



Executive Office of Elder Affairs

Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program (MFCSP) Newsletter

March 2019

CAREGIVING IN THE NEWS

[Changing 'The Tragedy Narrative': Why a Growing Camp is Promoting a More Joyful Approach to Alzheimer's](#)

This *Washington Post* article describes how individuals living with Alzheimer's or dementia and their caregivers are changing the "tragedy narrative" by **embracing improvisation and playfulness** as helpful techniques.

[Senator Cory Booker Spotlights Caregiving as a National Issue](#)

In this video from Senator Booker's Twitter account, he describes the **hardships and challenges his mother endured while taking care of his father who was living with Parkinson's disease dementia**. Senator Booker ends his speech with a call for improved health care and supports for family caregivers.

[Life Interrupted: The Struggles and Triumphs of Millennial Family Caregivers](#)

This *Stria News* article summarizes key findings from **dinners with millennial caregivers** hosted by AARP Public Policy Institute in Minneapolis and Washington, D.C. Firsthand insights include the **difficulties millennial caregivers experience** related to juggling work and caregiving, as well as navigating their care recipient's healthcare providers.

RESEARCH AND POLICY UPDATES

[Survey Request: Input Needed on Supporting Family Caregivers of Diverse Communities](#)

The Diverse Elders Coalition is conducting a [research project with the John A. Hartford Foundation](#) to **better understand the needs of family caregivers in communities of color, American Indian and Alaska Native communities, and LGBTQ+ communities**. The results of this survey will inform the development of a training curriculum for healthcare and social service providers.

[AARP Legislative Accomplishments for Family Caregivers in 2018](#)

This article highlights AARP's legislative accomplishments in supporting family caregivers in 2018. Bills enacted into law cover a wide range of issues, including **support for working caregivers, improved access to telehealth, and expansion of respite programs**. The article also touches on continued progress on the CARE Act and AARP's involvement in passing the RAISE Family Caregivers Act.

[Circle of Care: A Guidebook for Mental Health Caregivers](#)

The National Alliance for Caregiving recently published *Circle of Care: A Guidebook for Mental Health Caregivers*, developed with support from the Alkermes Inspiration Grant Program. The guidebook provides **information and helpful resources for mental health caregivers** covering topics such as finding the right provider, getting an accurate diagnosis, and leveraging community-based supports.



IMPORTANT PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS & REMINDERS

Throughout the next few months, the Executive Office of Elder Affairs will be reaching out to each program to solicit input on a statewide **Operations Manual** and **Caregiver Guide**. Both of these initiatives were mentioned during the September 2018 MFCSP call.

The **Operations Manual** is intended to serve as a program-wide training resource to assist in onboarding new staff. The **Caregiver Guide** is intended to be an introductory resource for family caregivers.

We recognize that many programs have either developed similar resources or have ideas on what should be included. EOEA looks forward to hearing your input!

THIS MONTH'S CAREGIVING MANTRA



"You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf."

Jon Kabat-Zinn

MONTHLY SPOTLIGHT

EOHHS Caregiver Lunch and Learns Support Working Caregivers



Since last April, the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) has hosted a monthly **Caregiver Lunch and Learn** for Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) employees. The purpose of the lunch and learns is to **provide working caregivers with helpful information and offer a supportive space to share with fellow caregivers.**

Prior sessions have featured guest speakers on a variety of topics, including the Family Caregiver Support Program, SHINE program, transportation, housing, and MassHealth. **EOEA is extremely thankful to the team at Boston Senior Home Care** who has provided information and supported EOHHS caregivers at multiple sessions. This month, **Bernice Osborne**, an Options Counselor with Boston Senior Home Care, will be providing tips on how to navigate caregiving responsibilities among siblings.

Given the success of the Caregiver Lunch and Learns, **EOEA has started taking the series “on the road”.** Amanda Bernardo facilitated an introductory session at the **Soldiers’ Home in Holyoke where West Mass Elder Services provided information to employees** in October 2018 and anticipates bringing this to other EOHHS offices in 2019!

Do you run a support group for caregivers? We would love to learn more. Please email [Amber Bernardo](mailto:AmberBernardo@eoehhs.com) to share your stories and tips!

HELPFUL RESOURCES

[Funding Opportunity for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren](#)

The Brookdale Foundation Group is offering **seed grants for the creation or expansion of supportive services to grandparents and other relatives raising grandchildren.** Up to 15 programs will be selected to receive a seed grant of \$15,000. Proposals are due on **June 12, 2019.**

[Respecting Diverse Approaches to Caregiving](#)

This blog post published on *AgingCare.com* reminds us that there is **no one-size-fits-all approach to caregiving.** No matter how similar a caregiving situation may seem, it is important to remember that we have not walked in the other person’s shoes.

[The Caregiver Action Network: Take Care of Yourself](#)

Caregivers have heard this message time and time again: “as a caregiver, you must take care of your own health”. **The Caregiver Action Network has made it easier for caregivers to access tips and tools for self-care in one place.** Their website includes ways to “Take Care of Yourself”, such as advice on caregiving fatigue and balancing demands on time.

[Tips for Alzheimer’s and Dementia Caregivers](#)

This guide published by *HelpGuide.org* describes the challenges and rewards of caring for someone living with Alzheimer’s or dementia, **provides advice on how to develop a personal support plan, and how to recognize early signs of caregiver burnout.**

EVENTS AND WEBINARS

AARP Webinar: Technology for Family Caregivers

(April 24, 3PM ET, online)

This webinar will feature a panel discussion on **“How can technology help family caregivers?”** Please email Leslie Siphers at lsiphers@aarp.org to be added to the webinar registration list.

[Aging 2.0 Boston Event on Voice Technology](#)

(May 8, 5:30 PM, AGENCY 245 Main Street, Cambridge)

Aging 2.0 is hosting a panel spotlighting companies that have integrated voice into their products for older adults. Guest speakers will share their lessons learned on what works and does not work.

[Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Statewide Resource Network Meeting Dates for 2019](#)

The Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren’s Statewide Resource Network is an opportunity for support group facilitators to participate in trainings, workshops, and more. **It is a “support group for support group facilitators”.** The Commission schedules five meetings a year in different locations throughout the state.

[2019 Global Carework Summit](#)

(June 9-11, Toronto, Ontario)

The **Carework Network, an international organization of scholars and advocates,** is organizing its second three-day conference to bring together researchers from across disciplines. Conference topics include how identities and inequalities influence caregiving, how caregiving is recognized and compensated, and how state policies influence the distribution of care.