



Massachusetts PATRIOT

Massachusetts Life Care Residents Association (MLCRA) JANUARY – MARCH 2026

The Residents' Advocate – Management's Friend • *Serving our community for 28 years* • www.mlcr.org

Senior Living Wellness Walk Challenges

By Patricia Burns, Chair of the Independent Living (IL) Health & Safety Committee, Springhouse

Springhouse Senior Living takes Resident and Team Member (staff) health seriously. We feel that it is not enough to live longer (*Agespan*), but more importantly to live longer in good health (*Healthspan*).

In 2024 I initiated our 1st Wellness Walk Challenge. The challenge was to walk 26.2 miles — a **Full Marathon** — over the course of 8 weeks ending on Boston Marathon Day. The challenge included Team Members and our Board Members.

Sunday evening, each participant's paper shoe was updated with the miles walked that week. Progress was posted near the elevator — there was friendly 'trash talk' about who would win. Many of the Residents who may not have known some of the Team or Board Members got to know them in a fun way.

Various forms of exercise could be counted, e.g. exercise bicycle or other gym equipment earned 1 mile for every 10 minutes.

The challenge was answered by 19 IL Residents — 5 of whom completed the

challenge using walkers, 1 previous IL Resident who recently transferred to Assisted Living and 10 Team Members! One of the Residents was 100 years old. The 30 participants ended up walking 1,888 miles equaling 71 marathons! That's right, many didn't stop at 1 marathon!



The sneakers tracked miles "walked"; quite a conversation piece posted near the main elevator.

On July 26, 2024, the opening day of the Paris Olympics, Springhouse IL Residents challenged their Team and Board Members and sister organization, Mount Pleasant Home to a 6-week, 20 mile walk from **Springhouse to Scituate Harbor**. In total, 52 participants "walked"

5,810 miles and 146 round trips to and from Springhouse Boston to Scituate Harbor. A bus trip to Scituate Harbor and lunch as well as an Awards Ceremony were enjoyed.

On June 1, 2025 the Residents, Team and Board Members were challenged to "walk" 20 miles (the distance from **Boston to Nantasket Beach**) in 6 weeks. The total of 48 participants walked 6,554 miles. Some participants "walked" more than 300 miles!

Another award ceremony with ‘gold’ medals, certificates, and good food was enjoyed, along with a lunch trip to Nantasket Beach in Hull.

With the cold and snowy winter upon us, we are planning our next Wellness Challenge when the weather is more conducive to walking and other activities outside. ♦

Springhouse is Serious About Healthspan — Extending Our Health and Wellness as we Age!!!

President’s Message

By Caroline Jacobs, The Commons in Lincoln

By the time you read this at the end of March, we will only be a month away from our Annual Meeting which will be held this year on May 4 from 1:30 – 3:00 pm on Zoom. The topic for our keynote speech will be **“Seniors in the AI Era: Benefits to Health Care, Independence and Well-Being,”** a topic of interest to most of us. The speakers will be Judith Foster, PhD, Emeritus Professor of Biochemistry at Boston University School of Medicine, and Keith Collins, MD, Board Certified Internist at Beth Israel Lahey Health System. We will be able to accommodate up to 100 members on Zoom. For those who cannot attend, a video of the talk will be posted on the MLCRA website.

In addition to following the recent developments in the legislature, keeping track of membership and publishing the Patriot, your Board is also working to update our bylaws which haven’t been revised for eight years. There have already been some lively discussions, particularly on the term lengths for board members and officers. We need

to avoid having all the key officers retiring at the same time and, as in sports, we need a strong “bench” to step in when needed. We are always looking for new volunteers — ideally MLCRA members



who have already held leadership positions in their communities and are interested in sharing ideas and best practices with the wider community of seniors living in CCRCs in Massachusetts. If you would like to know more, please call or email me (*see p.10*).

Finally, we held a special Community Conversation in February with Resident Council Presidents so that they could experience the benefits of getting to know one another and sharing their challenges and expertise.

Happy Spring to you all! ♦

“Thousands of candles can be lit from a single candle and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared.”

— Buddha

MLCRA: Your Voice, Your Protection, Your Community

By Christine Griffin, Vice President for Membership

As members of the Massachusetts Life Care Residents Association (MLCRA), you are part of the only statewide organization dedicated exclusively to informing, educating, and advocating for residents of Continuing Care Retirement Communities across Massachusetts. Each of us made one of the most significant financial and lifestyle decisions of our lives when we moved into a CCRC. Entrance fees, contracts, refund provisions, healthcare services, governance structures, and state oversight directly affect our security and peace of mind. Protections do not happen automatically. Transparency does not happen by accident. They happen because residents stay informed, organized, and engaged. That is the role MLCRA plays — and that is the role you strengthen through your membership.

Over the past year, MLCRA has continued to:

- Advocate for stronger entrance-fee disclosure and transparency
- Monitor and testify on legislation affecting CCRCs
- Engage directly with lawmakers on issues impacting resident rights
- Educate residents about contracts, financial stability, and governance
- Build a strong statewide network of Community Representatives

Membership Update

As of the February 22 Membership update, we had 1113 individual members including 66 new members in 2026! However, almost 25% of those whose membership expired in 2025 hadn't yet renewed.

If you have not yet renewed your membership for this year, we encourage you to do so promptly.

Strong participation strengthens our credibility with legislators, community leadership, and state agencies.

MLCRA remains one of the most affordable and effective organizations serving residents, at only \$15/year.

You can go to [MLCRA.org](https://www.mlcra.org) to join or renew online with a credit card or print the membership form and mail in with a check OR use the form on page 11 of the Patriot OR see your community MLCRA Representative to renew, join or get more information about MLCRA.

Across Massachusetts, residents share common challenges. When communities communicate, we learn. When we share information, we become stronger. When we organize collectively, we gain influence. MLCRA provides the structure for residents to speak with One Voice. Founded in 1998 by residents who understood the value of connection and advocacy, MLCRA now represents 16 communities. Legislation evolves. Regulations change. Governance issues arise. Through it all, MLCRA remains committed to ensuring that residents are respected partners in decisions affecting our homes and our futures.

Because of you, MLCRA continues to educate, advocate, and lead. Because of you, residents have a voice. And together, we will continue to strengthen our shared future.

A special thank you to our Community Representatives in all 17 communities who have worked diligently this year to encourage renewals and welcome new members. Your outreach and persistence are the backbone of MLCRA's strength.



Developments in MA Assisted Living

By Lauren Hale, Southgate



Most MLCRA communities offer Assisted Living residences, so MLCRA has been following developments in this arena. The state has

recently made significant advancements to improve standards for Assisted Living in Massachusetts. The Assisted Living Residences (ALR) Commission issued its final report on January 12. Following the release of the Commission's report, the Healey-Driscoll Administration announced that it is taking action to begin the implementation of a majority of the regulatory and administrative recommendations in the report; some recommendations would require legislative action. The Executive Office of Aging and Independence (AGE) has proposed amendments to Assisted Living regulations.

The ALR Commission was established through a provision of the long-term care act, passed by the Massachusetts legislature in August 2024. Many of the updated AL regulations implement provisions of that act. Other new regulations stem from recommendations made by the ALR Commission.

Assisted Living Residences Commission Report:

The ALR Commission made recommendations to improve transparency and increase consumer protections. It recommends a **uniform disclosure statement** outlining key cost and service information for each ALR. This information should help potential residents and their families as they evaluate various ALR options. The Commission also recommends an **online database** with searchable compliance reports and service data. It calls for public posting of inspection reports, incident trends and ownership changes.

Additionally, there are recommendations to **strengthen staffing** and to **promote resident rights** such as supporting resident and family council meetings. The Commission advocates for the establishment of an **ALR Affordability Task force** to find ways for lower-income older adults to access ALRs.

The Commission's report was extended from an earlier deadline because of the fire at Gabriel House in Fall River. It is no coincidence that the final report gives detailed guidance on establishing **stronger fire safety and emergency preparedness standards**.

Updated Assisted Living Regulations:

AGE has proposed updated AL regulations that implement provisions of the 2024 long-term care act and also reflect recommendations from the ALR Commission.

The long-term care act includes a provision that would allow AL facilities to offer **basic health services**, as was permitted on an exception basis during COVID. MLCRA had advocated with the legislature to permit common-sense health services in ALRs over a period of many years before COVID. AGE's updated regulations detail what AL facilities must do to seek and obtain certification to offer the basic health services covered in the new law: injections, simple dressing changes, oxygen management, specimen collection with home diagnostic tests, and the application of ointments or drops. Other regulatory recommendations include updated **staff training** and requiring ALRs to meet enhanced safety requirements related to **fire safety and emergency preparedness**. AGE held a public hearing on February 26 about the proposed new regulations. ♦

Residents Enjoy Wine Tasting

By Susan Eslick, The Willows at Westborough

At the Willows in Westborough, education is an ongoing adventure. We are treated to all manner of programs from a broad spectrum of arts, health, communication, etc. One of the most enthusiastically attended programs is the wine class.

Polly Horenstein, our Director of Resident Services, offers a monthly session of wine education through the “Great Courses, An Everyday Guide to Wine” on the big screen in the Community Room.

All residents are invited and the audience seems to grow with each segment. Here’s the part that attracts the high level of attendance: as the TV host describes a particular country’s

or region’s wines, Polly has already curated that month’s list and purchased representative wines for us to try. So, just before the host on the screen is showing a selection, Polly pours the relevant wine into mini cups for each to

taste and assess while the host tells us what to see, smell, and taste in our small sample. Sometimes there are “ugh” faces and sometimes smiles that say, “I like this one.” The usual fare amounts to five or six different

wines, each poured at the proper time.

It is fun, it is chatty, and it is a truly hands-on learning experience. ♦



Photo: Susan Eslick. Attentive Audience

Brooksby Village Celebrated 25 Years

Starting in June, 2025, Brooksby Village recognized their 25th Anniversary in a myriad of ways, wrapping up with an Anniversary dance on Dec 29. Brooksby Village also presented the Peabody Police Department, Peabody Fire Department Relief Association and the Peabody Fire Honor Guard with donations as a token of appreciation for 25 years of support, service, and commitment to our community, as well as their ongoing care, partnership, and compassion for our residents. ♦



MLCRA Communities Enjoy Craft Fairs!

At **Brooksby Village** most of the more than 40 tables were reserved by residents, with some outside family or friends. At the end of the 4-hour craft fair, each table donated 15% of their proceeds to the Student Scholarship Fund. Needle artists had knitted and crocheted items as well as quilts and toddler attire; crafters offered cards, woven brackets, and holiday decor; potters and woodworkers were also represented. There was a \$1 admission, as well as an array of items each with their own jar to collect raffle tickets.

Loomis Lakeside at Reeds Landing hosted 22 outside vendors, as well as four in-house tables which raised over \$6,000 for their Philanthropic Fund, with the raffle table alone bringing in \$2,000!

All Loomis Photos: Dick Weston



Tables with bowls made by Peter Courtney, MLCRA Rep



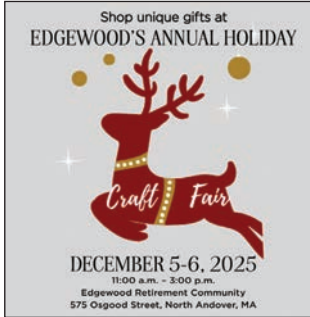
Bake table



Raffle table: More than twenty baskets or craft items (artwork, woodwork, quilting, handwork) donated by our residents



Outside vendor wares



At Edgewood's 2-day fair, there were 16 tables for Edgewood residents, some for personal craft items, and several tables for clubs that donate proceeds to local charity needs.

On Saturday five vendors from outside of Edgewood had tables.

Between clubs doing things for donations to community causes, residents selling their own wares, and the community vendors, thousands of dollars exchanged hands!

Photos: Don Miffit and Dave VanArsdale



The wood workers sold many of the beautiful cutting boards at \$70 a piece.



The Origami table grossed over \$900 and all of it went toward supporting a local hunger program.



Did You Know...

- Sitting for more than 10.5 hours/day was linked to a significantly increased risk of heart disease, especially heart failure and cardiovascular death. This was true even if other parts of the day were active. *Based on recent Mass General Brigham research.*
- Researchers have found that Shingrix (for shingles), Arexvy (for RSV), and the flu vaccine reduce the risk of dementia. They all stimulate the immune system which could help protect the brain.

Living in a Dementia-Inclusive Community

By Maggie Horn, Loomis Lakeside at Reeds Landing

Loomis Lakeside at Reeds Landing (LLRL) has come to national attention thanks to a broadcast on NPR*, November 17, 2025 on “dementia housing without locked doors,” or a dementia-inclusive community. Eight years ago, we called ourselves a “dementia friendly community.”

As a dementia friendly community, we would occasionally meet residents in independent living who had cognitive difficulties. Now, as a dementia inclusive community, those interactions may be more frequent as those individuals may be our neighbors. Before, if we noticed concerning behaviors, we would contact our Wellness Coordinator who would talk to the family. Now, the Wellness Coordinator will give us tips on how we can interact in a supportive and caring way.

Not all independent living residents are comfortable with this model of supporting those with dementia. For some, it is a reminder of having spent years as a caregiver for a loved one with dementia. For others, it is a double-whammy as they deal with a current partner who has cognitive issues. There is often a concern that “that’s what might happen to me”, or “I didn’t come to this community to be confronted with ‘that!’”

To help us learn the skills needed so that we are more comfortable in a dementia inclusive community, our Memory Care Director, Brenda Mendoza, has been giving monthly dementia education programs for our residents. Over a year and a half,

Brenda has met with up to ten residents per session. For instance, in one session, she talked about communications skills — both verbal and non-verbal. We, ourselves, use many non-verbal cues which may be either welcoming or threatening to those who are living with dementia. We have to be patient — something that may be naturally difficult for some of us!

I will leave you with a personal example. I recently attended one of Brenda’s sessions on communication. Shortly thereafter, a fellow resident who has dementia approached me hesitantly. She introduced herself to me, and I to her (even though she has lived in the community for over two years). I then asked if I could help her. She hesitantly started to tell me something was wrong, but couldn’t think of the words. I gave her time — she gestured to her stomach. I said, “Stomach?” “No” (gesturing to the other side) “Back?” “Yes”. I was then able to get her the help she needed. When I reported this to Brenda, she was thrilled since this particular resident has not volunteered information to an unfamiliar person before — this is the result of the interventions Brenda does and the result of a dementia inclusive community.

And, it is proof that you CAN teach an old dog new tricks.

**<https://www.npr.org/sections/shots-health-news/2025/11/17/nx-s1-5600877/dementia-alzheimers-care-housing-senior-living-inclusion-segregation> ◆*

Massachusetts End of Life Options Legislation

By Rev. Dr. David VanArsdale, Edgewood

Two companion bills related to end of life options — S.1486 in the Senate and H.2505 in the House — are again under consideration. These bills would permit medical aid in dying (MAiD) under carefully controlled circumstances for terminally ill adults. Although MLCRA has not advocated for or against the legislation, also referred to as Death with Dignity, many CCRC residents have expressed interest in this legislation.

The End of Life Options Act would allow adults to request medication that would end their lives, provided they met several criteria. Specifically, a patient requesting such medication would have to be:

- at least 18 years old and a Massachusetts resident
- mentally capable of making and communicating health care decisions, and
- diagnosed with a terminal disease that will result in death within six months.
- A patient who meets the requirements will be prescribed aid-in-dying medication if:
 - The patient makes a verbal request to their doctor, who will explain options including hospice and pain or symptom management.
 - At least 15 days after the verbal request, the patient gives a written request to the doctor, signed in front of two qualified, adult witnesses.
 - The prescribing doctor and one other doctor confirm the patient's diagnosis and prognosis.
- The prescribing doctor and one other doctor determine that the patient is capable of making medical decisions.
- The prescribing doctor refers the patient to a licensed psychiatrist or psychologist for counseling to determine that the patient is not suffering from a mental disorder that could cause impaired judgment.
- The prescribing doctor confirms that the patient is not being coerced or unduly influenced by others when making the request.
- The prescribing doctor informs the patient of any feasible alternatives to the medication, including care to relieve pain and keep the patient comfortable.
- The prescribing doctor asks the patient to notify their next of kin of the prescription request. (The doctor cannot require the patient to notify anyone, however.)
- The prescribing doctor offers the patient the opportunity to withdraw the request for aid-in-dying medication before granting the prescription.
- The patient must be able to take the medication on their own.

The language of the bill is based on Oregon's law; in the 20+ year history of that law, there haven't been any documented cases of coercion in seeking this medication.

MLCRA members are encouraged to contact their Senator and Representative to share their views on this legislation. ♦

MLCRA Board and Resident Associations

MLCRA represents about 1,000 older residents throughout Massachusetts. Its membership includes individual resident members and 17 Resident Associations

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NewBridge on the Charles,
Dedham

Newbury Court, Concord

Orchard Cove, Canton

Sophia Snow Place,
West Roxbury

Southgate at Shrewsbury

Springhouse, Jamaica Plain

The Briarwood Community,
Worcester

The Commons in Lincoln

The Overlook, Charlton

The Willows at Westborough

The Willows at Worcester

The Massachusetts Patriot

The Massachusetts Patriot is the quarterly newsletter of the Massachusetts Life Care Residents Association (MLCRA). As the residents' voice, the Patriot covers news about Massachusetts retirement communities, monitors laws and regulations that affect residents of retirement communities, and serves as an advocate for residents' rights. **Readers are encouraged to send articles, topics of interest, comments and questions to:** Allison Dolan, Patriot Editor, allisondolan77@gmail.com or 978-587-2955

Massachusetts Life Care Residents Association
MLCRA Membership Application/Renewal Form for 2026

Date: _____

Name(s) of member(s): _____

Check here if this is a renewal. (The date on mailing label is when your current membership expires.)

IF YOU ARE A NEW MEMBER: fill in information below; or attach a personal address label. If you are an existing member: fill in only if you are making changes.

Street: _____ Apt. # _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

Email: _____ (for MLCRA purposes only)

Your Retirement Community: _____

Dues for New Members and Renewals - Circle your choice.

1 year (expires 12/31/2026) \$15 (individual/household)

5 year (expires 12/31/2030) \$75 (individual/household)

Lifetime Membership \$150 (individual/household)

Please make checks payable to MLCRA.

If your community is having a membership drive, please give this form with your check to your MLCRA representative; otherwise mail form and check to:

Allison Dolan, Treasurer
 104 Brooksby Village Drive, Unit 405
 Peabody, MA 01960

Alternatively, go to mlcra.org/join-mlcra to pay by credit card.



Massachusetts Life Care Residents Association

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NOTE: The date next to your name on the mailing label above indicates when your membership expires.

<p>Join MLCRA now to maintain your quality of life!</p>	<p>What is the Massachusetts Life Care Residents Association? <i>The voice of residents of Continuing Care Retirement Communities</i></p> <p>The Massachusetts Life Care Residents Association (MLCRA) was founded in 1998. MLCRA is a state-wide non-profit volunteer organization with 501(c)(3) status. It represents individual members and resident associations located in non-profit and for-profit retirement communities known as Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs) or Life Care Communities. These communities are also sometimes referred to as Life Plan Communities. They provide facilities and services for independent living and assisted living/skilled nursing care or both.</p> <p>The general purposes of MLCRA are communication, education, advocacy, and collaboration with members, resident associations and other organizations to support the well-being of seniors living in retirement communities. MLCRA is the Massachusetts Chapter of the National Continuing Care Residents Association (NaCCRA).</p> <p>MLCRA recognizes and respects the common interests of residents and management. It supports efforts to promote a mutually beneficial relationship. When the interests of management and residents occasionally diverge, MLCRA serves as the residents' advocate.</p>
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