



The Dignity Digest

Issue # 300

September 15, 2026

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.

Reflection

Editor's note:

[Disability Voting Rights Week is September 14-18, 2026.](#)

"Vote as if your life depends on it, because it does."

[Justin Dart Jr.](#), disability rights activist and leader in the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This quote was a central rallying cry popularized and frequently delivered by Justin during his nationwide grassroots advocacy work in the 1990s and early 2000s.

For millions of people with disabilities, Justin Dart Jr.'s words are not hyperbole—they are daily reality. The ballot box directly influences the policies governing healthcare access, home- and community-based support services, accessible infrastructure, education, and employment protections. Every election cycle shapes decisions on civil rights enforcement, assistive technology funding, and independent living resources that directly affect everyday autonomy and dignity. Exercising the right to vote requires dismantling ongoing barriers, from physically inaccessible polling places to non-compliant digital voting machines and restrictive absentee ballot laws. A true democracy cannot exist without full accessibility and equal representation.

Guide to news items in this week's *Dignity Digest*

Nursing Homes

- [Half of Nursing Homes Lose Eligibility for Risk-Based Survey in a Year](#) (Center for Medicare Advocacy, September 10, 2026)
- [CMS rolls out streamlined nursing home inspections](#) (Healthcare Finance, September 8, 2026)

Behavioral Health

- ["Tsunami" of Behavioral Health Challenges Amid OIG's Antipsychotics Work Plan Seen Impacting QMs and Reimbursement in Nursing Homes](#) (Skilled Nursing News, September 8, 2026)

Workforce

- [Nursing Home Workforce Remains Sector's Biggest Challenge and Opportunity, With AI and Value-Based Care Seen as Key Levers](#) (Skilled Nursing News, September 11, 2026)

State Policy

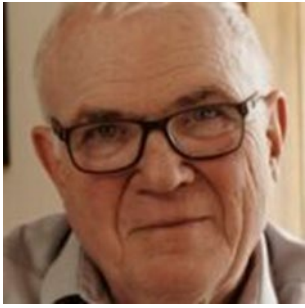
	• <u>Governor Healey Issues PROTECT Act Guidance for Health Care Providers, Employers, Law Enforcement and State Agencies</u> (Office of Governor Maura Healey and Lt. Kim Driscoll, September 8, 2026) Federal Policy • <u>128 Nursing Homes, Zero 24/7 Nurses</u> (Eugene Weekly, September 7, 2026) From Around the Country • <u>8 people rescued from assisted living facility fire in Glendale</u> (CBS LA (via YouTube), September 12, 2026) • <u>Auditor finds state nursing home inspections are often delayed</u> (New Jersey Monitor, September 9, 2026) • <u>Medi-Cal won't pay for assisted living in most of California. One brother fought back</u> (Pleasanton Weekly, September 8, 2026) From Our Colleagues from Around the Country • <u>(Center for Medicare Advocacy)</u>, September 10, 2026)
Quotes	<i>[A]fter three months, 20% of the nursing homes no longer qualified for RBS [the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services Risk Based Survey]. By February 2025, only half of the nursing homes (52%) would still have met the eligibility criteria for RBS.</i> <u>Half of Nursing Homes Lose Eligibility for Risk-Based Survey in a Year</u> (Center for Medicare Advocacy, September 10, 2026) <i>“You’re wasting money by dumping somebody like my sister in a skilled nursing facility and lessening her quality of life and her chance at doing better. By doing this, it makes no fundamental sense.”</i> John Aiello, who was advocating for Medicaid payment for his sister as a resident in a California assisted living residence, <u>Medi-Cal won't pay for assisted living in most of California. One brother fought back</u> (Pleasanton Weekly, September 8, 2026) <i>One of the legislative efforts that Sen. Ron Wyden has sponsored is the <u>Nurses Belong in Nursing Homes Act</u>, which would establish strict minimum staffing requirements within nursing homes. The act also requires a registered professional nurse to be on-site 24/7 and provides permanent funding for nursing home surveys, inspections and enforcement programs.</i>

	(Eugene Weekly, September 7, 2026) <i>“No one should have to weigh their health and safety against the fear of immigration enforcement. The PROTECT Act will help residents maintain access to services they need and ensure that places where people go for care will remain a trusted resource.”</i> Health and Human Services Secretary Kiame Mahaniah, MD, MBA, Governor Healey Issues PROTECT Act Guidance for Health Care Providers, Employers, Law Enforcement and State Agencies (Office of Governor Maura Healey and Lt. Kim Driscoll, September 8, 2026)
Spotlight  Noah Daube-Valois speaks to Jean Smith, a resident of a nursing home in Northampton. Daube-Valois hosts a podcast to highlight how residents live on \$72.80 a month in nursing homes. (Submitted courtesy photo) Access to podcast	<u>On his podcast, he speaks to nursing home residents living on \$72.80 a month</u> By Aprell May Munford MassLive.com September 13, 2026 NORTHAMPTON — For nearly two decades, Massachusetts nursing home residents on MassHealth have had less than \$75 a month to spend on personal needs, from toiletries to an occasional treat with their families. Hoping to build support for an increase, Noah Daube-Valois, a Vassar College student, launched the \$72.80 Project, a podcast featuring residents, elder care advocates and information on how listeners can contact their lawmakers. The idea grew out of a summer spent coordinating activities for residents at Rockridge Retirement Community in Northampton. But Daube-Valois’ connection to the facility began years earlier when he volunteered there as a pianist at age 16. “I fell in love with the place,” the 20-year-old said during an interview. A few years later, Daube-Valois became an activity assistant, a role he held for over two years. It was while taking residents on a recent shopping trip, he began to understand the financial challenges many faced. Many residents spent their lives working and paying into the system before entering nursing homes, and it was surprising to learn how little money they were able to keep for themselves after paying for their care, he said. The state’s Personal Needs Allowance, the monthly amount MassHealth recipients living in nursing homes and rest homes can keep from their income for personal expenses, has remained at \$72.80 a month, or about \$2.40 a day.

	It has been that way since 2008, he said. Daube-Valois said that during one of his most recent outings, several residents asked to stop at Dollar Tree because they could no longer justify spending an extra dollar or two at Walmart. Another resident became emotional while describing how the monthly allowance left him unable to afford outings with his grandson after covering his personal care needs, he said. “When our elders are forced to ration basic dignity in one of the wealthiest states in the nation, policy has failed. I created this podcast to spark a multi-generational fight for the right thing to do,” he said in a statement. Daube-Valois said he was surprised by how few people knew about the allowance. “What I have been met by was, ‘Wow that’s crazy. I had no idea,’” he said. He was also struck by how little it would cost to increase the allowance. While the state budget totals tens of billions of dollars, raising the personal needs allowance would cost about \$15 million, he said. “So not even a fraction of a percent,” he said. “Nobody would feel the impact, except if you’re a senior and you are struggling to get by.” He believes a lack of urgency on Beacon Hill has contributed to the allowance remaining unchanged for nearly two decades. “The people that this issue affects have very little political power,” he said. “We need to call an emergency session and that’s simply not what they’re doing.” He is not alone in pushing for an increase. Raising the allowance is a key priority for the advocacy group Dignity Alliance Massachusetts, said former state Sen. Richard T. Moore, chair of the legislative workgroup for the alliance. “Noah’s podcast brings human faces and lived experiences to numbers on a budget sheet,” Moore said. “It’s past time for the Legislature to restore basic financial dignity to our most vulnerable residents.” The alliance and Daube-Valois hope the podcast will help gather support of three bills pending in the Massachusetts Legislature that would increase the monthly allowance to \$100 and link future increases to inflation. While increasing the allowance would still leave Massachusetts below some other states, including Alaska (\$200), Nevada (\$163), and Florida (\$160), it would be a meaningful step forward, he said. Advocates estimate the allowance would exceed \$113 a month today if it had kept pace with inflation over the past 18 years, the alliance said in a statement.
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	The project is just as much about gratitude for the older adults Daube-Valois has worked with, whom he calls family, as it is about advocacy. “I hope that I can pay a little bit of what they’ve given to me back to them,” he said. He also hopes the podcast shows that individuals can make a difference on issues they care about. “Too often, especially young people, look at the political system we live in and think that it’s hopeless and there’s nothing that we can do,” he said. “By starting a project like this, I would like to disprove that.” Daube-Valois said among the first people he shared the podcast with was his grandparents, who are proud of the project. Unlike many of the residents he interviewed, they are financially secure in retirement, he said. But memories of his other grandparents, who have since died, also inspired the project. He described them as working-class people and recalled how his grandmother spent her final months in a Massachusetts nursing home, where she faced many of the same financial struggles as the residents featured in the podcast. Advocates estimate the allowance would exceed \$113 a month today if it had kept pace with inflation over the past 18 years, the alliance said in a statement. The project is just as much about gratitude for the older adults Daube-Valois has worked with, whom he calls family, as it is about advocacy. “I hope that I can pay a little bit of what they’ve given to me back to them,” he said. He also hopes the podcast shows that individuals can make a difference on issues they care about. “Too often, especially young people, look at the political system we live in and think that it’s hopeless and there’s nothing that we can do,” he said. “By starting a project like this, I would like to disprove that.” Daube-Valois said among the first people he shared the podcast with was his grandparents, who are proud of the project. Unlike many of the residents he interviewed, they are financially secure in retirement, he said. But memories of his other grandparents, who have since died, also inspired the project. He described them as working-class people and recalled how his grandmother spent her final months in a Massachusetts nursing home, where she faced many of the same financial struggles as the residents featured in the podcast.
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Commentary Offered by
DignityMA Participants



James A. Lomastro, PhD, is a member of the Coordinating Committee for Dignity Alliance Massachusetts and a surveyor for CARF International. He writes frequently on issues concerning nursing homes, home- and community-based services, private equity, artificial and augmented intelligence, and caregiving. He had an extensive career in healthcare administration and academia.

The views expressed by individuals are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policy position or perspective of Dignity Alliance Massachusetts.

Commentary
Offered by
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Participants

[Mass. needs a public guardian program, but with strong safeguards](#)

Boston Globe

By James Lomastro

September 10, 2026

The Globe is right: Massachusetts needs a publicly funded guardian program for adults ([“Guardians speak for incapacitated adults who can’t,”](#) Editorial, Aug. 31). No one should remain unnecessarily hospitalized because no qualified decision-maker is available, and the Commonwealth cannot continue relying on overworked volunteers. Public guardians should be trained, compensated, independently monitored, and assigned manageable caseloads.

However, support for public guardianship should not mean accepting default surrogacy without sufficient safeguards.

[Under the proposed law](#), the physician who determines that a patient lacks capacity could also select the surrogate.

Meanwhile, the hospital has a financial and operational interest in completing the patient’s discharge. Even when everyone acts in good faith, that concentration of authority creates a conflict that legislation must address.

Capacity is not all or nothing. Dementia, disability, age, or difficulty communicating should never replace an individualized assessment. Before appointing a surrogate, providers should offer communication accommodations and supported decision-making. Patients should receive understandable notice, retain the right to object, and have access to independent review.

A surrogate must follow the patient’s known wishes and values, not simply approve the hospital’s preferred plan.

Decisions involving institutional placement, restraint, or other serious restrictions deserve heightened scrutiny.

Massachusetts should establish a strong public guardian program while ensuring that surrogacy remains limited, independent, and accountable. Success should be measured not merely by faster discharges but also by whether people receive appropriate care in the least restrictive setting while retaining the greatest possible control over their lives.

Protection is necessary. Protection without voice becomes paternalism.

[Justice failed Ducky Anderson](#)

Salem News

By Paul Lanzikos

September 10, 2026

The recent “not guilty” verdict in the Salem Juvenile Court trial regarding the brutal 2024 assault of Chris “Ducky” Anderson, a



Paul Lanzikos is a cofounder and current coordinator of Dignity Alliance Massachusetts. He is a former Secretary of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs. The views expressed by individuals are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policy position or perspective of Dignity Alliance Massachusetts.

Related news articles:

[Teen found not guilty in Ducky assault](#) (Salem News, August 7, 2026)

[DA reacts to not guilty verdict in Ducky assault trial](#) (Salem News, August 7, 2026)

disabled Danvers resident, is a deeply unsettling outcome that underscores systemic failures in protecting our most vulnerable citizens (Salem News, Sept. 7). While, understandably, the legal system operates on technical burdens of proof, nonetheless, the reality remains that a vulnerable man with intellectual disabilities was led into a park, surrounded, and savagely beaten to the point of fearing for his life, leaving him with broken ribs and lasting trauma. For organizations like Dignity Alliance Massachusetts — which advocate fiercely for the right of older adults and people with disabilities to live with dignity, safety, and respect — this case represents a profound miscarriage of systemic accountability.

The details of the case are devastating. Mr. Anderson was swarmed by a group of youths, and despite changing stories and video evidence placing individuals at the scene, the prosecution failed to secure a conviction in this instance due to dropped charges and evidentiary hurdles. True justice requires a society where hate, intimidation, and violence directed at individuals with disabilities are met with absolute intolerance and robust legal protection. When the state fails to meet its burden or charges are dropped because key witnesses are unavailable, it sends a dangerous signal that crimes against disabled individuals may go unpunished.

We must do better to safeguard the basic human rights and dignity of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This outcome must serve as a wake-up call for our legal system, law enforcement, and local communities to ensure better victim support, stronger investigative protections, and an unyielding commitment to holding all participants in targeted violence fully accountable.

DignityMA Study Session



Grace Ferguson
Investigating Reporter
The New Bedford Light

DignityMA Study Session: Report: *Half of all nursing homes in Massachusetts are understaffed*

Presenter:

Grace Ferguson, Investigating Reporter
The New Bedford Light in conversation with
DignityMA Co-Founder, **former State Senator Richard Moore**

Wednesday, September 16, 2026 10:00 a.m.

Registration: <https://tinyurl.com/StudySessionGraceFerguson>

Grace Ferguson reports on nursing home care, housing, and transportation for The New Bedford Light. She graduated from Boston University and recently completed a fellowship reporting on police accountability for WBUR. She previously investigated housing issues in western Massachusetts for GBH News. Some of her reports involved a nursing home with more health citations than any other nursing home in Massachusetts in a year; Next Step nursing homes

	which were put in receivership for millions in unpaid rent and fees; and the Fall River Nursing Home which was labeled “the worst of the worst”. This study session will focus on Grace’s findings reported in her July 28, 2026 article, Half of all nursing homes in Massachusetts are understaffed.
DignityMA Study Session John Ford, Esq, Liane Zeitz, Esq. Kathleen Moncata, Esq.	DignityMA Study Session: <i>Navigating New Massachusetts Assisted Living Regulations</i> Presenters: John Ford, Esq. Liane Zeitz, Esq., Kathleen Moncata, Esq. Wednesday, September 30, 2026 11:00 a.m. Registration: https://tinyurl.com/ALR-Study-Session Massachusetts has implemented some of the most significant regulations regarding Assisted Living Residences (ALRs) in years. From enhanced consumer protection standards under Chapter 93A to critical safety mandates, fire preparedness, and the integration of Basic Health Services, these regulatory changes directly impact older adults, families, operators, and elder advocates. Join Dignity Alliance Massachusetts for an in-depth study session breaking down these new rules, what they mean for resident rights, and how they will be enforced. What You Will Learn • New Consumer Protections: Understand the Attorney General’s regulations targeting unfair or deceptive practices, billing transparency, and eviction protections. • Health & Safety Mandates: Review updated requirements for emergency preparedness, fire safety, and staff training. • Basic Health Services Framework: Learn the standards governing residences choosing to offer basic health care options and licensed nursing coverage. • Advocacy & Impact: Practical takeaways for residents, families, and professionals working to ensure accountability and high-quality care across the Commonwealth.

DignityMA Study Session  Kevin Lownds, JD Division Chief Medicaid Fraud Division Office of the Attorney General	DignityMA Study Session: <i>The Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Division</i> Presenter: Kevin Lownds, JD, Division Chief Wednesday, October 14, 2026 10:00 a.m. Registration: https://tinyurl.com/Oct14StudySession The Medicaid Fraud Division within the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office functions as the federally certified Medicaid Fraud Control Unit for the Commonwealth, dedicated to protecting the integrity of MassHealth and defending vulnerable residents. Operating with multidisciplinary teams of prosecutors, forensic auditors, and investigators, the division conducts statewide civil and criminal investigations into healthcare providers suspected of defrauding the system through illegal practices such as false billing, upcoding, kickbacks, and cost-report falsification. Alongside recovering millions in misappropriated taxpayer funds under state and federal False Claims statutes, the unit fulfills a critical patient-protection mandate by investigating and prosecuting allegations of abuse, neglect, mistreatment, and financial exploitation of patients in nursing homes, long-term care facilities, and community-based healthcare settings.
Recruitment	See: Listings on MASterList.com's Job Board for all current listings
In Person and / or Online Events	Massachusetts Permanent Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities <u>Commission Meeting</u> Wednesday, September 16, 2026 , 11:00 a.m. Hearing Room 222, State House, Boston and virtual Registration link: <u>register here Sept 16</u> Mental Health Advisory Council <u>Statewide Mental Health Advisory Council meeting</u> Thursday, September 17, 2026, 8:30 a.m. Agenda includes an introduction from Department of Mental Health Commissioner Emily Bailey, who was sworn into the role in May. Bailey will talk about her vision for the department and council. There will be an update on DMH hires. <u>MHACA Agenda and Access</u> <u>Primary Care Reform Legislation Negotiations</u> Thursday, September 17, 2026, 1:00 p.m. Room 428A, State House, Boston House and Senate negotiators on primary care reform legislation hold their first meeting. The branches largely agree on setting a 15% primary care spending target, though they differ on how quickly the state should reach that goal and which healthcare entities should be responsible for pumping more money into the sector. The proposals also envision a

new capitated payment model that moves away from the traditional-fee-for-service structure. Health Care Financing Committee Co-chair Sen. [Cindy Friedman](#) is leading negotiations for her branch. But her co-chair, Rep. [John Lawn](#), was not picked for the assignment and the House side will instead be led by House Ways and Means Chair [Aaron Michlewitz](#).

4. [Public Hearing: MassHealth Dental Services](#)

Friday, September 20, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

MassHealth holds a public hearing on the emergency adoption of regulations imposing a cap on adult coverage for dental services, based on a limit the Legislature agreed to in the fiscal 2027 budget. The cap is \$1,750 per member, which officials say is expected to cut costs and is "anticipated to enable MassHealth to maintain dental benefits for the general adult population without cutting services." Gov. Healey wanted to limit adult dental benefits to \$1,000 annually. [Dental Services Public Hearing More Info and Access](#)

5. [Harvard Law School Project on Disability \(HPOD\) Open House](#)

Wednesday, September 23, 2026, 12:20 to 1:20 p.m.

Hauser Hall Room 102 (the Malkin classroom), Harvard University, Cambridge

Each year, the Harvard Law School Project on Disability (HPOD) welcomes the community to learn more about its ongoing research, capacity-building, and awareness-raising activities aimed at enabling civil society to undertake informed disability scholarship and advocacy across an array of issue areas. This year, join the HPOD team on September 23rd, from 12:20 to 1:20pm US Eastern time, in Hauser Hall Room 102 (the Malkin classroom).

Co-founders, Professors Bill Alford and Michael Stein, will be joined by HPOD's Senior Director for East Asia Dr. Fengming Cui; Director of Advocacy Initiatives Hezzy Smith; and Self-Advocacy Associate Anne Fracht to discuss HPOD activities ranging from disability-inclusive climate action and research and disability legal scholarship in East Asia to participatory research designed and conducted with persons with disabilities and human rights reporting to United Nations treaty bodies on priority issues for persons with intellectual disabilities, and much more.

ASL interpretation and lunch will be provided.

[HPODRegister](#)

6. [Olmstead About-Face](#)

Harvard Law School Project on Disability (HPOD)

Tuesday, October 13, 2026, 12:20 to 1:20 p.m.

Wasserstein Caspersen Center, Room 1015, Harvard University, Cambridge

Key Points:

	• The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in <i>Olmstead v. L.C.</i> that segregated services for persons with disabilities are discriminatory and violate the Americans with Disabilities Act. • However, a recent memo from the U.S. Department of Justice signals a narrower approach to <i>Olmstead</i> enforcement. • Panelists will discuss the implications of the Department's new stance on <i>Olmstead</i> for the disability community from historical, advocacy, and practitioner lenses. Olmstead registration
Webinars and Online Sessions	7. <i>Older Homelessness: An Emerging Challenge for Cities</i> Co-hosted by the Bloomberg Center for Cities, the Harvard Urban Health Initiative, and the Initiative on Health and Homelessness at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health Wednesday, September 16, 2026, 4:00 p.m. Homelessness among older adults is emerging as one of the most significant—and least understood—challenges facing cities today. Older adults are the fastest-growing segment of the population experiencing homelessness, and research suggests that the number of people age 65 and older experiencing homelessness in some locations could nearly triple by 2030. As rising housing costs, fixed incomes, health challenges, and demographic shifts converge, cities are increasingly being called upon to respond to the unique needs of an aging homeless population. This conversation will bring together leading researchers and practitioners working on the front lines of elder homelessness to examine the scope of the challenge, emerging evidence, and promising solutions. Speakers will explore the pathways that lead older adults into homelessness, the connections between housing instability, health, and aging, and the ways in which cities, health systems, and service providers can better prevent and respond to homelessness among older adults. Attendees will gain insights into the latest research on older homelessness, as well as practical lessons from communities developing innovative approaches to housing, healthcare, supportive services, and cross-sector collaboration. The discussion will also examine broader questions relevant to scholars, policymakers, and practitioners alike, including how cities can prepare for the growing scale of need, measure the effectiveness of interventions, and design systems that promote both housing stability and healthy aging. Welcoming Remarks • Professor Michael Ashley Stein, Executive Director, HPOD Moderator • Hezzy Smith, Director of Advocacy Initiatives, HPOD Panelists • Steven J. Schwartz, Special Counsel, Center for Public Representation • Dianna Hu, President, Boston Center for Independent Living • Alex Green, Lecturer, Harvard Kennedy School Older Homelessness Registration 8. <i>NASET Webinar: Disability Rights and the Classroom</i> Harvard Law School Project on Disability (HPOD) Wednesday, September 16, 2026, 7:00 p.m.

Join Dr. Michael Ashley Stein, Co-Founder of the Harvard Law School Project on Disability and a drafter of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, on where the rights of students with disabilities come from and where they're headed.

Learn more: <https://learn.naset.com/disability-rights>

9. **[Political and Civic Security for Older Persons. 5th year. Series "Mainstreaming Knowledge on Ageing".](#)**

Thursday, September 24, 2026, 9:30 a.m.

This event will be an opportunity to learn how to protect the right to safe and meaningful participation in democratic processes, governance, and community decision-making. Some relevant aspects on how to strengthen inclusive governance practices that recognize and support active citizenship will be shared.

[Registration Political and Civic Security for Older Persons](#)

10. **[Meeting long-term care needs for an aging United States](#)**

The Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institution

Tuesday, September 29, 2026, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

The U.S. is aging—and not ready for it.

The number of Americans age 65 or older is projected to grow from 65.6 million to 77.5 million in the next decade. As the number of older Americans grows, so too will the need for long-term care. Meeting those needs will require growing the long-term care workforce, improving access to long-term care, and addressing the uneven quality of long-term care services and supports.

On September 29, The Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institution will host an event to discuss policies to expand access to long-term care.

The event will feature two panel discussions. Panelists include Aviva Aron-Dine (Brookings Institution), Jonathan Cohn (The Bulwark), Maggie Elehwany (Argentum), Nicole Howell (National Council on Aging), Carole Johnson (University Hospital), Neale Mahoney (Stanford University), Tisamarie Sherry (Urban Institute), Tara Watson (Brookings Institution), and Haeyoung Yoon (National Domestic Workers Alliance). In conjunction with the event, The Hamilton Project will release new publications including a proposal for a new visa for direct care workers; an assessment of Medicare's home health benefit; and an analysis exploring the nursing home and home care workforce.

For updates on the event, viewers can follow [@HamiltonProj](#) on Twitter/X or [@hamiltonproject.org](#)

on Bluesky. To ask questions, join the conversation using

#LongTermCare or email info@hamiltonproject.org.

[Virtual Registration The Hamilton Project](#)

11. **[Accessible Detention and Correctional Facilities](#)**

U.S. Access Board

Thursday, October 1, 2026, 2:30 to 4:00p.m.

Designing detention and correctional facilities pose additional challenges and considerations to ensure security, safety, and accessibility. This presentation will provide an overview of the scoping and technical requirements in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) Accessibility Standards for provisions addressing holding cells and housing cells with mobility and

	communication features, visiting areas, and medical care facilities within detention and correctional facilities. In addition to information found in the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, the presenter will highlight additional requirements for detention and correctional facilities defined by the ADA Title II regulations. Registration: Accessible Detention Facilities
Transitions	12. Skilled Nursing News May 6, 2026 LeadingAge Affiliates Approve Regional Merger Across Four States By Zahida Siddiqi <i>LeadingAge chapters merge</i> The boards of LeadingAge Massachusetts and LeadingAge Maine & New Hampshire approved a merger to form a larger regional association supporting mission-driven aging services providers across Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, where there is currently no LeadingAge affiliate. . . The merger will expand staff capacity and regional reach while preserving strong state-level advocacy and local engagement with members, policymakers and regulators. The goal is to amplify the voice of aging services providers across the region and improve support for mission-driven organizations, leaders said. Upon completion, Elissa Sherman, president of LeadingAge’s Massachusetts chapter, will serve as CEO. Meanwhile, Lisa Henderson, executive director of the LeadingAge Maine & New Hampshire, will serve as chief member experience officer, leading an integrated team across all four states. The combined association is expected to begin operations on January 1, 2027, following regulatory approvals and continued member engagement.
Previously posted webinars and online sessions	Previously posted webinars and online sessions can be viewed at: https://dignityalliancema.org/webinars-and-online-sessions/
Nursing Homes	13. Center for Medicare Advocacy September 10, 2026 Half of Nursing Homes Lose Eligibility for Risk-Based Survey in a Year By Tobi Edelman The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) implemented a new risk-based survey (RBS) protocol on September 8, 2026. The new survey protocol is available for 12% of nursing homes nationwide (more than 1,000 facilities) that CMS describes as “higher quality facilities.” A risk-based survey has fewer surveyors, includes fewer residents whose care is reviewed by surveyors, and looks at only a single regulatory requirement, infection control. Nine other requirements for care, including staffing, resident assessment, environment, medication administration, and personal funds, are reviewed only if “triggered” by (1) a complaint or facility-reported incident, (2) identification of the issue by an ombudsman, or (3) identification of the issue during the survey (by

	a resident or surveyor observation). CMS links a nursing home's eligibility for an RBS to meeting 11 criteria. In a new Issue Brief, "CMS's Risk-Based Survey Program: Nearly Half of 'High-Performing' Homes No Longer Eligible a Year Later," Consumer Voice looked at publicly available CMS data for 1,769 nursing homes (11.9%) from January 2024 through February 2025 that would have been eligible for RBS. It found that after three months, 20% of the nursing homes no longer qualified for RBS. By February 2025, only half of the nursing homes (52%) would still have met the eligibility criteria for RBS. The most common reason for losing eligibility was loss of a 5-star overall rating; the second most common reason was having the staffing rating fall below 3 stars (on a 5-point scale, meaning, staffing fell below average). For more information from Consumer Voice, see • Understanding the New Risk-Based Survey (RBS) (Reference Guide) • Risk Based Survey vs. Standard Long-Term Care Survey Process (Comparison Guide) For more information about the Center for Medicare Advocacy's concerns about RBS, see • "The Risk-Based Survey Endangers Nursing Home Residents" (Press Release, Jul. 28, 2026) • "Risk-Based Surveys for Nursing Homes Go Live September 2026" (CMA Alert, Jul. 30, 2026) • "Is the Risk-Based Survey an Illegal Free Pass for Nursing Homes?" (CMA Alert, Aug. 20, 2026) 14. Healthcare Finance September 8, 2026 CMS rolls out streamlined nursing home inspections By Eve Bender <i>The risk-based process will direct fewer survey resources toward consistently higher-performing facilities.</i> The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) launched a nationwide risk-based oversight system that provides shorter, streamlined annual recertification surveys for qualifying high-performing nursing homes, initially covering about 12% of facilities nationwide. While federal officials state the approach allows state agencies to redirect limited inspection resources toward higher-risk facilities and address survey backlogs, resident advocacy organizations have raised strong concerns that reduced inspections and favorable web designations could weaken critical oversight and leave residents vulnerable to undetected sub-standard care.
Behavioral Health	15. Skilled Nursing News September 8, 2026 ‘Tsunami’ of Behavioral Health Challenges Amid OIG’s Antipsychotics Work Plan Seen Impacting QMs and Reimbursement in Nursing Homes By Amy Stulick Nursing facilities nationwide are experiencing an unprecedented surge in resident behavioral health complexities, creating immense operational

	strain as facilities struggle to provide appropriate psychiatric and behavioral care with limited resources. This crisis is severely compounding the daily challenges faced by front-line staff who must manage complex psychological needs alongside traditional skilled nursing care without adequate specialized training or staffing support. At the same time, this behavioral health wave is colliding with increased regulatory pressure, notably driven by the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) active work plan targeting antipsychotic medication usage. This heightened scrutiny places nursing home operators in a difficult bind, as compliance efforts, quality measures, and vital Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement levels are directly threatened by how facilities manage and document behavioral interventions.
Aging Topics	16. Skilled Nursing News September 11, 2026 <u>Nursing Home Workforce Remains Sector's Biggest Challenge and Opportunity, With AI and Value-Based Care Seen as Key Levers</u> According to a Skilled Nursing News survey heading into the RETHINK conference, workforce recruitment and retention remains the single greatest long-term challenge and operational hurdle for nursing home providers. While tackling persistent staffing shortages remains paramount, industry leaders increasingly view emerging artificial intelligence (AI) adoption and evolving value-based care models as crucial levers to alleviate workforce pressures, streamline workflows, and drive future transformation.
State Policy	17. Office of Governor Maura Healey and Lt. Kim Driscoll September 8, 2026 <u>Governor Healey Issues PROTECT Act Guidance for Health Care Providers, Employers, Law Enforcement and State Agencies</u> Governor Maura Healey issued <u>comprehensive guidance and resources</u> to implement the PROTECT Act, establishing clear operational frameworks for health care providers, employers, law enforcement agencies, and state entities. The guidance enforces key mandates under the law—signed on August 5—including restricting civil immigration enforcement activities in nonpublic areas of state and health care facilities (such as nursing homes and hospitals), limiting local law enforcement participation in federal civil immigration actions, and requiring employers to provide written notice within 48 hours of receiving ICE Form I-9 inspection notices.
Federal Policy	18. Eugene Weekly September 7, 2026 <u>128 Nursing Homes, Zero 24/7 Nurses</u> By Aishiki Nag A report from the <u>Eugene Weekly</u> highlights a striking vulnerability across Oregon's long-term care landscape, revealing that none of the state's 128 licensed nursing home programs currently provide around-the-clock registered nurse coverage. While Oregon benefits from established minimum staffing ratios for certified nursing assistants (CNAs), the total absence of 24/7 RN presence underscores a significant gap in clinical oversight for vulnerable residents.

	In response to these systemic shortcomings, federal lawmakers such as Senator Ron Wyden are championing the Nurses Belong in Nursing Homes Act. As detailed in the Eugene Weekly report, this proposed legislation aims to establish strict federal minimum staffing requirements, mandate on-site registered nurses around the clock, and secure permanent funding for rigorous facility inspections and enforcement programs.
From Our Colleagues from Around the Country	19. Center for Medicare Advocacy September 10, 2026 • UnitedHealth Cutting Back on Prior Authorization Unlikely to Have Major Impact on Medicare Advantage Enrollees • Half of Nursing Homes Lose Eligibility for Risk-Based Survey in a Year • CMA Statement on the Department of Justice's Proposed Resolution in Texas v. Kennedy • Free Webinar Medicare Open Enrollment
From Around the Country	20. CBS LA (via YouTube) September 12, 2026 8 people rescued from assisted living facility fire in Glendale By Tom Wait A fierce fire tore through Mountain Villa, a residential senior care home in Glendale, California, trapping vulnerable residents with intensive medical needs before quick-thinking neighbors and first responders rushed into the smoke-filled building to evacuate them. Seven residents and a staff nurse were rescued or treated at the scene—with a couple of heroic neighborhood brothers and another local resident stepping in to pull people to safety despite inhaling heavy smoke. Fortunately, no one was seriously injured in the blaze, and while the red-tagged home is now under active investigation by arson authorities, state records confirm that the facility had up-to-date smoke detectors, extinguishers, and fire drills during its last inspection in March. 21. New Jersey Monitor September 9, 2026 Auditor finds state nursing home inspections are often delayed By Lilo H. Stainton <i>80%+ of inspections resulting from resident complaints were delayed, report says</i> A recent state audit of New Jersey's Department of Health evaluated the division responsible for overseeing skilled nursing facilities, focusing on compliance with federal and state inspection mandates, complaint investigations, and reportable events. While the audit concluded that the agency generally maintained adequate overall oversight, it highlighted notable management weaknesses regarding inspection time frames, the classification and timeliness of complaint reviews, and delays in tracking facility reportable events. 22. Pleasanton Weekly September 8, 2026

	<u>Medi-Cal won't pay for assisted living in most of California. One brother fought back</u> By CalMatters While Medi-Cal covers nursing home care for low-income seniors in California, it largely refuses to pay for assisted living across most of the state due to a severely restricted and historically underfunded waiver program. This gap leaves lower-income older adults and individuals with disabilities trapped between unaffordable private-pay facilities and institutional nursing homes, forcing many families to exhaust their life savings just to find a humane living environment. The article highlights the personal battle of a brother who fought against these systemic hurdles to secure appropriate community-based housing and care for his sibling. His advocacy underscores a widespread policy failure that keeps assisted living financially out of reach for ordinary families, denying vulnerable residents access to less restrictive, home-like settings.
A Raise for Mom: Campaign to Increase the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA)	<i>The Campaign to Increase the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA)</i> 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. 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. 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.

	<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>
Books by DignityMA Participants	<u>A Perfect Turmoil: Walter E. Fernald and the Struggle to Care for America's Disabled</u> By Alex Green <u>Buy the book here</u> 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. <u>American Eldercide: How It Happened, How to Prevent It</u> By <u>Margaret Morganroth Gullette</u> <u>Buy the book here.</u> 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 <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.
Bringing People Home: The Marsters Settlement	Webpages: https://www.centerforpublicrep.org/court_case/marsters-et-al-v-healey-et-al/ https://marsters.centerforpublicrep.org/ Marsters data for the calendar year 2025: • 499 people who have returned and are active in the community • Efforts to validate status of 63 others who are in the community • Target for 2025 and 2026 is 600 transitions • 1,369 currently enrolled • 100 AHVP vouchers issued for transitions: 71 used, 10 in process. The Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP) is a state-funded rental assistance program in Massachusetts specifically designed for non-elderly (under age 60) people with disabilities who have low incomes.
Support Dignity Alliance Massachusetts <u>Please Donate!</u>	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. 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. 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. https://dignityalliancema.org/donate/ Thank you for your consideration!	
Dignity Alliance Massachusetts Legislative Endorsements	Information about the legislative bills which have been endorsed by Dignity Alliance Massachusetts, including the text of the bills, can be viewed at: https://tinyurl.com/DignityLegislativeEndorsements Questions or comments can be directed to Legislative Work Group Chair Richard (Dick) Moore at dickmoore1943@gmail.com.	
Websites		
Blogs	Risking Old Age in America https://okayboomer.substack.com/ By Harry Margolis With 65 million Baby Boomers becoming older by the day, the United States is facing a looming elder care crisis. This blog explores how the nation and individuals can prepare for it.	
Podcasts		
YouTube Channels		
Previously recommended websites	The comprehensive list of recommended websites has migrated to the Dignity Alliance MA website: https://dignityalliancema.org/resources/. Only new recommendations will be listed in <i>The Dignity Digest</i>.	
Previously posted funding opportunities	For open funding opportunities previously posted in <i>The Tuesday Digest</i> please see https://dignityalliancema.org/funding-opportunities/.	
Websites of Dignity Alliance Massachusetts Members	See: https://dignityalliancema.org/about/organizations/	
Contact information for reporting complaints and concerns	Nursing home	Department of Public Health 1. Print and complete the Consumer/Resident/Patient Complaint Form 2. Fax completed form to (617) 753-8165 Or Mail to 67 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA 01752 Ombudsman Program
MassHealth Eligibility Information	MassHealth / Massachusetts Medicaid Income & Asset Limits for Nursing Homes & Long-Term Care Table of Contents (Last updated: December 16, 2024) 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 The Money Follows the Person (MFP) Demonstration helps older adults and people with disabilities move from nursing facilities, chronic disease or rehabilitation hospitals, or other qualified facilities back to the community. Statistics as of March 31, 2025: 344 people transitioned out of nursing facilities in 2024 49 transitions in January and February 2025 910 currently in transition planning 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 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. 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.												
Nursing Home Inspect	ProPublica Nursing Home Inspect Data updated October 15, 2025 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 (July 1, 2022 through September 30, 2025). Massachusetts listing: https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/state/MA Deficiencies By Severity in Massachusetts (What do the severity ratings mean?) <table><tr><td>Deficiency Tag</td><td># Deficiencies</td><td>in # Reports</td><td>MA facilities cited</td></tr><tr><td>B</td><td>257</td><td>187</td><td>Tag B</td></tr><tr><td>C</td><td>77</td><td>63</td><td>Tag C</td></tr></table>	Deficiency Tag	# Deficiencies	in # Reports	MA facilities cited	B	257	187	Tag B	C	77	63	Tag C
Deficiency Tag	# Deficiencies	in # Reports	MA facilities cited										
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J	64	31	Tag J																																		
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L	7	2	Tag L																																		
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. 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	• 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 Dignity Alliance Massachusetts	Workgroup	Workgroup lead	Email																																		
	General Membership	Bill Henning Paul Lanzikos	bhenning@bostoncil.org paul.lanzikos@gmail.com																																		
	Assisted Living	John Ford	jford@njc-ma.org																																		
	Behavioral Health	Frank Baskin	baskinfrank19@gmail.com																																		
	Communications	Lachlan Forrow	lforrow@bidmc.harvard.edu																																		
	Facilities (Nursing homes and rest homes)	Jim Lomastro	jimlomastro@comcast.net																																		
	Home and Community Based Services	Meg Coffin	mcoffin@centerlw.org																																		
	Legislative	Richard Moore	Dickmoore1943@gmail.com																																		
	Legal Issues	Stephen Schwartz	sschwartz@cpr-ma.org																																		
	Interest Group	Group lead	Email																																		
Interest Groups meet periodically (monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly).	Housing	Bill Henning	bhenning@bostoncil.org																																		
	Veteran Services	James Lomastro	jimlomastro@comcast.net																																		

Please contact group leaders for more information.	Transportation	Frank Baskin Chris Hoeh	baskinfrank19@gmail.com cdhoeh@gmail.com
	Covid / Long Covid	James Lomastro	jimlomastro@comcast.net
	Incarcerated Persons	TBD	info@DignityAllianceMA.org
<i>Bringing People Home: Implementing the Marsters class action settlement</i>	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/		
<i>REV UP Massachusetts</i>	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 .		
<i>The Dignity Digest</i>	For a free weekly subscription to <i>The Dignity Digest</i> : https://dignityalliancema.org/contact/sign-up-for-emails/ Editor: Paul Lanzikos Primary contributor: Sandy Novack MailChimp Specialist: Sue Rorke		
Note of thanks	Thanks to the contributors to this issue of <i>The Dignity Digest</i> : • Noah Daube-Valois • Wynn Gerhard • Dick Moore Special thanks to the MetroWest Center for Independent Living for assistance with the website and MailChimp versions of <i>The Dignity Digest</i> . <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. Our guiding principle is the assurance of dignity for those receiving the services as well as for those providing them. 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: https://dignityalliancema.org/dignity-digest/</i> <i>For more information about Dignity Alliance Massachusetts, please visit www.DignityAllianceMA.org.</i>			