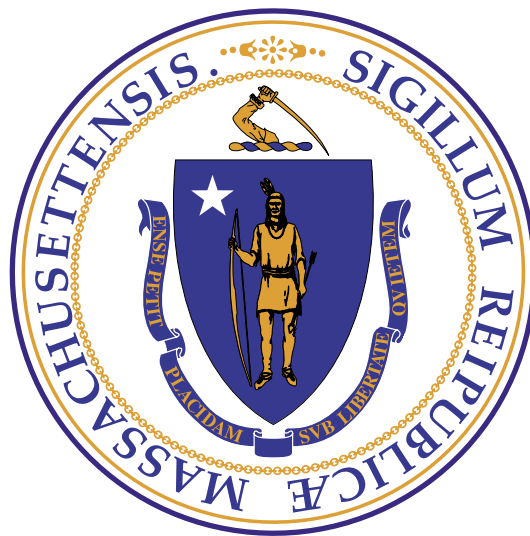


Listen to the
free audio CD!

Embrace Your Future



Planning guide for long-term supports in Massachusetts

- Planning Options for your Future
- Resources Available for More Information
- Financial Planning for Long-Term Supports
- Healthy Aging and Staying at Home

To learn more about long-term supports planning,
go to www.longtermcare.gov

Introduction

This guide is designed to help you learn how to plan for your future long-term support needs. In Massachusetts, and throughout the United States and abroad, people are living longer and staying healthier longer than ever before. As we enjoy extended lives, the likelihood that at some point we will need long-term supports also increases. Chronic disease and disabilities are more prevalent in our later years. Because we are living longer, we need to be thinking about and planning for the futures that we want for ourselves and our loved ones. This guide presents some helpful resources and ways to think about the future for yourself and your loved ones.

Needing long-term supports does not mean a complete loss of independence or control over your life. The keys to planning for your future are:

- planning early and wisely,
- knowing and understanding your options, and
- taking action.

Massachusetts has many resources to help you maximize your independence and functioning at a time when you are unable to be fully independent. These are discussed throughout this planning guide. You can get additional information on the Massachusetts website: www.800ageinfo.com or by calling toll free **1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-243-4636)**. When calling, select **menu option #1** to be transferred to your local elder service agency or Aging Service Access Point (ASAP).

You may have requested this planning guide to help you learn more about how to care for a parent or other loved one. Even if this is the case, as you take the time to read this guide, consider how it might help YOU start planning ahead now! No matter what your age or situation, it is never too early to plan. Putting a long-term supports plan in place now can help you prepare for the future and preserve peace of mind. The guide includes practical advice, steps you can take now to get started and resources for more information.

Throughout this planning guide, you will find the phone numbers and website links to Massachusetts-specific and national resources designed to help you embrace your future and age well!



Whenever this symbol is used in this planning guide it means that additional information is available on the audio CD that accompanies this guide.

Table of Contents

- Embrace Your Future!..... 2
- Where to Start? 4
- Lifestyle Planning..... 7
- Planning for Your Care..... 11
 - Decide Who You Can Count On for Help..... 11
 - Learn What Your Community Has to Offer..... 12
- Getting Legal Matters in Order 15
- Staying at Home 18
- Financial Planning for Long-Term Supports..... 22
 - What Does Medicare Cover? 23
 - What Does Medicaid Cover? 24
 - Insurance for Long-Term Supports..... 25
 - Long-Term Care Insurance 25
 - Life Insurance Options..... 27
 - Reverse Mortgages..... 31
 - Additional Financial Options Available in Massachusetts..... 35
- Concerns about Care? 36
- Principles for Attaining the Best Quality of Life as We Age..... 38
- For More Information 39
- To Do Checklist 40

Embrace Your Future!

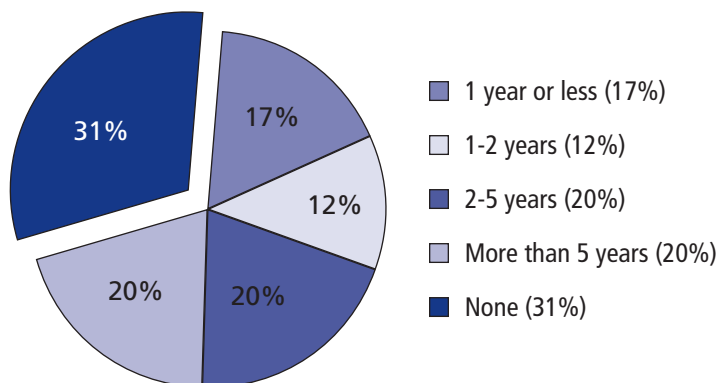
If you have not begun so already, it is time to embrace your future and plan for a long life! Many of us can shape the supports and services available to ourselves and others in the future through proactive planning, community involvement and advocacy.

What are long-term supports?

Long-term supports are a variety of services and supports designed to meet health or personal care needs over an extended period of time. Most long-term supports involve assistance with everyday activities like shopping, laundry and preparing meals or help with personal care, such as bathing, dressing or eating.

Most of us don't ever think we will need long-term supports. Many of us learn about long-term supports the hard way – when we or a loved one need care. That's when we find out that:

- The risk of needing long-term supports is high. Almost seven out of ten people turning age 65 today will, at some point in their lives, need long-term supports.
- While most people who need long-term supports are in their 70s and 80s, young people also can require care. Nearly 40% of those currently receiving long-term supports in Massachusetts are between the ages of 18 and 64.
- While many people need long-term supports for only a year or two, some require care for many years.



Kemper, Komisar, Alecxi. Long-Term Care Over an Uncertain Future: What Can Current Retirees Expect? Inquiry 42:335-350, Winter 2005/2006

This chart shows the expected length of time that people turning 65 will require long-term support services over their lifetimes. This includes all types of care that people might receive – care provided by family or friends, paid services such as home care from a nurse or personal care aide, or care in a nursing home or an assisted living residence.

- Informal care or unpaid care provided by families, friends, and neighbors, makes up the largest single source of long-term supports.
- A study by the University of Massachusetts Boston Gerontology Institute found that in 2008 the average income necessary for elder couples to achieve economic security ranged from \$34,926 to \$42,853 for elders with rent or paying a mortgage. The need for long-term supports can more than double an elder's expenses, significantly increasing the income needed to meet basic needs.
- Paying for care on your own is expensive – a year in a Massachusetts nursing home can cost over \$100,000. The average cost of 40 hours of certified home health aide services per week for one year is over \$50,000 in Massachusetts.
- Medicare and Medicare supplemental insurance (Medi-gap) generally do not pay for long-term support services.
- MassHealth (Medicaid) only pays for long-term supports for people with limited financial means. Many people qualify for MassHealth only after the costs of long-term supports have diminished virtually all of their financial resources.

As you review this guide and consider the options available to you and your loved ones ask yourself a few questions:



“What will give me quality of life if I live into my 80s and beyond?”

“What do I want future long-term supports to look like for me and my loved ones?”

“Who do I want to deliver services, and what are my priorities should additional supports be needed?”

“What steps can I take, and how should I plan today and in the near future?”

Where to Start?

Many people don't plan for long-term supports; one day they just need them! That is not the best way to prepare for something that will affect most older adults at some point in their lives. How you plan for long-term supports depends on your age and life situation. Here are some basic guidelines for how to start planning for different age groups:

If You Are Between 40 and 60 years of Age...

- Learn about long-term supports. Talk to expert professionals by contacting state and non-profit agencies listed throughout this planning guide. Talk to other professionals that you have access to including financial advisors, accountants and lawyers. Also learn from the experiences of friends and relatives who are currently facing long-term support needs of a loved one or from someone who is receiving long-term supports.
- Learn more about the risks of lifestyle behaviors and their effects on healthy aging. Talking to your primary care physician is a good place to begin.
- Learn what long-term supports can cost you. Learn about the financial risks of long-term supports and the financial options for planning ahead. Talk to professionals and ask your friends and relatives if they have bought a long-term care insurance policy or made other financial arrangements for long-term supports.
- Consider increasing the percentage of your income that you allocate to savings. Most people are not saving enough for their older years.
- Investigate whether your employer offers long-term care insurance as a voluntary benefit. As explained later in this guide, it costs far less to buy long-term care insurance as part of a group policy or when you are young.
- If you are planning modifications to your home, consider including changes that enhance accessibility such as widening the front doorway or creating a sloped, no-step entrance. These will allow you to welcome friends and family members who develop a disability and will be an investment in your future that also may increase the marketability of your home.

- Stay physically active. Walk more, drive less. Participate in a local community program for regular physical activity. Join a gym, YMCA or adult education center.
- Establish an advance directive that expresses your desires for medical treatment should you not be capable of making decisions on your own. See the list of advance directive options on pages 15-16 under legal matters in this guide.



If You are Age 60 or older...

- Assess your finances and ability to pay for future long-term support costs, as well as your living expenses for your retirement years. Consider using an accountant or financial specialist to help you plan.
- Planning for long-term supports includes discussion about finances with family and friends. Be direct with family members about their expectations for inheritance and the potential costs of long-term supports.
- Think about where you want to live. If you want to stay in your current home, begin thinking about home modifications that may let you stay at home longer.

- If you have not done so already, establish an advance directive that expresses your desires for medical treatment should you not be capable of making decisions on your own. See the list of advance directive options on pages 15-16 under legal matters in this guide.
- If long-term care insurance is right for you, and you haven't bought it yet, understand that premiums will escalate as you age. The monthly premium cost for a new policy is based on your age when you buy it, and the premium cost increases dramatically if you buy at age 70 instead of 60.
- Increase the percentage of your income that you allocate to savings. Most people are not saving enough for their older years.
- If your home is your primary financial asset, explore whether using your home equity to pay for your future long-term support needs is an option for you. Assess whether a reverse mortgage is a feasible option for paying for your future long-term support needs.
- Stay mentally and physically active. Do crosswords or Suduko, take classes at a local college or adult education center, exercise, learn Tai Chi, and stay involved in your community. Visit www.800ageinfo.com or call toll free **1-800-Age-Info (1-800-243-4636)** to get information about your local Massachusetts Council on Aging and Senior Center wellness programs. When calling, select **menu option #1** to be transferred to your local elder service agency for more information.
- To learn about long-term supports available in your community, speak to an Information and Referral Specialist, Elder Care Advisor, Family Caregiver Specialist, or a Long-Term Care Options Counselor. To find out more about these service providers, visit www.800ageinfo.com or call toll free 1-800-Age-Info (1-800-243-4636). These services are provided through your local elder services agency, Aging Services Access Point (ASAP) or your regional Aging and Disability Resource Consortium (ADRC). Care Managers at your local ASAP can also help to arrange and coordinate care. Most communities also have private care managers for those who can afford private consultations.

Lifestyle Planning

The scientific evidence is overwhelming. If you adopt a healthier, more active lifestyle, your risk of disability in older age declines dramatically. Even if your lifestyle habits up until now have been less than ideal, it is never too late to modify your habits and improve your health. Of course, not every disease or disabling condition can be prevented, but even small changes in your daily activities can improve functioning and delay the time that you will need long-term supports.

People who get regular physical activity, don't smoke, and eat a healthy diet are more likely to age well compared with those who do not follow a healthy lifestyle.

Moderate, regular physical activity helps to control weight, contributes to healthy bones, muscles and joints, reduces falls and helps to relieve the pain of arthritis. Physical activity also reduces symptoms of depression and stress, improves brain functioning, and may even reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.

Good nutrition lowers the chances of getting many life-shortening chronic diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, some cancers, diabetes, and osteoporosis. Even if you have chronic conditions, good nutrition and a healthy lifestyle can help you efficiently manage disease. Volunteering in your community can help you to stay active, engaged and positive as you age. Just as importantly, your community needs your involvement!

Everyone recognizes that changing lifelong habits is not easy. Participation in a structured program for healthy aging provides you with tools and support for achieving permanent change.

Planning for long-term supports is a continuing exercise!

Plan for the future!



“You don’t have to be an Olympic runner. Walking is an excellent form of exercise for older people. The trick is to walk for at least 30 minutes, and at a healthy pace.”

Steps you can take now

- Take advantage of health promotion benefits offered by Medicare and/or private health insurance, such as gym memberships, cancer screening tests, diabetes screening, comprehensive eye exams and blood pressure tests. Ask your doctor whether you should get any annual immunizations.
- Exercise your brain. Read, play cards and board games, do crossword puzzles, adopt a new hobby, volunteer, or attend an adult education class.
- Contact your local Council on Aging, managed care plan, local YMCA, hospital, or other service provider to learn more about wellness services and health promotion activities offered to Massachusetts residents in your community. Self-management programs can help you to learn new behaviors and manage chronic disease more effectively. Some examples of these programs include: “My Life, My Health: Chronic Disease Self-Management Program,” “A Matter of Balance: Falls Prevention,” and “Healthy Eating for Successful Living in Older Adults.”

- There are many other community programs to help you stay physically active, care for a chronic illness, reduce falls, maintain proper nutrition, stop smoking, lose weight or manage substance abuse problems. In Massachusetts, you can find out about programs in your area by calling toll free **1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-243-4636)** which will connect you to a variety of resources for Massachusetts elders. Select **menu option #1** to be transferred to your local elder service agency or **menu option #3** for information about free health insurance counseling known as the Massachusetts SHINE Program.
- Contact your local Council on Aging, Senior Center, community hospital, community center, parks and recreation facility or gym to find out what types of health-related and social activity programs they offer.
- Do something you love! Learn about the volunteer and work opportunities that your community has to offer and how your unique skills can continue to shape our society. Contact your local Council on Aging or visit www.mass.gov/elders/civicengagement to learn about volunteer service. Visit www.workwithoutlimits.org for tips on getting paid employment, even if you have a chronic illness or disability.
- If you take medications, manage your medications safely. Make a list of all your medications, when you take them and the condition for which you are taking them. Discuss the list with all of your health care professionals including pharmacists. Make sure you understand how and when to take your medications. Talk to your healthcare practitioner and/or pharmacist about any side effects. Visit www.seniorcarepharmacist.com/record for a medication record template.
- Take steps to prevent falls. Use the checklists and information at the website link mentioned on the next page under “Learn how to avoid falls.” You may want to take part in a community program that addresses “fear of falling” – a common risk factor for falling.
- Stay active! Avoid isolation by getting together with friends or family, participating in community events, joining social or religious organizations, volunteering, continuing or returning to work part-time. It is never too late to learn new things, make new friends, and meet new people.

For more information, consider the following websites with tips on Healthy Aging:

- The Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs: www.mass.gov/elder
- The Massachusetts Department of Public Health: www.mass.gov/dph/healthyaging
- Exercise: A Guide from the National Institute on Aging: www.niapublications.org/exercisebook/exercisebook.asp
- Center for Disease Control’s “Strong for Life”: www.bu.edu/hdr/products/stronglife/items.html
- First Step to Active Health: www.firststeptoactivehealth.com
- Tips on Using Your Medicines Wisely: www.seniorcarepharmacist.com:16080/tips
- Learn how to avoid falls: www.cdc.gov/ncipc/duip/fallsmaterial.htm
- The Massachusetts “Keep Moving Walking Club”: www.mass.gov/eohhs
(Search website for “Keep Moving Walking Club”)
- National Council on Aging “Healthy Aging” website: www.ncoa.org/content.cfm?sectionID=302

Planning For Your Care

Decide Who You Can Count On for Help

There are many different types of families, and often family and friends are the first people you rely on for help when you become ill or disabled. Identify the people you can depend on and how they might be able to help if you need long-term supports.

Care from family or friends can supplement care from paid service providers. Some people prefer to receive care from family or friends, while others don't want to burden their loved ones with the responsibilities of caregiving. Give some thought to how you feel about relying on your family for care, and talk to your family members to understand their feelings about providing care.

If you plan on relying on family or friends for much of your care, be sure they receive sufficient training and support. Many communities have agencies that provide “caregiver training” so that your family can learn how to safely assist you with your everyday personal care. It is also important to plan time off for them so that they can have a break from caregiving from time to time. Some people arrange for paid services several hours a week or a few weeks a year so that the family caregivers can take a vacation or just have some time off. To learn about and be connected to caregiver support programs in Massachusetts, call toll free **1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-243-4636)** and select **menu option #1**.



“After my wife died, I didn't know what would happen if I needed help. I love my kids, but I don't want to live with them, and they probably don't want to live with me either. We all talked and agreed on a plan. Between the help they can provide, and paying for some outside help, I think I'll be just fine. But I'm glad we talked through it.”

Learn What Your Community Has to Offer

There are 27 Aging Services Access Points (ASAPs) that link elders and their families to local services anywhere in the state. These ASAPs also coordinate with disability organizations through a statewide network of Aging and Disability Resource Consortia (ADRCs). Counselors at ADRCs can help you explore your options and work with you to develop a plan that fits your situation. Call toll free **1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-243-4636)** and select **menu option #1** to be directed to a Long Term Care Options Counselor or a care advisor in your area.

Visit www.800ageinfo.com to get information about your local Massachusetts Aging Services Access Points and other services in your community such as Councils on Aging, Senior Centers, the Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program, Adult Day Health Centers and Centers for Independent Living. In addition, visit the websites of the Massachusetts programs and resources below to learn more about what your community has to offer!

- Massachusetts Aging and Disabilities Information Locator (MADIL): www.madil.org
- Senior Care Options (Integrated care for MassHealth members aged 65 and older): www.mass.gov/masshealth
- Rewarding work (Database of personal care attendants available to provide assistance to an individual with a disability in performing activities of daily living.): www.rewardingwork.org
- Mass Access Housing Registry (A housing database that helps people to find affordable, accessible housing in Massachusetts. The website highlights housing for elders and people with disabilities of all ages who need accessible or barrier-free housing): www.massaccesshousingregistry.org
- Mass Home Care Association (A network of 27 non-profit agencies that cover every city and town in Massachusetts and provide information on services for elders such as personal care, legal help, alternatives to nursing homes, respite care, transportation, health insurance counseling, home health and eldercare advisors): www.masshomecare.org

- Massachusetts Senior Care Association (Represents a diverse set of organizations that deliver a broad spectrum of services to meet the needs of older adults and people with disabilities. Members include more than 500 nursing and rehabilitation facilities, assisted living residences, residential care facilities and continuing care retirement communities): www.maseniorcare.org
- The Massachusetts Aging Services Association (MassAging) (Represents the full continuum of not-for-profit providers of aging services including nursing facilities, residential care communities, assisted living residences, housing providers, continuing care retirement communities, and community based service providers): www.massaging.org
- Massachusetts Assisted Living Facilities Association (Mass-ALFA) (Supports the establishment and operation of quality assisted living residences in Massachusetts that provide appropriate supportive housing and services for individuals with varied needs and income levels): www.massalfa.org
- The Alzheimer's Association (A national voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research that may be contacted for referrals, support, support groups, care consultation, education and safety services): www.alz.org/ma. The Association's 24/7 toll free helpline is **1-800-272-3900**. (For residents of Cape Cod and the islands, please visit www.alzcapecod.org.)



Over the past decade, many Massachusetts residents and communities have been leaders in developing their own community-based long-term support models. These emerging models vary in services and structure, but may help you to age in your preferred place by providing transportation, coordination of medical care, grocery shopping, group exercise and socialization opportunities, and other services. You may want to talk with elders in your community to learn about current and/or emerging community-based models that are available to you or your loved ones.

Additional steps you can take now

- Talk to your family about what will happen if you need help with everyday activities. Share your concerns and preferences, where you may want to live, and any medical history that may be important in making decisions.
- Think about whether moving in with other family members or sharing your home with someone else is a viable option for you.
- Learn about your local community's services and programs, and whether they are available at no or low cost.
- Contact your faith community to find out if they can help with future long-term support needs, such as transportation or in-home care.
- Contact the National Family Caregivers Association for more information on how to talk with family or friends about long-term supports. You can reach them toll free at **1-800-896-3650** or www.thefamilycaregiver.org.
- Visit the Family Caregiver Alliance www.caregiver.org for helpful family caregiving resources in Massachusetts.
- For information on providing support to individuals who are caring for a friend or loved one, go to: www.800ageinfo.com (click on the "Family Caregiver Handbook")
- Learn how to select a private care manager to help you at: www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/whocares/caregivers.shtm
- For links to transportation resources throughout Massachusetts for elders and younger people with disabilities, go to: www.disability.gov/state/massachusetts/transportation

Getting Legal Matters in Order

To the degree that you can, planning for your future legal and financial needs will give you peace of mind and make sure your wishes are followed. You may be able to take simple steps right now including learning about all of your options and completing a Health Care Proxy.

Think about what kind of life-saving medical treatment you want while you have time to think through your options. Discuss your preferences with your healthcare practitioner and family. You should put your wishes in writing, just in case you cannot speak for yourself or lose the ability to make decisions on your own.

Health Care Proxies, advance directives, and durable power of attorney offer peace of mind that your preferences about health care, life-sustaining treatments, and financing decisions will be honored.

Massachusetts law recognizes four types of advance directives:

- **A Health Care Proxy** form allows you to name someone to make health care decisions on your behalf when you are unable to communicate your wishes. This person may be a spouse, adult, child, other relative, friend or someone else you trust such as clergy or a lawyer. Visit the Massachusetts Medical Society at www.massmed.org for a clear explanation of the responsibilities of a Health Care Proxy along with a sample form and directions on how to fill out and sign the form.

It is strongly recommended that every Massachusetts resident, regardless of age or health care status, have a Health Care Proxy. You may easily change or cancel your Health Care Proxy at any time that you are able to make decisions about your healthcare. A legal guardian may be appointed by the court if an individual becomes incapacitated and a Health Care Proxy was not previously established.

- **Living wills** are a legally non-binding option in which you can document your preferences about future care. Living wills can provide important information to your Health Care Proxy and health professionals about your wishes regarding end-of-life care.
- **A durable power of attorney for health care** names someone to make health care decisions for you and becomes active any time you are unconscious or unable to make medical decisions for yourself.
- **A conservator of estate or durable power of attorney for financial matters** names someone to make financial decisions for you and becomes active any time you are unable to make financial decisions for yourself.



“We both have strong feelings about what type of treatments we would want, but we’d never bothered to put those wishes in writing or talk to our kids about it. Now that we have completed the necessary legal documents, our kids and our doctors won’t have to guess about what we want and don’t want, just in case we can’t speak for ourselves. We hope that never happens, but it is always best to be prepared.”

Steps you can take now

- Simplify things for yourself and your family by gathering all of your important documents, such as your advance directives, Health Care Proxy, will, and a list of financial accounts and institutions, and keep them in one place. You should consider leaving copies in your safe deposit box, with your attorney, and/or with at least one friend or family member.
- Have conversations with your physician and family about appointing a Health Care Proxy.
- Make sure you have a living will, durable power of attorney for health care or Health Care Proxy that expresses your wishes in the event that you become seriously ill and cannot communicate your wishes.
- Get detailed information about advance directives at: www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/advancedirectives.html
- Locate a Massachusetts elder law attorney through the Massachusetts Chapter of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, Inc. at: www.manaela.org. You can also find a lawyer through the Massachusetts Bar Association at www.massbar.org or the Boston Bar Association at www.bostonbar.org.
- Visit www.800ageinfo.com or call toll free **1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-243-4636)** and select **menu option #1** to access information about legal assistance through your local elder service agency, Aging Services Access Points or Councils on Aging.



*Listen to the track on “Establish clear legal directions”
on the enclosed audio CD.*

Staying at Home

Many people prefer to remain in the familiar surroundings of their current home for as long as possible as they age. There are several things you can do to help you stay in your preferred home as long as possible, even if you do need long-term supports.

Is your home a good fit?

Whether your home is owned or rented, homes that are easy to live in at age 40 or 50 can present problems later in life. Some changes can help you remain safely at home and also can be inexpensive, like removing scatter rugs, making sure that smoke detectors are in working order, or replacing doorknobs with lever handles that are easier to use. Bigger changes may include adding railings to outside steps or replacing floor coverings with slip-resistant carpet. Visit the Home Safety Council at www.homesafetycouncil.org for safety and prevention tips, and to create your personalized home safety checklist.

Home modifications can help you stay in your home longer.

Modifying your home is an important option that can improve your safety and help you more easily perform daily activities such as bathing and cooking. Home modifications range from grab bars and improved lighting in the bathroom to handrails and wider doorways for wheelchair access, or even adding a bathroom or relocating a bedroom to the first floor for someone no longer able to climb stairs. Many home modifications may also increase the value of your home. Visit the Massachusetts Statewide Independent Living Council at www.masilc.org/membership/cils for the contact information of the eleven Independent Living Centers throughout Massachusetts. These centers can be contacted for regional information and advice on home modifications.



“Making changes to our home throughout the years has made our lives a lot easier and safer. In addition, the value of our home has increased as a result.”

Should you consider moving?

Perhaps moving to a new home will best help you meet your future needs. Consider the variety of options such as moving to a house, condominium, or apartment that is all on one level, or one that has elevators instead of stairs. Perhaps you would prefer a small, easy-to-care-for apartment with basic modifications already in place. Many places have begun to develop naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCs) where residents can age in place. Visit www.norcs.com for information about NORCs.

If you choose to move, you may want to consider a home that meets visitability standards. A home that meets visitability standards allows for occupancy or visitation by people with disabilities. Such a home must meet three basic requirements: At least one no-step entrance, doors and hallways wide enough to navigate through, and a bathroom on the first floor big enough to get into with a wheelchair and close the door.

Meeting these standards in a home may be advantageous to you today and as you age. Family and friends with disabilities will be able to enjoy your home with you. You can rest assured that your home is constructed for the challenges that you and your loved ones may face in the future. You may also increase the future marketability of your home.

Steps you can take now

- Start making small changes to your home to keep it safe in the years ahead. For instance, you might install easy to use light and power switches. Or you might change shelving so that it is more easily reachable.
- The following website has a “checklist” of items to review to determine how suitable your current living situation is to meet your current and future needs: www.eldercare.gov/Eldercare.NET/Public/Resources/fact_sheets/home_mod.aspx
- Some people living alone have a device to call for help in the case of a medical situation or other emergency. Think about whether a personal emergency response system might be appropriate for you at some point in the future. For information on various types of emergency response systems, go to www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/products/pro24.shtm
- Find out about various assistive devices and in-home technology that you can include in your home to help you adapt to physical and mental challenges related to illness or disability. The following site also tells you how you can pay for these types of devices: www.eldercare.gov/Eldercare.NET/Public/Resources/Resources.aspx
- For help in locating a local contractor trained in counseling about home modification, call the National Association of Home Builders toll free at **1-800-368-5242**.
- Learn whether your workplace has benefits that support family caregiving. You can visit the United States Department of Labor at www.dol.gov/dol/topic/benefits-leave/fmla.htm to learn about eligibility for unpaid, job-protected leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).
- To learn about visitability standards and initiatives around the country, go to www.visitability.org.

- Visit the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission at www.mass.gov/mrc to learn about the Home Modification Loan Program, which provides no- and low-interest loans to modify the homes of elders, adults and children with disabilities.
- The Mass Access Housing Registry is a housing database that helps people to find affordable, accessible housing in Massachusetts. The website highlights homes for people of all ages with disabilities who need accessible or barrier-free housing. The Registry's website is www.massaccesshousingregistry.org.



Listen to several tracks on the enclosed audio CD. They include:

- *Make sure your home remains a good fit*
- *Low income options for home modification and repair*

Financial Planning for Long-Term Supports

A critical part of planning for long-term supports is knowing how you are going to pay for the care you may need in the future. There are many ways to pay for care, and you should decide what financial plan works best for you.

Financial planning for long-term supports also involves knowing what kind of coverage is provided through government programs such as Medicare and MassHealth (Medicaid), and what costs you will have to pay for yourself. In addition to MassHealth, Massachusetts has other programs that may be able to help you. However, unless you qualify for MassHealth or state home care programs, most of the costs of long-term supports will have to be paid directly by you.

The most important consideration is to start planning when you are relatively young. If you wait until you are 70 or 80, it will be difficult to put aside the funds you need to protect yourself from the high costs of nursing home care and home care. Go to www.aarp.org/money for financial calculators to help you understand and plan for your future needs. Make a plan today!

The Massachusetts SHINE (Serving the Health Information Needs of Elders) Program provides health insurance counseling services to elders and persons with disabilities. Volunteer health benefit counselors trained at fourteen SHINE Regional Programs provide free, accurate, unbiased information and assistance regarding health insurance and benefits. SHINE counselors work at senior centers, elder service agencies, hospitals, and other community locations. Call them for any health insurance related question. To learn more or to find a SHINE counselor, visit the SHINE program online at www.medicareoutreach.org or call toll free **1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-243-4636)** and select **menu option #3**.

MassMedLine is a free, confidential service available to all Massachusetts residents who are seeking information about their medications. Whether you are having difficulties affording your medications or want to know the side effects of your medications, MassMedLine can help. For more information visit MassMedLine at www.massmedline.com, call toll free **1-866-633-1617** or email MassMedLine@mcphs.edu. Interpreters are available.

What Does Medicare Cover?

Medicare is the federal health insurance program for elders and certain younger people with disabilities. It is designed to cover traditional health care services, and does not cover long-term supports. That is why people need to take steps to protect themselves from the potentially catastrophic costs of long-term supports. Medicare does cover some skilled nursing facility care, hospice care, and home health services, but only as described below.

- Medicare covers skilled nursing facility care (only after a 3-day prior inpatient hospital stay for a related illness or injury) for up to 100 days in a benefit period.
- To qualify for Medicare coverage in a nursing facility, you must need skilled care. Medicare does not cover personal care or custodial care (such as help with activities of daily living, like bathing and dressing) if that is the only kind of care you need.
- If you qualify, Medicare Part A benefits pay the full cost of nursing facility care for the first 20 days. In 2010, if you do not have supplemental insurance, then you pay \$137.50 per day for every day of coverage between days 21 and 100 and all expenses after the first 100 days (Medicare provides no coverage after the first 100 days). For instance, if you qualify for Medicare coverage in 2010, but do not have supplemental insurance and you stay over 100 days in a nursing facility, your out of pocket payment beyond Medicare coverage for nursing facility care will be \$11,000.00 plus all expenses after the first 100 days of your stay.
- Medicare covers hospice care for people with a terminal illness who are expected to live 6 months or less. Coverage includes drugs, medical and support services from a Medicare-approved hospice, and other services not otherwise covered by Medicare (like grief counseling). Visit the Hospice & Palliative Care Federation of Massachusetts at www.hospicefed.org for information and to locate hospice care in Massachusetts. Visit the National Hospice Foundation at www.nationalhospicefoundation.org for additional information.
- Medicare coverage of home health services is limited to reasonable and necessary part-time or intermittent skilled care, or a continuing need for physical, occupational, or speech therapy.

What Does Medicaid Cover?

Medicaid, called MassHealth in Massachusetts, is a program that is jointly financed by the federal government and the states. It is a program designed to provide medical and long-term support services to people who cannot afford to pay for their own care. Medicaid is a major funding source for long-term supports. In fiscal year (FY) 2007, the Medicaid program spent more than \$100 billion nationally to support persons with long-term support needs. The MassHealth (Medicaid) program spent more than \$2.96 billion in FY 2007 for long-term support services for Massachusetts residents.

- To qualify for Medicaid, you must have limited resources. When you apply, you will be asked to document your current finances, including both your income and your assets. The state will then determine whether you qualify for Medicaid coverage.
- If you are 65 years of age or older and not married, the financial criteria for full Medicaid eligibility are such that you cannot have more than \$2,000 in countable assets (not including your house). There are similar types of financial criteria for married couples and younger people with disabilities. If only one member of a married couple needs long-term supports, asset limits much are greater.
- Often, when people start needing long-term support services, they do not qualify for Medicaid because they have assets such as retirement accounts, multiple automobiles, or other savings. After they spend whatever resources they have, then they may qualify for Medicaid coverage.
- MassHealth provides a relatively broad package of long-term support benefits, including nursing home care and home and community-based services. But not everyone gets all of the services they want or need. At times there may be waiting lists for home and community-based services.
- In most states, including Massachusetts, persons who receive Medicaid-funded long-term support services may have some or all of the cost of Medicaid-funded services recovered from any personal assets not spent before qualifying for Medicaid. Assets may be recovered even if a Medicaid recipient is no longer living.
- For more information on MassHealth, go to www.mass.gov/masshealth.



“We always thought Medicare would pay for long-term care in case we needed it, but then we found out it didn’t. And we don’t want to have to rely on Medicaid. We feel strongly about leaving something for our kids and grandkids.”

Insurance for Long-Term Supports

Whether to buy or not to buy an insurance policy is an important decision. Insurance can help pay for many types of long-term supports, but it is not for everyone and some policies are more restrictive than others. This section discusses two types: long-term care insurance and life insurance policies with accelerated benefits, both of which could be used to pay for long-term supports.

Long-Term Care Insurance

Long-term care insurance is a product specifically designed to cover the cost of care provided when a person needs continued help with personal care and receives care in a nursing home, an assisted living residence, at home, or in community settings such as an adult day health center. When choosing a long-term care insurance policy, you can choose the level of coverage per day, the locations where benefits are covered, and even if a policy will cover training for family caregivers, or offer respite care so that

family members can have a break from caregiving. Some policies provide you with a cash payment for each day that you are eligible for care which gives you the flexibility to use the payment to purchase any type or amount of care you prefer.

The prices of long-term care insurance policies vary based on your age, your health status, the specific benefits, and other factors. Each policy is priced differently, and a lower priced policy may not mean that it is the right one for you.

There are two basic types of long-term care insurance policies: individual policies and group policies. Individual policies are sold directly to individuals, and must meet certain minimum standards set by the Massachusetts Division of Insurance. Group policies are sold through employers and associations, and are not subject to all the same state protections. Visit the Division of Insurance for more information on the standards that individual policies must meet, and the individual long-term care insurance policies (including the companies selling policies) offered in Massachusetts. The Division's website is www.mass.gov/doi, and their phone numbers are **1-617-521-7777** (Boston) or **1-413-785-5526** (Springfield).

How Does it Work?

Generally, you receive benefits from a long-term care insurance policy when a licensed health care practitioner (doctor, nurse or social worker) determines that you are eligible. In most cases, you qualify for benefits when you need help from another person with two or more activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, using the toilet, eating and moving in or out of a bed or chair. A severe cognitive impairment, such as Alzheimer's disease, could also qualify you for benefits, depending on the policy you buy.

When you buy a policy, you choose how much coverage and what coverage features you want. Obviously, the more coverage you buy, the more the policy will cost. The coverage amounts you choose can help keep your policy affordable.

Life Insurance with the Option to Accelerate Benefits for Long-Term Support Services

Many life insurance policies are offered so the insured person can purchase an option to accelerate the policy benefits to pay for certain long-term support services while the insured person is still alive. Most acceleration options do not require you to choose any per day limits or benefit locations when adding the option to the life insurance policy. Instead, when you are chronically ill and need services, the policy can be used to pay for the costs of services.

Accelerated benefit options on life insurance policies must meet certain minimum standards set by the Massachusetts Division of Insurance. These policies may only be offered if they meet certain disclosures when the option is purchased and upon filing to accelerate benefits, so it is clear how the acceleration will impact the death benefit. The prices of life insurance policies with the option to accelerate benefits vary based on your age, your health status, the configuration of benefits, and other factors. Each policy is priced differently, and a lower priced policy may not mean that it is the right one for you.

How Does it Work?

Generally, life insurance policies pay benefits when the insured person dies. Life insurance policies with accelerated benefit features are designed to make payments when the insured person is still alive but only when a licensed health care practitioner (doctor, nurse or social worker) determines that you are eligible. In most cases, you must contact the life insurance company to activate the accelerated benefits to pay the cost of long-term supports. Most accelerated benefit options do not limit the amount spent per day or specify the location where services may be provided, but they usually do require that the services be “qualified long-term care services” according to federal rules.

It is important to note that accelerating a life insurance policy's benefits reduces or eliminates the amount available for beneficiaries at the insured person's death. The amount available to be accelerated and its impact on the death benefit can differ from one policy to another, so it is important to understand the features when buying a life insurance policy with an accelerated death benefit feature.



“We’re glad we took our time shopping for a policy. There were a lot of options out there, and we had a lot to learn. But we ended up with a policy that provides us good coverage, with a monthly premium that won’t make us cut back on our lifestyle. I just wish we had bought earlier!”

What Do Policies Cost?

Insurance premiums are based on your age when you buy the policy. The younger you are at the time of purchase, the lower your monthly premium. The premium you pay when you first buy a policy is designed to remain level over the lifetime of your coverage. You should note that if you do not purchase certain long-term care insurance options or an accelerated death benefit option on a life insurance policy when first offered, the company may charge more or not offer it at all once the policy is in place or you are older.

Be A Smart Shopper

If you are considering buying long-term care insurance or life insurance with an accelerated benefit feature, shop carefully. Don't be pressured into buying a policy or buy out of fear or emotion. Do not make your decision based only on price.

Steps you can take now

- Look for additional tips on www.longtermcare.gov or www.800ageinfo.com.
- When and if you begin shopping, consider policies from at least three different companies that are licensed in your state. The Massachusetts Division of Insurance sets the minimum standards for individual (not group) long-term care insurance plans in Massachusetts, as well as for accelerated death benefit options offered with life insurance products. Visit the Division of Insurance online at www.mass.gov/doi or call **1-617-521-7777** (Boston) or **1-413-785-5526** (Springfield) to download or request a hard copy of “Your Options for Financing Long-Term Care: A Massachusetts Guide” and “Individual Long-Term Care Insurance Policies offered after January 1, 2000 (Massachusetts policies only; updated as of September 28, 2009).”
- Talk with others you know who have bought long-term care insurance policies or life insurance policies with accelerated benefit features to learn more about why and what they bought. If someone has had experience with filing a claim, find out from them what that process was like and if the company they used handled their claim professionally and promptly.

- Check to see which policies are approved for coordination with MassHealth (Medicaid). Under certain circumstances, Massachusetts rewards you for purchasing an approved long-term care insurance policy. If you meet these conditions, Medicaid will allow you to protect your home from asset recovery even if you receive Medicaid-funded long-term supports. For more information, visit the MassHealth online at www.mass.gov/masshealth.
- Visit www.aarp.org/money for articles about insurance options and tools to help you plan for your future needs.
- Call your insurance agent or financial planner to discuss whether long-term care insurance is suitable for you.
- Check out options for group long-term care insurance or life insurance at your place of work.



Listen to the relevant tracks on the enclosed audio CD:

- *Introduction*
- *Focus on your finances*
- *Understand long-term care insurance*

Reverse Mortgages

If you expect to stay in your current home for several years, a reverse mortgage is another potential option for financing long-term supports. A reverse mortgage can pay for both immediate needs as well as preventive measures, so you can continue to live at home safely and comfortably.

Is a reverse mortgage right for you? It's a decision you should consider carefully since your home may be your most valuable financial asset. Massachusetts law requires that lenders have their reverse mortgage products approved by the Division of Banks before selling them in the Commonwealth. The law also mandates that you participate in a reverse mortgage counseling session from an agency approved for that purpose by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs before you close a reverse mortgage transaction. Visit www.mass.gov/reversemortgage for a listing of reverse mortgage programs approved by the Massachusetts Division of Banks. Visit www.mass.gov/elders for a listing of reverse mortgage counseling programs that have been approved by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.



“We love our home, and we put a lot of our savings into making improvements over the years. The way things worked out, our home is our primary financial asset right now. That’s why we started looking into a reverse mortgage as a way to pay for long-term care, should we need it.”

How does a reverse mortgage work?

A reverse mortgage is a special type of home equity loan that is available to homeowners age 62 and older. You receive cash against the equity of your home without selling it. You choose whether you want to receive a lump-sum payment, a monthly payment, or a line of credit. You can choose equal monthly payments for as long as at least one borrower lives and continues to occupy the property as a principal residence, equal monthly payments for a fixed period of months, a combination of a line of credit plus scheduled monthly payments for as long as the borrower remains in the home, or a combination of the line of credit plus monthly payments for a fixed period of time. There are no restrictions on how you use the money you get from a reverse mortgage.

Unlike a traditional mortgage, a reverse mortgage does not require an income or credit history, and you make no monthly payments. Instead, the amount you owe, based on loan payouts and interest on the loan, increases over time. You do not have to repay the loan as long as you continue to live in the home. The loan becomes due when you or the last borrower (such as the remaining spouse) dies, sells the home, or moves out of the home permanently. You or your heirs “keep the difference” if the home’s sale price is greater than the reverse mortgage loan balance when it’s time to repay the loan. Your heirs can also keep the family home if they repay the loan balance.

Where do I shop?

Most people get a reverse mortgage through a traditional mortgage lender, like a bank. Consult the list of approved reverse mortgage programs published by the Division of Banks at www.mass.gov/reversemortgage or contact the Division toll free at **1-800-495-2265** or **(617) 956-1501**. There are many reverse mortgage products available today, with different features, costs, and interest rate choices. As with any major purchase, it is best to shop around for the right product. Study your options carefully before making any decisions. New, lower-cost reverse mortgages are likely to become available in the next few years. If you do not have an urgent need now, you may want to wait until you have more choices.

What else should I consider?

- A reverse mortgage usually has significant upfront costs, primarily because of mortgage insurance premiums. These premiums include both a large up-front premium and additional monthly servicing fees. Therefore, if there is a good chance you will be moving out of the home soon (for example, for a health problem) it is not a good idea to buy a reverse mortgage.
- Reverse mortgage funds must first be used to pay off any existing mortgage or other debt against the home, and to make required home repairs. These expenses can greatly reduce the amount of the loan available to pay for long-term support costs.
- A reverse mortgage reduces your available home equity. A reverse mortgage with a large loan balance may limit your options if you decide you want to move at a later date.
- Make sure you understand your obligations under the terms of the loan such as to pay taxes, insurance and maintain the property in satisfactory condition. A failure to fulfill these obligations may constitute a default and possibly lead to foreclosure.
- Be wary of pressured sales tactics to draw down a large portion of your available equity up front and use this to purchase an investment product, annuity or insurance product.
- Obtain independent legal and financial advice and speak with trusted family members before signing any loan documents.
- If you are the sole borrower and you leave your home to receive care in an assisted living or nursing facility for more than a year, your loan will become due and will need to be repaid.
- Sometimes a conventional home equity loan is a better option than a reverse mortgage, particularly if you are unsure how long you can continue to live at home.



Steps you can take now

- You'll find additional information about reverse mortgages at www.mass.gov/elder, www.mass.gov/reversemortgage and www.ftc.gov (search for reverse mortgages).
- You can find a detailed overview of reverse mortgage loans, including a guide on how to compare your options and a calculator to estimate how much you can get from this type of loan at: www.aarp.org/money/revmort.
- The National Reverse Mortgage Lenders Association offers consumer publications and a website with a reverse mortgage calculator. The Association can help you find a reverse mortgage lender in your state: www.reversemortgage.org.

Additional Financial Options Available in Massachusetts

Additional planning options available in Massachusetts for you to consider include property tax deferrals, the timely sale of your assets, sale of an interest in a life insurance policy, and the purchase of annuity contracts. These options are briefly described below.

- **Property tax deferrals:** You may be able to defer property taxes on your home if you are over 65 and meet certain income and asset limits. Taxes may be deferrable until your home is sold. Visit “Section O -- Senior Citizens” of the “Commonwealth of Massachusetts Citizens’ Guide to State Services” for more information on property tax deferrals and to look up your local tax assessor’s phone number. The Guide can be accessed for free online at: www.sec.state.ma.us/cis/ciscig/guide.html.
- **Sale of assets:** If you have assets, you may consider selling them to finance the cost of long-term supports. Some of the assets that you own may no longer be needed including unused automobiles, certain investments, collections, or real estate that is not your primary residence.
- **Sale of an interest in a life insurance policy:** If you own an insurance policy, you may be able to sell that policy and get an immediate cash payment. These arrangements are known as viatical settlements or life settlements; they involve the sale of an insurance policy before the policy fully matures. If you decide to sell your policy in this way, you will receive a financial settlement right away, but the purchasing settlement company will then own your policy and receive the full proceeds of your life insurance upon your death.
- **Annuity contracts:** If you have the ability to purchase an annuity contract, you may consider doing so to help pay for potential future long-term support costs. Certain contracts provide the contract holder with extra flexibility to pay for long-term support needs should they arise. All annuity contracts in Massachusetts are reviewed by the Massachusetts Division of Insurance.

A financial or other advisor can help you determine if these options are right for you. The Massachusetts Division of Insurance has more information about these options and others available in Massachusetts. Visit their website at www.mass.gov/doi or call at **1-617-521-7777** (Boston) or **1-413-785-5526** (Springfield) to learn more about the planning options for your future that are detailed in this planning guide, as well as additional options not detailed in this guide.

Concerns about Care?

The Massachusetts Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is a federal and state mandated program that offers residents of long-term care facilities a way to voice their concerns and have their complaints addressed. The Protective Services program investigates complaints of abuse, neglect or exploitation of elders living in the community.

Ombudsmen visit nursing and rest homes on a regular basis. When a resident, family member or friend expresses a concern and asks the Ombudsman to intervene, the Ombudsman works with the resident and facility staff to resolve the issue. If outside resources are needed, the Ombudsman seeks assistance from local organizations and agencies. Ombudsmen are advocates who provide a voice to the needs and preferences of residents. They link residents with services or agencies, receive and investigate resident complaints, offer advice on selecting long-term support providers, inform consumers about their rights, and provide information and assistance with benefits and insurance.

Call toll free **1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-243-4636)** and select **menu option #4** (Elder Abuse, neglect or financial exploitation) or visit: www.mass.gov/elders for the contact information of your local Ombudsman.

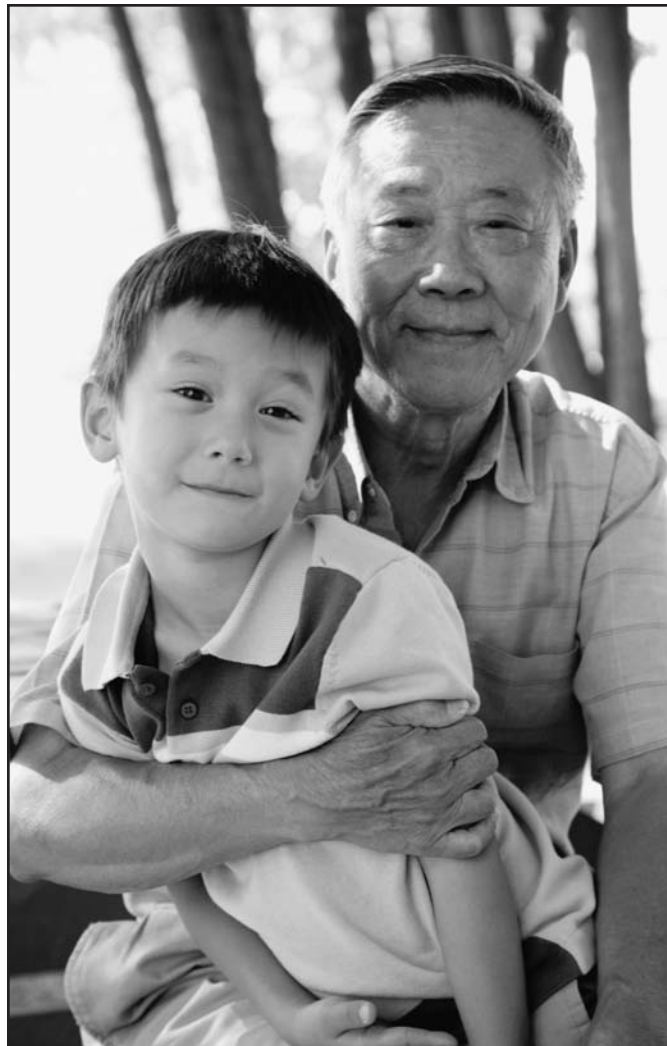
If you suspect abuse of an adult, age 60 or over, residing in the community, call your local Elder Affairs designated Protective Services agency during regular business hours, or the statewide Elder Abuse Hotline 24/7 toll free at **1-800-922-2275**.

If you are providing care for a loved one and need support, call toll free **1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-243-4636)** and select **menu option #1** to be connected to a Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program in your area.

Remember...Embrace Your Future!

As outlined throughout this guide, in Massachusetts there are many programs and resources to support you and your loved one's long-term support needs. Among those outlined in this guide are a no-cost health counseling insurance information program called SHINE (Serving the Health Information Needs of Elders), numerous websites and resource guides, and statewide networks including Aging Services Access Points (ASAPs), Independent Living Centers (ILCs), Councils on Aging (COAs), Senior Centers, and Aging and Disability Resource Consortia (ADRCs).

The Massachusetts-specific and national resources in this planning guide are meant to help you plan for a high quality of life in your later years. If you have not begun so already, it is time to start embracing and planning for your future using these resources and others that are available to you!



Principles for Attaining the Best Quality of Life as We Age

Society cannot thrive or even survive without the continuous active participation of all people as they age. Each of us, both individually and collectively, has a stake in building an environment in which every person has an equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of civic life. The Commonwealth is committed to an aging agenda that emphasizes the following:

- The positive aspects of aging;
- Economic security;
- The best possible physical, cognitive, and mental health;
- Affordable, accessible housing;
- Control over managing one's own life including participation in a wide range of civic, cultural, learning, spiritual and recreational opportunities;
- Access to social services, including protection against abuse and neglect;
- An adequate array of flexible, reliable transportation options;
- Access to affordable long-term supports in the setting of one's choice; and
- Meaningful support for caregivers.

For More Information

There is a federal website designed specifically to assist you with planning ahead for your long-term support needs. It has a variety of user-friendly tools including a map of the United States so that you can find out what long-term supports cost where you live, and a “savings calculator” so that you can see what it might cost you if you need long-term supports and how much you’d have to begin saving today in order to have enough to pay for your own care needs. The website covers all of the topics addressed in this planning guide in greater detail. You can find the website at: www.longtermcare.gov.



The enclosed audio CD is a valuable resource with real-life stories about how people have planned ahead for their long-term support needs. The CD focuses on a wide range of planning options and people in very different life situations. We urge you to take the time to listen to it; people who have done so tell us it has been a very helpful supplement to this planning guide.

CD Index:

1. Introduction (2:17)
2. Focus on your finances (5:50)
3. Understand long-term care insurance (7:47)
4. Tips for buying long-term care insurance (7:01)
5. Establish clear legal directions (7:50)
6. Decide who you can count on for help (8:24)
7. Learn what your community has to offer (6:57)
8. Make sure your home remains a good fit (5:49)
9. Low income options for home modification and repair (7:39)
10. Concluding comments (1:49)



To Do

Use this checklist to Embrace Your Future

I'll start out by:

- Learning more about _____

I'll adopt a healthier lifestyle by:

- Getting more physical exercise
- Eating healthier
- Exercising my brain by _____

I'll begin planning for my care needs by:

- Talking with _____
- Checking these local websites _____
- Calling for information at _____
- Visiting Medicare at www.medicare.gov to learn about my eligibility and coverage.
- Visiting MassHealth (Medicaid) at www.mass.gov/masshealth to learn about my eligibility and coverage.

I'll start getting my legal affairs in order by:

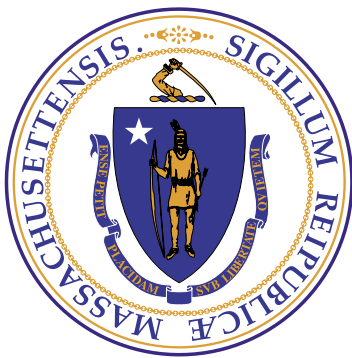
- Organizing my paperwork and storing it in a safe place
- Consulting with _____
- Establishing advanced directives such as _____

I'll begin planning where I want to live in the future by:

- Learning more about _____
- Investing in home modifications such as _____
- Investigating these alternative living options _____

Una versión en español compatible con la guía de planificación a largo plazo titulada “Abraza tu futuro” está disponible para su descarga en www.800ageinfo.com.

To download an accessible version of this planning guide, go to www.800ageinfo.com.



The Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services

The Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation

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