated by Medicare/Medicaid and state-inspected by the Department of Public Health, ALRs are certified by the Executive Office of Aging & Independence with less stringent oversight and no mandated minimum clinical staffing levels. While ALRs can now offer basic health services, the average monthly cost in Massachusetts is nearly \$10,000, typically</p>

	<p>paid privately or through long-term care insurance, as traditional health insurance, Medicare, and generally Medicaid (MassHealth) do not cover them. This leaves a "gap" for many seniors who need assistance but don't qualify for nursing home care and can't afford ALRs, a need that facilities like the now-burned Gabriel House, which served a high percentage of Medicaid residents, aimed to address. Other aging services in Massachusetts include PACE, Senior Care Options, various senior housing options, continuing care retirement communities, and rest homes. When choosing an ALR, experts advise considering staff tenure, meal quality, activities offered, and feedback from current residents and families.</p>
Long-Term Care	<p>9. The Center for Retirement Research at Boston College <i>What Can We Learn About Long-Term Care Models from Home and Abroad?</i> By Harry Margolis July 17, 2025 Ben Veghte, executive director of the Washington Cares Fund, discussed two distinct approaches to long-term care: Washington's innovative public financing model and the Dutch senior care system. The Washington Cares Fund, launching in July 2026, will offer residents up to \$36,500 for long-term care, funded by a 0.58% payroll tax. Veghte acknowledges the modest benefit but frames it as a crucial first step towards universal coverage, enabling more affordable private long-term care insurance and easing the burden on informal caregivers. He envisions this as a paradigm shift from individual to shared social responsibility for care. Shifting to the Dutch model, Veghte highlighted its success in providing high-quality, lower-cost care through readily available senior housing and a cultural acceptance of older adults moving into congregate settings, fostering community support. He also advocated for social investing in housing co-ops as seen in the Netherlands. Ultimately, Veghte champions universal long-term care coverage as the most impactful initiative, believing it would improve care quality due to broader stakeholder investment and be accepted by the public, much like Social Security.</p>
Private Equity	<p>10. *Boston Globe July 13, 2025 <i>The loophole that could allow another private equity debacle in Mass. health care</i> By Neil Mehta Stemming from a 1937 Massachusetts court ruling, the "corporate practice of medicine" (CPOM) doctrine historically barred unlicensed corporations from employing doctors to prevent financial influence over patient care. While over half of states adopted CPOM bans, lax enforcement and exceptions, particularly for hospitals, weakened this principle, allowing private equity firms to invest heavily in healthcare. A common workaround, the "friendly physician" loophole, involves private equity firms using shell companies to manage practices, with a compliant doctor nominally in charge. Inspired by these historical precedents and recent issues like the Steward Health Care collapse, a renewed legal movement is challenging private equity in medicine. Oregon, for example, recently passed legislation to restrict private equity takeovers by curbing the "friendly physician" loophole, banning shell company contractors from</p>

	<p>influencing medical and business decisions, and prohibiting doctors from working for both a shell company and an affiliated practice. However, Massachusetts' recent healthcare reform, while addressing some financial tactics, notably left this loophole open and continues to permit private equity ownership of hospitals and physician practices. Other states like North Carolina and Vermont are also pursuing stronger CPOM legislation to prevent financial interests from compromising medical practice.</p>
<p><i>A Raise for Mom: Campaign to Increase the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA)</i></p>	<p><i>The Campaign to Increase the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA)</i></p> <p>For nearly 20 years, the Personal Needs Allowance for Nursing Home and Rest Home residents has been stuck at \$72.80 per month. If inflation had been factored since the amount was last set, the allowance should now be about \$113.42. Costs for everything have increased over the last two decades, but the PNA has remained unchanged. That means that folks residing in nursing homes and rest homes have been paying ever higher prices for their personal needs – items not covered within the care, room, and board required to be provided by nursing and rest homes. These residents are obligated to pay almost all their monthly Social Security and other income for their basic care leaving the PNA to cover all other life's necessities. Amplifying this situation, Massachusetts has the highest cost of living of any state in the continental United States – meaning these vulnerable residents can afford less each and every year.</p> <p>Three similar bills have been filed in the Massachusetts Legislature this year and are awaiting a public hearing with the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing, chaired by Senator Cindy Friedman and Representative John Lawn. The bills to raise the PNA are Senate Bill 887 by Senator Joan Lovely and others; Senate Bill 482 by Senators Patricia Jehlen and Mark Montigny and others; and House Bill 1411 by Representative Thomas Stanley and others. As of the middle of May, twenty-nine legislators (11 senators, 16 representatives) have already co-sponsored one or more of these bills. DignityMA, AARP Massachusetts, and LeadingAge Massachusetts are among the statewide organizations that have indicated support of the PNA legislation. There's still time for other legislators to become co-sponsors. Please contact your state senator and representative using this link: https://dignityalliancema.org/take-action/#/25. It literally takes less than a minute to deliver the message.</p> <p>If you are a nursing or rest home resident, family member, or caregiver and have a story about the inadequacy of the current PNA, your story can help put an important human face on why this raise is so necessary. Please submit your story via https://tinyurl.com/ForgetMeNotPNA or you can email your story to Dignity Alliance MA (info@DignityAllianceMA.org), noting at least your first name and town where you live so that we can include your story in the testimony submitted to the Legislature.</p> <p><i>*We selected the Forget-me-not as our symbol to encourage legislators to remember older adults in nursing and rest homes who have gone so long without a raise in the PNA.</i></p>
<p>Books by DignityMA Participants</p>	<p><u>A Perfect Turmoil: Walter E. Fernald and the Struggle to Care for America's Disabled</u></p>



About the Author:

Alex Green 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.

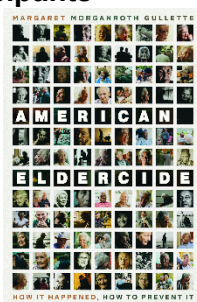
By Alex Green

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, *A Perfect Turmoil* 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.

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.

[Buy the book here](#)

Books by DignityMA Participants



About the Author:

Margaret Morganroth Gullette 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 *Agewise*, *Aged by Culture*, and *Ending Ageism, or How Not to Shoot Old People*. Her writing has appeared in publications such as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Guardian*, *Atlantic*, *Nation*, and the *Boston Globe*. She is a resident scholar at the Women's Studies Research Center, Brandeis, and lives in Newton, Massachusetts.

[American Eldercide: How It Happened, How to Prevent It](#)

By [Margaret Morganroth Gullette](#)

A bracing spotlight on the avoidable causes of the COVID-19 Eldercide in the United States.

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 *American Eldercide*, 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 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.

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.

[Buy the book here.](#)

Bringing People Home: The Marsters Settlement

Webpages:

https://www.centerforpublicrep.org/court_case/marsters-et-al-v-healey-et-al/
<https://marsters.centerforpublicrep.org/>

<div><div><div>Support Dignity Alliance Massachusetts</div><div>Please Donate!</div></div></div>	<div>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.</div> <div>As a fully volunteer operation, our financial needs are modest, but also real. Your donation helps to produce and distribute <i>The Dignity Digest</i> weekly free of charge to almost 1,000 recipients and maintain our website, www.DignityAllianceMA.org, which has thousands of visits each month.</div> <div>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.</div> <div>https://dignityalliancema.org/donate/</div> <div>Thank you for your consideration!</div>	
<div>Dignity Alliance Massachusetts Legislative Endorsements</div>	<div>Information about the legislative bills which have been endorsed by Dignity Alliance Massachusetts, including the text of the bills, can be viewed at: https://tinyurl.com/DignityLegislativeEndorsements</div> <div>Questions or comments can be directed to Legislative Work Group Chair Richard (Dick) Moore at rmoore8473@charter.net.</div>	
Websites		
Blogs		
Podcasts		
YouTube Channels		
Previously recommended websites	<div>The comprehensive list of recommended websites has migrated to the Dignity Alliance MA website: https://dignityalliancema.org/resources/. Only new recommendations will be listed in <i>The Dignity Digest</i>.</div>	
Previously posted funding opportunities	<div>For open funding opportunities previously posted in <i>The Tuesday Digest</i> please see https://dignityalliancema.org/funding-opportunities/.</div>	
Websites of Dignity Alliance Massachusetts Members	<div>See: https://dignityalliancema.org/about/organizations/</div>	
Contact information for reporting complaints and concerns	<div>Nursing home</div>	<div>Department of Public Health<div><div>1. Print and complete the Consumer/Resident/Patient Complaint Form</div><div>2. Fax completed form to (617) 753-8165</div></div>Or<div>Mail to 67 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA 01752</div><div>Ombudsman Program</div></div>
MassHealth Eligibility Information	<div>MassHealth / Massachusetts Medicaid Income & Asset Limits for Nursing Homes & Long-Term Care</div> <div>Table of Contents (Last updated: December 16, 2024)</div>	

	Massachusetts Medicaid Long-Term Care Definition Income & Asset Limits for Eligibility Income Definition & Exceptions Asset Definition & Exceptions Home Exemption Rules Medical / Functional Need Requirements Qualifying When Over the Limits Specific Massachusetts Medicaid Programs How to Apply for Massachusetts Medicaid
Money Follows the Person	MassHealth Money Follows the Person <p>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.</p> <p>Statistics as of March 31, 2025: 344 people transitioned out of nursing facilities in 2024 49 transitions in January and February 2025 910 currently in transition planning</p> Open PDF file, 1.34 MB, MFP Demonstration Brochure MFP Demonstration Brochure - Accessible Version MFP Demonstration Fact Sheet MFP Demonstration Fact Sheet - Accessible Version
Nursing Home Closures	List of Nursing Home Closures in Massachusetts Since July 2021: https://dignityalliancema.org/2025/04/07/nursing-home-closures-since-july-2021/
Determination of Need Projects	List of Determination of Need Applications regarding nursing homes since 2020: https://dignityalliancema.org/2025/04/07/list-of-determination-of-need-applications/ Recent approval: Town of Nantucket – Long Term Care Substantial Capital Expenditure Approved May 5, 2025
List of Special Focus Facilities	Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services <i>List of Special Focus Facilities and Candidates</i> https://www.cms.gov/files/document/sff-posting-candidate-list-march-2025.pdf Updated March 26, 2025 <p>CMS has published a new list of Special Focus Facilities (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.</p> <p>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.</p>

	<p>This is important information for consumers – particularly as they consider a nursing home.</p> <p>What can advocates do with this information?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include the list of facilities in your area/state when providing information to consumers who are looking for a nursing home. Include an explanation of the SFF program and the candidate list. • Post the list on your program's/organization's website (along with the explanation noted above). • Encourage current residents and families to check the list to see if their facility is included. • Urge residents and families in a candidate facility to ask the administrator what is being done to improve care. • Suggest that resident and family councils invite the administrator to a council meeting to talk about what the facility is doing to improve care, ask for ongoing updates, and share any council concerns. • For long-term care ombudsmen representatives: Meet with the administrator to discuss what the facility is doing to address problems and share any resources that might be helpful. <p>Massachusetts facilities listed (updated)</p> <p>Newly added to the listing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salem Rehab Center, Salem https://www.adviniacare.com/adviniacare-salem/ Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225644/ • Fall River Healthcare https://www.nextstephc.com/fallriver Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225723/ <p>Massachusetts facilities which have graduated from the program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marlborough Hills Rehabilitation and Health Care Center, Marlborough https://tinyurl.com/MarlboroughHills Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225063 • Somerset Ridge Center, Somerset https://somersetridgerehab.com/ Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225747 • Tremont Healthcare Center, Wareham https://thetremontrehabcare.com/ Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225488/ <p>Massachusetts facilities that are candidates for listing (months on list)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AdviniaCare Newburyport (13) https://www.adviniacare.com/adviniacare-country-center/ Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225332 • Brandon Woods of New Bedford (1) https://brandonwoodsnewbedford.com/ Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225264/ • Cape Cod Post Acute, Brewster (9)
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	<p>https://capecodrehabhc.com/ Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225667/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Charwell House Health and Rehabilitation, Norwood (37) https://tinyurl.com/Charwell Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225208Life Care Center of Merrimack Valley, Billerica (2) https://lcca.com/locations/ma/merrimack-valley/ Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225546/Medway Country Manor Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation, Medway (1) https://www.medwaymanor.com/ Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225412Pine Knoll Nursing Center, Lexington, (3) https://www.longtermcentersgroup.com/About-Pine-Knoll-Nursing-Center-Rehab Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225049/RegalCare at Glen Ridge (20) https://www.genesishcc.com/glenridge Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225523West Newton Healthcare, West Newton (9) https://www.nextstephc.com/westnewton Nursing home inspect information: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/homes/h-225324/ <p>No longer operating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">South Dennis Healthcare, South Dennis https://tinyurl.com/SpecialFocusFacilityProgram																												
Nursing Home Inspect	<p>ProPublica Nursing Home Inspect Data updated April 23, 2025</p> <p>This app uses data from the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Fines are listed for the past three years if a home has made partial or full payment (fines under appeal are not included). Information on deficiencies comes from a home’s last three inspection cycles, or roughly three years in total. The number of COVID-19 cases is since May 8, 2020, when homes were required to begin reporting this information to the federal government (some homes may have included data on earlier cases).</p> <p>Massachusetts listing: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/state/MA</p> <p>Deficiencies By Severity in Massachusetts (What do the severity ratings mean?)</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>Tag B</td></tr><tr><td>C</td><td>106</td><td>82</td><td>Tag C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>7,445</td><td>1,401</td><td>Tag D</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>2,133</td><td>767</td><td>Tag E</td></tr><tr><td>F</td><td>676</td><td>314</td><td>Tag F</td></tr><tr><td>G</td><td>517</td><td>339</td><td>Tag G</td></tr></table>	Deficiency Tag	# Deficiencies	# Facilities	MA facilities cited	B	315	222	Tag B	C	106	82	Tag C	D	7,445	1,401	Tag D	E	2,133	767	Tag E	F	676	314	Tag F	G	517	339	Tag G
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	<div>H 58 35 Tag H</div> <div>I 3 2 Tag I</div> <div>J 53 28 Tag J</div> <div>K 27 9 Tag K</div> <div>L 9 3 Tag L</div> <div>Updated April 23, 2025</div>		
Nursing Home Compare	Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) <i>Nursing Home Compare Website</i> Beginning January 26, 2022, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is posting new information that will help consumers have a better understanding of certain staffing information and concerns at facilities. This information will be posted for each facility and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff turnover: The percentage of nursing staff as well as the number of administrators who have stopped working at a nursing home over the past 12-month period. • Weekend staff: The level of weekend staffing for nurses and registered nurses at a nursing home over a three-month period. Posting this information was required as part of the Affordable Care Act, which was passed in 2010. In many facilities, staffing is lower on weekends, often meaning residents have to wait longer or may not receive all the care they need. High turnover means that staff are less likely to know the residents, recognize changes in condition, or implement preferred methods of providing care. All of this contributes to the quality-of-care residents receive and their quality of life. https://tinyurl.com/NursingHomeCompareWebsite		
Data on Ownership of Nursing Homes	Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services <i>Data on Ownership of Nursing Homes</i> CMS has released data giving state licensing officials, state and federal law enforcement, researchers, and the public an enhanced ability to identify common owners of nursing homes across nursing home locations. This information can be linked to other data sources to identify the performance of facilities under common ownership, such as owners affiliated with multiple nursing homes with a record of poor performance. The data is available on nursing home ownership will be posted to data.cms.gov and updated monthly.		
DignityMA Call Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for state bills that advance the Dignity Alliance Massachusetts' Mission and Goals – State Legislative Endorsements. • Support relevant bills in Washington – Federal Legislative Endorsements. • Join our Work Groups. • Learn to use and leverage social media at our workshops: Engaging Everyone: Creating Accessible, Powerful Social Media Content 		
Access to Dignity Alliance social media	Email: info@DignityAllianceMA.org Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/DignityAllianceMA/ Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/dignityalliance/ LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/dignity-alliance-massachusetts Twitter: https://twitter.com/dignity_ma?s=21 Website: www.DignityAllianceMA.org		
Participation opportunities with	Workgroup	Workgroup lead	Email
	General Membership	Bill Henning Paul Lanzikos	bhenning@bostoncouncil.org paul.lanzikos@gmail.com
	Assisted Living	John Ford	jford@njc-ma.org

Dignity Alliance Massachusetts Most workgroups meet bi-weekly via Zoom. Interest Groups meet periodically (monthly, bi- monthly, or quarterly). Please contact group lead for more information.	Behavioral Health	Frank Baskin	baskinfrank19@gmail.com
	Communications	Lachlan Forrow	lforrow@bidmc.harvard.edu
	Facilities (Nursing homes and rest homes)	Jim Lomastro Arlene Germain	jimlomastro@comcast.net agermain@manhr.org
	Home and Community Based Services	Meg Coffin	mcoffin@centerlw.org
	Legislative	Richard Moore	rmoore8743@charter.net
	Legal Issues	Stephen Schwartz	sschwartz@cpr-ma.org
	Interest Group	Group lead	Email
	Housing	Bill Henning	bhenning@bostoncil.org
	Veteran Services	James Lomastro	jimlomastro@comcast.net
	Transportation	Frank Baskin Chris Hoeh	baskinfrank19@gmail.com cdhoeh@gmail.com
	Covid / Long Covid	James Lomastro	jimlomastro@comcast.net
	Incarcerated Persons	TBD	info@DignityAllianceMA.org
Bringing People Home: Implementing the Marsters class action settlement	Website: https://marsters.centerforpublicrep.org/ Center for Public Representation 5 Ferry Street, #314, Easthampton, MA 01027 413-586-6024, Press 2 bringingpeoplehome@cpr-ma.org Newsletter registration: https://marsters.centerforpublicrep.org/7b3c2-contact/		
REV UP Massachusetts	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: https://revupma.org/wp/ To join REV UP Massachusetts – go to the SIGN UP page .		
The Dignity Digest	For a free weekly subscription to <i>The Dignity Digest</i> : https://dignityalliancema.org/contact/sign-up-for-emails/ Editor: Paul Lanzikos Primary contributor: Sandy Novack MailChimp Specialist: Sue Rorke		
Note of thanks	Thanks to the contributors to this issue of <i>The Dignity Digest</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Special thanks to the MetroWest Center for Independent Living for assistance with the website and MailChimp versions of <i>The Dignity Digest</i> . <i>If you have submissions for inclusion in <u>The Dignity Digest</u> or have questions or comments, please submit them to Digest@DignityAllianceMA.org.</i>		
<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> <i>Our guiding principle is the assurance of dignity for those receiving the services as well as for those providing them.</i> <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> <i>Previous issues of The Tuesday Digest and The Dignity Digest are available at:</i> https://dignityalliancema.org/dignity-digest/ <i>For more information about Dignity Alliance Massachusetts, please visit www.DignityAllianceMA.org.</i>			

