



Executive Office  
Of Elder Affairs

**JF&CS**  
Jewish Family & Children's Service



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**May 5, 2016**

## **Making Massachusetts “Dementia Friendly” Leadership Summit Convenes on May 9**

**Watertown, MA** - In the United States, an estimated 5.1 million people 65 and older are living with Alzheimer’s disease, the most common form of dementia. In Massachusetts, 1 in 8 older adults has Alzheimer’s disease or a related disorder. Nearly 60 percent of those with dementia live in their own communities and 1 in 7 lives alone. Communities across the country are experiencing an urgent call to support people with dementia and their caregivers by becoming “dementia friendly.” Massachusetts is taking a lead in answering that call.

On May 9, a group of leaders and stakeholders from around the Commonwealth will launch a state-wide conversation about “dementia friendly” communities and solicit input from grassroots advocates and thought leaders. This DEMENTIA FRIENDLY MASSACHUSETTS LEADERSHIP SUMMIT will represent key sectors, and geographic and cultural communities.

### **What is a “dementia friendly” community?**

A dementia friendly community is informed, safe, and respectful, and enables people living with dementia and those who care about them to live full, engaged lives. A dementia friendly community:

- raises awareness of and develops respect and inclusion for people with dementia;
- has services and resources embedded in all areas of community to ensure meaningful access to community and promote quality of life;
- supports and educates people with dementia, their care partners and families from diagnosis through disease progression; and,
- promotes meaningful engagement in community life.

There is a growing realization that if many sectors of our communities work together, we can make strides in supporting the more than 120,000 Massachusetts residents with dementia as well as their care partners and families. In Massachusetts, we build upon the work of the [Age-Friendly](#) movement which promotes change that benefits people of all ages by supporting community standards for inclusion, access, safety and engagement.

### **The May 9<sup>th</sup> DEMENTIA FRIENDLY MASSACHUSETTS LEADERSHIP SUMMIT:**

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) and Jewish Family & Children’s Service (JF&CS), in collaboration with ten agencies, will convene a leadership summit to begin to chart a direction for building a dementia friendly Commonwealth.

Summit participants will gain awareness of progress to-date in the Commonwealth and learn more about effective practices and collaboration. The goal of the summit is to increase understanding, identify the roles and specific steps that each community sector (such as government, health care, business, financial services, emergency responders, faith communities) can take in supporting people living with ADRD and their care partners. Participants will leave with concrete steps for learning more and taking action in their community. The Dementia Friendly Massachusetts Leadership Summit and follow-up efforts to support this initiative is supported by a generous grant from Tufts Health Plan Foundation.

National leader Olivia Mastry will share key learnings from early-adopter states and regions. [Mastry is a founding partner of The Collective Action Lab](#) and a highly regarded expert in enabling organizations to accomplish together what they cannot do alone. Also presenting will be Executive Office of Elder Affairs' Secretary Alice Bonner, a leader and catalyst in making Massachusetts dementia friendly.

"This is a tremendous opportunity to develop public-private partnerships throughout the Commonwealth to promote livable, inclusive communities for everyone," said Executive Office of Elder Affairs Secretary Alice Bonner.

"More people than ever before are affected by Alzheimer's disease and related disorders. Despite the widespread impact of these conditions, barriers such as lack of information, fear and stigma can prevent those who are affected from feeling safe, socially connected and able to thrive in their communities."

Following the dementia friendly summit a team will be synthesizing and disseminating findings from the event, and working with communities and sectors ready to take action to support this process and building grassroots coalitions in those communities. To learn more about how to make your community dementia friendly, where all people can live, age, and thrive, visit [Dementia Friendly America](#) and access free resources and toolkits.

**CONVENING ORGANIZATIONS:**

Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs  
Jewish Family & Children's Service

**CO-SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS:**

AARP Massachusetts  
Age-Friendly Boston  
Alzheimer's Association Massachusetts/New Hampshire Chapter  
BayPath Elder Services, Inc.: Dementia-Friendly Hudson/Northborough/Marlborough  
Healthcentric Advisors  
Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging  
Mayor's Alzheimer's Initiative, Boston  
Multicultural Coalition on Aging  
Tufts Health Plan Foundation

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### **About Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA)**

Executive Office of Elder Affairs holds a vision that older adults and individuals with disabilities will have access to the resources they need to live well and thrive in every community in the Commonwealth. The EOEA promotes the independence, empowerment, and well-being of older adults, individuals with disabilities, and their caregivers. EOEA's six strategic goals include: supporting aging in community; preparing for evolving demographic trends; empowering healthy aging; preventing injury, violence, and exploitation; strengthening "no wrong door" access to aging and disability services; and ensuring quality, value, and person-centered care. Through the statewide elder services network, EOEA provides services locally via Aging Services Access Points (ASAP), Councils on Aging (COA), Aging and Disability Resource Consortia, (ADRC) and senior centers in communities across the Commonwealth. This network provides elder services that include home care, caregiver support, nutrition programs, protective services, wellness services, and more. [www.mass.gov/elders](http://www.mass.gov/elders)

### **About Jewish Family & Children's Service**

For 150 years, Jewish Family & Children's Service has focused on a singular, powerful mission – to improve people's lives. With an integrated network of more than 40 programs serving communities throughout Eastern and Central Massachusetts, JF&CS helps people of all faiths and backgrounds meet life's challenges. JF&CS programs focus on serving particularly vulnerable populations including children and adults with disabilities or mental illness, new mothers and their infants, seniors living with chronic conditions, and people experiencing financial crisis, hunger, or domestic abuse. Please visit [www.jfcsboston.org](http://www.jfcsboston.org) for more information.

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