

# Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program Newsletter - Winter 2024



## New Resources Available for Family Caregivers

The following are new resources for family caregivers offered by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs:

- [Family Caregiver Support Groups Listing](#) – Are you searching for a caregiver support group? Explore this new webpage to find a virtual or in-person support group near you that's run by Family Caregiver Support Program staff.
- [Caring for the Caregiver Webinar Series Webpage](#) – Are you looking for information about caregiving? The Executive Office of Elder Affairs hosts a webinar series for family caregivers. Visit this new landing page to learn about the series, find past recordings, and upcoming webinars. Details on the next *Caring for the Caregiver* webinar are below:

### CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER WEBINARS

Brought to you by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs



#### UPCOMING WEBINARS

Join the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs and SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) for a two-part series focused on health insurance counseling for family caregivers.



**TUESDAY, JANUARY 30**  
12:00 PM  
**TOPIC: The SHINE Program and Medicare**

This webinar will provide an overview of the SHINE program, how program services can assist family caregivers, and Medicare eligibility, costs, and penalties.



Register by scanning the QR code to the right or by visiting <https://bit.ly/3u1CqO>

**THURSDAY, MARCH 28**  
12:00 PM  
**TOPIC: Programs that May Assist Families with Medicare Costs**

This webinar will focus on programs that may assist families with Medicare costs, including federal, state, and other programs for which Medicare beneficiaries may be eligible.



Register by scanning the QR code to the right or by visiting <https://bit.ly/4z3Drea>

The *Caring for the Caregiver* webinar series aims to provide family caregivers in Massachusetts with simple tips, practical solutions, and information on community resources to support loved ones and care for themselves.

### Register for the Upcoming *Caring for the Caregiver* Webinar

**When:** Thursday, March 28, 12:00 PM

**About:** The webinar will be the second in a two-part series focused on health insurance counseling for family caregivers featuring the SHINE Program (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone).

The event is hosted by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs and the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative.

[Register](#)

## Caregiving Thought Pieces

[You Shouldn't Have to Take Care of Your Aging Parents on Your Own](#)

[More Men Are Taking Care of Aging Parents. They Feel Unprepared](#)

[Behind Dianne Feinstein's Headlines Lies](#)

"Being a family caregiver for a transplant patient isn't just about case management, taking on medical responsibilities, or ensuring financial support when a loved one can't work.

[Another, Untold Story](#)

[Baby Boomers are Aging. Their Kids Aren't Ready](#)

[After Loved Ones' Long-Awaited Organ Transplants, Caregivers Often Find Challenges Are Just Beginning](#) (quote on right)

So much more goes into it:

understanding nutrition, keeping up with medical literature and new innovations, encouraging exercise, providing emotional support. **It's a lifelong work of lifelong love."**

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## Resources for Family Caregivers

### [Communicating with Health Care Providers](#)

Tips for family caregivers to foster healthy communication with health care providers and recommendations for how to build mutual understanding.

### [Terms to Help Caregivers Access Essential Services and Reduce Expenses for Aging Parents](#)

Knowing a few key terms can help family caregivers understand the services an aging loved one may need and plan ahead for how to afford them.

### [The Emotional Side of Caregiving](#)

Fact sheet that identifies some of the common feelings caregivers experience. Once identified, suggestions are offered for how caregivers might better cope with these feelings.

### [The Physical Toll on a Caregiver's Body](#)

Actions caregivers can take to try to prevent injuries and care for themselves.

### [The Challenges Facing Male Caregivers](#)

Men can find themselves trying to manage responsibilities and expectations while being accepted for their competency in the family caregiver role.

### [Brain Change and Incontinence](#)

Many care partners who support individuals living with brain changes often struggle with knowing how to best assist when this becomes an issue. This article explores what causes incontinence and what caregivers can do to offer support.

### [Ways a Caregiver Can Be a Better Patient Advocate](#)

Tips on how caregivers can help their loved ones when they are in the hospital.

### [B.U.R.N. I.T.: Simple Reminders to Stop Caregiver Burnout](#)

In moments of extreme stress, it can be nearly impossible to think clearly. 21-year-old family caregiver Abby Carol shares her strategy for when she is approaching a breaking point of caregiver burnout "**Burn It**":

**B:** Be right back

**U:** Uber

**R:** Remember

**N:** Need help

**I:** It's okay

**T:** Talk to me

### [How Worried Caregivers Can Avoid Becoming Anxious](#)

Strategies to observe and stop harmful behavior in its tracks.

### [6 Tips for Dining Out with Someone with Dementia](#)

Tips to help family caregivers plan and prepare when taking someone with dementia out to eat, including recommendations to choose a restaurant that meets their needs, choose an ideal time of day, and keep the outing short.

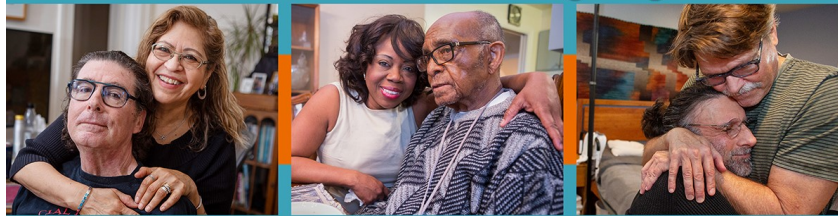
### [5 Ways to Make Long-Distance Caregiving Easier](#)

5 things that can help you make long-distance caregiving more manageable.

### [Recordings from the 2023 Alzheimer's Association New England Family Conference](#)

- Opening Remarks & Keynote: Caregiver Conversations: Journey of Hope, Panel of Caregivers
- Reducing Hesitancy to Care: Personalizing Your Approach
- Creating a Healthy and Safe Environment for Living with Dementia

## Innovations in Alzheimer's Caregiving Awards



In partnership with The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation, Bader Philanthropies, Inc., and Family Caregiver Alliance

Congratulations to the [Alzheimer's Family Support Center \(AFSC\)](#) for winning one of three 2023 [Innovations in Alzheimer's Caregiving](#) awards for their [AFSC Community Center at the Cape Cod Mall](#). The three awards were given to organizations that deliver state of the art programs that address the needs of caregivers and those they care for living with Alzheimer's disease or a related condition.



Created by caregivers, the AFSC provides an array of cost-free personalized services to families, individuals, and caregivers on Cape Cod currently living with Alzheimer's and other dementia-related diseases. The goal of the AFSC is to help families navigate the complexities and challenges they face across the span of these diseases, within a research-based, service driven social model.

One of the AFSC's programs is the Alzheimer's Family Community Center at the Cape Cod Mall (pictured on left). This unique site offers a multi-service resource within a local shopping mall setting, potentially the first one in the nation. The public shopping mall location, with its brightly-lit sign and great visibility, helps to reduce stigma about seeking help while increasing dementia care accessibility to people from across

racial, ethnic, sexual preference and socio-economic backgrounds, including significant populations of Brazilian, Central American, Native American, LGBTQIA+, and rural community members.

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## Tips for Navigating Winter Weather



### [Staying Safe in Bad Weather: Your Guide to Being Prepared for Emergencies](#)

Sampling of a guide created by WestMass ElderCare with valuable tips, guidance, and resources on emergency preparedness for older adults and individuals with disabilities during inclement weather, including power outages and winter storms.

1. Create a personalized emergency plan, including emergency contacts, medications and medical supplies, and an evacuation route.
2. Assemble an emergency kit, including non-perishable food and water, warm clothing and blankets, a first aid kit, and important documents.
3. Stay informed and connected during inclement weather and power outages, for example through emergency alerts and notifications and a NOAA weather radio
4. Consider options for shelter and transportation, including establishing a plan for accessible transportation, making home modifications to ensure safety and

- accessibility during emergencies, and identifying an evacuation plan that can accommodate your specific needs.
5. Identify special consideration for preparing for winter weather, such as snow removal, backup power, and heated shelter.

### [Programs to Keep Older Adults Connected to Energy and Utility Services](#)

This recorded training provides information about federal utility assistance programs such as the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP), the low-income Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), and additional protections for those with serious illnesses. These programs can help older adults stay safe and healthy, reducing the dangers that arise from a lack of access to utilities.

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## Report Spotlight

[The Public Health Center of Excellence on Dementia Caregiving released an updated guide on Advanced Care Planning.](#) The guide contains a range of tools, materials, and information related to advanced care planning, including financial, housing, medical, legal, and palliative/hospice care assistance. This resource is the result of a comprehensive, environmental scan of available dementia-specific planning resources for advanced care.

This guide is intended to be used primarily by people living with dementia and their care partners. It should be used as a tool to help navigate and provide recommend actions for effective care, services, and considerations at various stages of cognitive impairment and dementia.



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## Webinar and Podcast Recordings

### [Caregiving Chronicles: Lived Experiences and Life Edits](#)

Recording of a discussion with a panel of journalists, caregivers, and practitioners to celebrate National Family Caregiver Month, hosted by the National Center on Elder Abuse and the Los Angeles Caregiver Resource Center.

### [Addressing the Needs of Diverse Family Caregivers](#)

Interview about the Diverse Elders Coalition with National Director Lauren Pongan to learn about their recent work to better understand and highlight the lived experiences of diverse family caregivers for older adults.

### [Sandwiched and Stressed?](#)

Recording of a webinar for caregivers caring for older loved ones and children, often referred to as “sandwich generation” caregivers. This webinar provides tips to navigate caregiving logistics, responsibilities, and emotions as a sandwich generation caregiver with experts in the field.

### [Supporting Unsung Heroes – A Conversation with the VA Caregiver Support Group](#)

Podcast featuring staff from the Veterans Caregiver Support Program as they discuss the multitude of supportive programs the Veterans Administration (VA) offers, how they are listening to caregivers to better shape their programs, and why the VA is so committed to serving caregivers.

### [Building Bridges: Compassionate Communication in Dementia Care](#)

Recording of a Hilarity for Charity webinar for those caring for someone with memory loss. Yael Wyte, MSW shares practical tips and strategies for communicating with compassion and patience; insights into how memory loss can affect communication and strategies to overcome challenges; and information on how caregivers can strengthen their connection with their loved one through mindful communication.

### [Conversations with Caregivers: Stress Reduction and Activities for Caregivers](#)

Recording of a Dementia Care Collaborative at Mass General Hospital "Conversations with Caregivers" seminar session presented by Dr. Abby Altman.

## Upcoming Webinars and Free Virtual Events

### [Black Heritage Month - Family Caregiving & the African American Experience](#)

February 8, 5:30 PM

### [Understanding Alzheimer's and Dementia](#)

February 13, 12:00 PM

### [Hilarity for Charity CareCon](#)

February 14, 3:00 PM

### [The Many Faces of Dementia: I Am More Than My Memory](#)

February 15, 1:00 PM

### [Yoga Nidra with the Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren](#)

February 15, 7:30 PM

### [When Is Your Loved One with Dementia Eligible for Hospice?](#)

February 20, 12:00 PM

### [New Advances in Alzheimer's Treatment](#)

February 26, 12:00 PM

### [Understanding and Responding to Dementia-Related Behavior](#)

February 27, 12:00 PM

### [Meaningful Activities for a Loved One with Dementia](#)

March 19, 12:00 PM

### [Programs that May Assist Families with Medicare Costs](#)

March 28, 12:00 PM

### [Grief Journey of the Dementia Caregiver](#)

April 16, 12:00 PM



## Alzheimer's Association New England Family Conference

March 1 - 2, 2024

Programs for Family Caregivers on Saturday, March 2, 2024

**9:30-11:00 AM Opening Remarks and Keynote, A Time of Hope: Advances in Treatment and Modifiable Risk Factors**

*Presented by Dr. Edmarie Guzman Velez*

**11:15 AM - 12:15 PM Caregiver Panel, Caregiver Conversations: Journey of Hope, Panel of Caregivers**

Caring for someone with dementia is an important, yet complex role. Caregivers may provide help with personal care, paying bills and coordinating medical care while also providing

emotional support for the person living with dementia and the extended family. Join this panel discussion with caregivers as they share tips, strategies and lessons learned throughout their journey.

*Presented by Nicole McGurin, MS, and Panelists*

### 12:45 - 1:45 PM Creating Meaningful Engagement with Memory Boxes

Often in the early stages of dementia, one's attention span and ability to initiate activities can be altered, making it difficult for the person to engage in hobbies or pastimes they once enjoyed. This session will focus on the evidence about the use of failure-free activities to engage the early or mid-stage person living with a progressive dementing illness. Strategies will be shared that can help reduce anxiety when surrounded by an overstimulating, understimulating, or unfamiliar environment, and bring meaning to the person's life. A special focus will be on what to add to a memory box and how to present the activity so it feels meaningful and fulfilling.

*Presented by Judith Pare, PhD, RN*

[Learn More & Register](#)

The Family Caregiver Support Program Fact Sheet is available on [Mass.gov](http://Mass.gov) in the following languages:

- [Arabic](#)
- [Chinese](#)
- [English](#)
- [Haitian Creole](#)
- [Khmer](#)
- [Portuguese](#)
- [Russian](#)
- [Spanish](#)
- [Ukrainian](#)

## MASSACHUSETTS FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM

**Am I a family caregiver?**

- If you **care** for a **loved one** who is an older adult, or has a disability or illness, you are a family caregiver.
- The **care** could include helping with finances, grocery shopping, transporting, cleaning, or cooking.
- You could be caring for a spouse, parent, grandparent, adult child, grandchild, friend, or neighbor.



**Do I need family caregiver support?**

- Caregiving can be rewarding and fulfilling, but can also take an emotional, physical, and financial toll.
- For example, providing care can lead to fatigue, stress, worry, missed work, and time spent away from family, friends, or hobbies.



**What is the Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program?**

- The Family Caregiver Support Program provides **free support services** to **eligible** caregivers.
- The program is administered by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs and provided by your local Aging Services Access Point (ASAP). ASAPs are regional non-profits dedicated to aging services.



**Who is eligible for the Family Caregiver Support Program?**

- You are **eligible** if you are an adult who is...
  - caring for an older adult (60 years of age or older)
  - caring for an individual living with dementia (e.g. Alzheimer's disease)
  - age 55 or older caring for a child under age 18
  - age 55 or older caring for someone with a disability



## MASSACHUSETTS FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM

**How can the Family Caregiver Support Program help me?**  
Family Caregiver Specialists can, at no cost to you, facilitate...

**Access**

- Refer you to services and resources in your community
- Counseling and training**  
Advise you one-on-one
- Help you plan for care wherever your loved one lives
- Organize caregiver support groups
- Run workshops and training
- Provide educational materials
- Respite care**  
Relieve you temporarily from your caregiving responsibilities so you can get the rest and respite you need

**How do I connect with the Family Caregiver Support Program?**



**Call MassOptions** at 844-422-6277 from 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Mon - Fri  
Someone will connect you with a Family Caregiver Specialist at your local Aging Services Access Point!

 [Mass.gov](http://Mass.gov)

Visit [Mass.gov/family-caregiver-support-program](http://Mass.gov/family-caregiver-support-program) for more on:

<a href="#">Eligibility for Family Caregiver Support Program</a>	<a href="#">Caregiver help and information</a>	<a href="#">Grandparents Raising Grandchildren</a>
<a href="#">Caregiving information for workplaces</a>	<a href="#">Training and technology for families caring for individuals living with dementia</a>	<a href="#">EODEA newsletter for caregiver specialists</a>

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