

A RAISE FOR MOM

(Or Dad, Grandma, Grandpa—
All Our Loved Ones)

CAMPAIGN TO RAISE THE PNA TOOL KIT

Increasing the
Personal Needs
Allowance (PNA)

for nursing home and home
residents is rooted in dignity, equity,
and quality of life.



A SPECIAL PROJECT OF

**DIGNITY ALLIANCE
MASSACHUSETTS**



Campaign to Raise the PNA Tool Kit

The strongest argument for increasing the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA) for nursing home and home residents is rooted in **dignity, equity, and quality of life**.

Why It Matters

- **Basic Human Dignity:** The PNA is often the *only* discretionary income residents have to cover personal items like clothing, toiletries, phone bills, and even snacks. When this allowance is too low—sometimes as little as \$30 per month forces residents to choose between essentials, undermining their autonomy and dignity².
- **Inflation Has Eroded Its Value:** The federal minimum of \$30 hasn't changed since 1987. Adjusted for inflation, that's worth less than half today. Meanwhile, the cost of living has surged, making it nearly impossible for residents to afford even modest personal comforts².
- **Health Equity and Mental Well-being:** Researchers argue that increasing the PNA is a matter of health equity. When residents can't afford basic personal items, it affects their mental health, self-esteem, and overall well-being. It also places emotional strain on staff, who often try to fill the gap out of compassion².
- **State Disparities Are Stark:** Some states like Alaska offer up to \$200 per month, while others stick to the bare minimum. This inconsistency highlights the need for federal action to ensure all residents, regardless of geography, can age with dignity².
- **Grassroots Advocacy Is Growing:** Residents themselves are speaking out. In New York, for example, a petition campaign led by nursing home residents is pushing to raise the \$50 monthly stipend that hasn't budged in over 40 years.

In short, increasing the PNA isn't just a financial adjustment, it's a moral imperative. It's about recognizing that even in institutional care, people deserve the means to express themselves, maintain their identity, and live with comfort and pride.

How PNA Affects Quality of Life

- **Preserves Dignity and Autonomy** The PNA is often the *only* money residents have control over. It allows them to make choices—what shampoo they prefer, which snacks

they enjoy, or how they want to stay in touch with loved ones. Without it, even basic self-expression becomes difficult.

- **Supports Social Connection** Residents use their PNA to buy greeting cards, pay for phone bills, or go out for a meal with friends. These small acts help maintain relationships and reduce isolation, which is vital for mental health.
- **Covers Essentials Not Provided by Facilities** While nursing homes supply basic hygiene items, the quality and variety may be limited. Residents often rely on their PNA for better toiletries, clothing, shoes, and even therapeutic services like optometry or dentistry in some states.
- **Mental and Emotional Well-being** When residents can't afford a haircut or a new pair of socks, it affects their self-esteem. Staff members report feeling heartbroken when they have to tell residents they can't afford such basics. This financial strain can lead to feelings of helplessness and loss of identity.
- **Equity and Fairness** The disparity across states is stark—some offer up to \$200/month, while others stick to the federal minimum of \$30. This inconsistency means that a resident's quality of life can vary dramatically depending on where they live.

In essence, the PNA isn't just pocket change, it's a lifeline to **dignity, choice, and connection**. Increasing it would be a powerful step toward honoring the humanity of those in long-term care.

Join the Campaign

There's a growing movement to improve the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA), and advocates are using a mix of **grassroots pressure, legislative action, and public awareness** to push for change.

Here's how anyone passionate about this issue—can get involved:



Legislative Advocacy

- **Support State-Level Bills:** In Massachusetts, for example, AARP is backing bills like *H.1411* and *S.887*, which aim to increase and codify the PNA for long-term care residents. Advocates are urging lawmakers to recognize that the current federal minimum of \$30/month is outdated and insufficient.
- **Join Advocacy Groups:** Organizations like Dignity Alliance Massachusetts are leading the charge. They host legislative briefings, publish research, and amplify the voices of residents and caregivers. Their current proposal seeks to raise the PNA from \$72.80 to \$113.48/month, aligning it with inflation over the past 18 years.



Grassroots Mobilization

- **Tell Your Story:** Personal testimonies from residents, families, and caregivers are powerful. Groups like Consumer Voice encourage people to share how the PNA affects their lives, which helps humanize the issue for policymakers.

- **Petitions and Letter-Writing Campaigns:** Residents and allies have launched petitions and written letters to state legislators, urging them to act. These efforts are especially effective when coordinated with advocacy organizations.
- **Engage Local Media:** Writing op-eds or contacting local news outlets can raise awareness and put public pressure on lawmakers.

If you're in Massachusetts, you're in a hotbed of advocacy right now.

Sample Letter to Your Legislator

Draft a letter to your state senator or representative!

Here's a compelling and respectful draft you can use to urge your Massachusetts state senator and representative to support increasing the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA) for nursing home and rest home residents:

Subject: Support for Increasing the Personal Needs Allowance for Long-Term Care Residents

Dear [Representative's Name],

My name is (insert your name), and I'm writing to express my strong support for legislation that would increase the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA) for residents in nursing homes and rest homes across Massachusetts.

As you know, the PNA is the only discretionary income many residents have to cover essential personal items—such as toiletries, clothing, phone bills, and other basic comforts that contribute to their dignity and well-being. The current allowance of \$72.80 per month has not kept pace with inflation or the rising cost of living. It falls far short of what is needed to maintain even a modest quality of life.

I urge you to support bills like *H.1411* and *S.887*, which would raise the PNA to \$113.48 per month, aligning it with inflation over the past 18 years. This increase would make a meaningful difference in the lives of thousands of vulnerable residents, allowing them to maintain autonomy, preserve their dignity, and participate more fully in daily life.


Massachusetts has long been a leader in compassionate care and elder advocacy. Updating the PNA is a simple yet powerful way to reaffirm that commitment.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued service to our community.

Sincerely,

Sample Social Media Post:

Here's a punchy and heartfelt social media post you can use to rally support for increasing the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA) in Massachusetts:

 Imagine living in a nursing home with just \$72.80/month to cover everything *not* provided—clothes, toiletries, phone bills, even a haircut. That's the reality for thousands of residents in Massachusetts.

It's time to raise the Personal Needs Allowance to \$113.48/month and restore dignity, autonomy, and comfort to those who need it most.

I support bills H.1411 and S.887—because aging shouldn't mean losing your voice or your choices.

Let's make Massachusetts a leader in compassionate care. #RaiseThePNA #DignityMatters #ElderJustice #MAleg

Letter to the Editor *Advocating for Dignity: Increase the Personal Needs Allowance*

To the Editor,

Every day, thousands of nursing home and rest home residents across Massachusetts live with dignity—but barely. The Personal Needs Allowance (PNA), which provides a small monthly stipend for residents to purchase essentials not covered by Medicaid, has remained stagnant for years. At just \$72.80 per month, this amount is expected to cover clothing, toiletries, phone bills, and other personal items. In today's economy, that's not just unrealistic—it's unjust.

Imagine trying to buy a pair of shoes, a birthday card for a grandchild, or even a haircut with less than \$3 a day. These aren't luxuries—they're basic human needs that contribute to self-worth, independence, and mental well-being. Residents in long-term care facilities deserve more than institutional care; they deserve the ability to maintain a sense of self.

Massachusetts prides itself on being a leader in healthcare and compassion. Yet we lag behind other states that have already increased their PNA to reflect modern costs. Raising the PNA is not a budgetary burden—it's a moral imperative. It's a statement that we value our elders not just in words, but in action.

I urge our legislators to act swiftly and raise the Personal Needs Allowance to a level that reflects today's cost of living. Let's give our most vulnerable citizens the dignity they deserve.

Sincerely,

Sample Graphic for use on social media

Here's your graphic, ready to share and spark change. It's bold, heartfelt, and designed to make people stop scrolling and start caring.




Imagine living in a nursing home with just \$72.80/month to cover everything not provided—clothes, toiletries, phone bills, even a haircut.

**IT'S TIME TO RAISE THE
PERSONAL NEEDS
ALLOWANCE TO \$113.48
/MONTH** and restore dignity,
autonomy, and comfort to those
who need it most.

I support bills H.1411 and S.887—because aging shouldn't mean losing your voice or your choices


**#RaiseThePNA #DignityMatters
#ElderJustice**

Facebook Post (Longer, Story-Driven Format)

Header:  *Aging with dignity shouldn't be a luxury—it should be a right.*


Body: Did you know that nursing home residents in Massachusetts get just **\$72.80/month** to cover all their personal expenses—clothes, toiletries, phone bills, even a haircut? That's their Personal Needs Allowance (PNA), and it hasn't kept up with inflation or basic human dignity.

I'm calling on our legislators to support bills **H.1411** and **S.887**, which would raise the PNA to **\$113.48/month**. This small change would make a huge difference in the lives of thousands of residents who deserve comfort, autonomy, and respect.

Let's make Massachusetts a leader in compassionate elder care.  Share this post. Tag your rep. Let's raise the PNA.

Hashtags: #RaiseThePNA #DignityMatters #ElderJustice #MAleg #CompassionateCare

Instagram Caption (Shorter, Visual-First Format)

Caption:  Imagine living in a nursing home with just **\$72.80/month** for everything personal—clothes, toiletries, even a haircut. That's not dignity. That's neglect.

Let's raise the Personal Needs Allowance to **\$113.48/month** and restore comfort, autonomy, and respect to those who need it most.

I support bills **H.1411** and **S.887**. Do you?




 Tag your rep. Share this post. Let's make change happen. #RaiseThePNA #DignityMatters #ElderJustice #MAleg


Image Tip: Use the graphic we created earlier as your post image—it's perfect for Instagram's square format and will stand out in the feed.

message into a compelling **Instagram Story sequence**—perfect for grabbing attention and driving advocacy. Each slide is short, visual, and emotionally resonant:

Instagram Story Sequence: “Raise the PNA”


Slide 1: Bold Intro   **"What can you buy with \$72.80/month?"** *If you live in a Massachusetts nursing home... that's all you get for personal needs.*

Slide 2: Reality Check    **Toiletries. Clothes. Phone bills. Haircuts.** That's what residents must cover with their Personal Needs Allowance. It hasn't increased in years.

Slide 3: Call to Action  **Let's raise the PNA to \$113.48/month.** Support bills **H.1411** and **S.887**. Because dignity shouldn't be optional.

Slide 4: Your Voice Matters  **Tag your rep. Share this story.** Help restore comfort, autonomy, and respect to those who need it most.

Slide 5: Hashtag Slide #RaiseThePNA #DignityMatters #ElderJustice #MAleg

Your Instagram Story graphics (below) are ready to roll . They're bold, animated, and designed to stop thumbs mid-scroll. Each panel delivers your message with clarity and heart, perfect for rallying support to raise the Personal Needs Allowance in Massachusetts.

