

*Dementia Friendly Massachusetts (DFM) is a statewide effort to spark and support dementia friendly systems and grassroots programs across Massachusetts. A “dementia friendly community” is informed, safe, and respectful and enables people living with Alzheimer’s or a related neurocognitive disorder, and those who care about them, to live full, engaged lives. Our goal is to help all communities in the Commonwealth to become more dementia friendly.*

## ***The Connection Newsletter***

Welcome to *The Connection*, Dementia Friendly Massachusetts’ (DFM) quarterly newsletter, celebrating the beginning of our second year, updating you on our transitions, and introducing you to a myriad of tools and resources to strengthen the great work you do to support those living with dementia by growing dementia friendly communities.

We are grateful to Tufts Health Plan Foundation for its continued support of the Dementia Friendly Massachusetts.

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## March 2018 Edition

### Spotlight on Massachusetts Councils on Aging's (MCOA) New Role

MCOA has become the new backbone organization supporting Dementia Friendly Massachusetts (DFM). DFM is a state-wide, grassroots movement comprised of organizations, individuals, and municipalities growing dementia friendly communities to become more inclusive and supportive of those living with dementia, their families, and care partners. DFM is a member of Dementia Friendly America and is generously supported by Tufts Health Plan Foundation.

In its first 18 months, the backbone organization for DFM was Jewish Family & Children's Services, led by Beth Soltzberg with Co-Coordinator, Emily Kearns. The Management Committee included representatives from: MCOA, Alzheimer's Association, MA/NH Chapter, JF&CS, MA Executive Office of Elder Affairs, Multicultural Coalition on Aging, MA Healthy Aging Collaborative, Leading Age, and AARP. The DFM staff closely collaborated with MHAC and AARP staffs to further develop and disseminate integrated approaches that communities could use to pursue both age-friendly and dementia-friendly initiatives in a streamlined fashion.

Now in its second iteration, DFM is scaling its efforts through this new funding and MCOA is taking the lead. The partnering leadership organizations listed above will continue collaborating closely with MCOA's DFM staff to guide the movement.

**Responding to the Need:** DFM responds to the pressing need to leverage a wide array of resources to create innovative solutions to support the growing number of people living with dementia. 1 in 10 people age 65 and older has Alzheimer's Disease and this does not include other causes of dementia. In Massachusetts, currently there are more than 130,000 individuals living w Alzheimer's.

Not all communities are impacted equally. African- American communities have double the prevalence – African Americans are twice as likely than older whites to live with dementia; and Hispanics are 1.5 times as likely. Most critically, genetic factors do not seem to account for these differences but the social determinants of health, such as lifestyle and socioeconomic risk factors, do. This means that we have the opportunity to make real and sustainable impact if DFM change strategies focus on these determinants of health. It also means that while DFM supports all communities, outreach and support will need to especially focus on those communities most impacted by dementia.

## Spotlight on NEW Regional Dementia Friendly Massachusetts' Meetings – Join Us!

DFM is responding to the need to support the growing number of individuals and care partners journeying with dementia in a myriad of ways including holding quarterly DFM regional meetings to support communities as they grow awareness through information sessions and training and become dementia friendly, more inclusive and supportive of those living with dementia. These meetings aim to: provide networking opportunities, share resources and best practices, and offer expert panels from different sectors to help you with your local efforts. The first round of quarterly meetings was held in February and provided an overview of DFM, an opportunity for networking and sharing dementia friendly resources and innovations.

The next round of meetings will be held in May and the third round, in August. May will focus on how to start and programming and training resources to support your efforts. Please visit [www.mcoaonline.com/programs/dementia-friendly/](http://www.mcoaonline.com/programs/dementia-friendly/) for dates, locations, and registration. If you missed the first round of meetings, don't worry, you can find a meeting summary and materials also, at this link. (Meeting materials including agenda, PowerPoint, handouts, participant survey and meeting summary can be found online at the link above.)

**February DFM Meetings Overview:** 149 individuals, representing a wide range of sectors and organizations, attended the first round of Dementia Friendly Massachusetts (DFM) quarterly regional meetings, held from February 12 – 16, 2018. Four meetings were held at Councils on Aging (COA) sites across the state including: Westfield, Beverly, Lakeville, and Northborough. The goal of the quarterly meetings series is to support and grow community and regional capacity to create, implement, and sustain dementia- and age-friendly efforts.

The first 90-minute sessions included a welcome and overview of DFM by Emily Kearns, DFM Project Manager in which she discussed reframing dementia in terms of 1) a public health issue, referring to the World Health Organization, and 2) living with a cognitive challenge and disability, referring to the Dementia Action Alliance's work. Meeting participants were asked to complete a survey about their dementia- and age-friendly efforts – their areas of involvement, priority next steps, and what they needed to go forward. Their reflections were shared in a whole-group discussion that included how DFM might support local and regional efforts, going forward. Meeting agenda, handouts, and PowerPoint can be found on the MCOA website.

In their surveys, meeting participants identified the towns/cities and areas (sectors and domains) they have been most involved in. They also shared the extent to which they can be designated as an “active” dementia-friendly community. “Active” means the community has:

- Participated in a formal consultation with DFM Coordinator/Project Manager
- Identified a point person/community team leader
- Made a commitment to setting goals and an ongoing process until goals are reached
- Have participation of at least 3 sectors
- Included the voice of people living with dementia and care partners on the team

We are mapping state-wide DFM efforts. If some, but not all of these criteria are met, the town/city is classified as “emerging.” The exception to this is the first criteria. If a community has met the all criteria except consultation, it is classified as “active.”

Survey findings will be used to help us develop a strategy for providing further technical support to communities. We will follow up with contacts for local efforts to explore how to best support them, as needed.

**For more information, contact Emily Kearns, DFM Project Manager: [emily@mcoaonline.com](mailto:emily@mcoaonline.com).**

### **Spotlight on How to Get Involved**

You can join the Dementia Friendly Massachusetts movement and be part of making your community safe and respectful for persons with dementia. There are many ways to get involved:

#### **Watch brief videos**

- Visit [www.dfmassachusetts.org](http://www.dfmassachusetts.org) to view our introductory video: *Always a Dancer* (2.5 minutes).
- See [www.dfamerica.org/sector-videos](http://www.dfamerica.org/sector-videos) to explore what “dementia friendly” could look like in your community by watching additional brief videos.

#### **Join our mailing list**

- Go to <http://dfmassachusetts.org> to join our mailing.

#### **Help your neighborhood’s businesses become dementia friendly**

- Help your community’s businesses become dementia friendly by distributing our neighborhood business packets. Please contact Maura Moxley at [mmoxley@alz.org](mailto:mmoxley@alz.org).

#### **Visit, promote, or start a memory café**

Memory cafés welcome people with dementia, their families, and friends. They're in a variety of places including coffeehouses, museums, or community organizations:

- Post flyers around town to promote memory cafes and/or learn how to start one in your area by contacting Beth Soltzberg at [bsoltzberg@jfcsboston.org](mailto:bsoltzberg@jfcsboston.org).

#### **Improve your understanding and spread awareness in your community**

- Improve your understanding of dementia by attending a Dementia Friends information session, or lead a Dementia Friends information session. Visit [dementiafriendsma.org](http://dementiafriendsma.org) to learn how.
- Raise awareness of dementia and connect people in your community to programs and services. Contact Maura Moxley at [mmoxley@alz.org](mailto:mmoxley@alz.org) for information.

#### **Join others in your community**

- Share ideas and join others to make your community dementia friendly. To learn how, contact Emily Kearns at [emily@mcoaonline.com](mailto:emily@mcoaonline.com).
- Learn how cities and towns across MA are making their communities “age-friendly” as well as dementia friendly. Visit the MA Healthy Aging Collaborative at [www.mahealthyagingcollaborative.org](http://www.mahealthyagingcollaborative.org), or contact James Fuccione at [James.Fuccione@mahealthyaging.org](mailto:James.Fuccione@mahealthyaging.org). Also, visit the AARP Livable Communities website at [www.aarp.org/livable-communities](http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities), or contact Kara Cohen at [kcohen@aarp.org](mailto:kcohen@aarp.org).

**Do you have questions about any of this information?**

Contact Emily Kearns at [emily@mcoaonline.com](mailto:emily@mcoaonline.com) or 978-604-0830 to learn more.

## Spotlight on Tools and Resources

### The Alzheimer’s Association

The Alzheimer's Association is looking for host sites to bring Dementia Friendly Training and Education in to your community. We offer programs at no cost, and would love to help support your efforts.

Educational offerings we could provide can be for:

- Community members looking for more education on the Signs and the Basics of Alzheimer's disease and related dementia
- Family members who are supporting in the caregiving role
- Persons with dementia to help empower and take control of the disease
- Municipalities to educate a Town on how to be more Dementia Friendly
- Business owners to become more Dementia Friendly.
- First Responders to understand how to respond to Persons with dementia.

Please contact Maura Moxley at [mmoxley@alz.org](mailto:mmoxley@alz.org) to connect with the Regional Manager from the Alzheimer's Association who covers your region.

### The Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA)

*Acute care and dementia:* Persons with dementia in acute care settings are at greater risk for adverse events than other patients. EOEA recently co-chaired the Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s Alzheimer’s and Related Dementias Acute Care Advisory Committee. In 2017, the Committee released a set of [recommendations](#) intended to address care of individuals with dementia who are hospitalized and their caregivers in Massachusetts. Full and updated

information related to these recommendations will be available at [www.dfmassachusetts.org](http://www.dfmassachusetts.org) and in future editions of this newsletter.

**Faith-based community outreach:** EOEA is working with the Alzheimer’s Association to establish relationships within the Commonwealth’s faith-based communities to enhance our state’s efforts to become more age- and dementia friendly in diverse communities across the state. For more information, or to volunteer to help, please contact Pam MacLeod at [pam.macleod@state.ma.us](mailto:pam.macleod@state.ma.us).

**Savvy Caregiver training:** EOEA continues to oversee the implementation of Savvy Caregiver, which is a series of six free evidence-based training sessions for family caregivers of persons with dementia. Trainings are available through August 2018. Caregivers are urged to learn, develop and modify their caregiving strategies, which includes the contented involvement of the person they care for. EOEA is pleased to announce that Savvy Caregiver training will soon be offered in Spanish. For more information about the training, contact the Healthy Living Center of Excellence at (978) 946-1211. [Find Savvy Caregiver training near you](#).

**DFM website on Mass.gov:** EOEA will continue to maintain state government’s [Dementia Friendly Massachusetts website](#)

### Spotlight on Memory Cafes

Memory cafés are welcoming, free social gatherings for people living with dementia, along with their family members, friends, and professional caregivers. Dementia can be isolating; memory cafés bring people together. People living with dementia at any stage and due to any underlying condition are welcome, and no one is asked if they have a diagnosis. Massachusetts is home to over 75 cafés – more than any other state in the nation. You can find a directory of memory cafés at [www.jfcsboston.org/MemoryCafeDirectory](http://www.jfcsboston.org/MemoryCafeDirectory).

If you are interested in starting a memory café, lots of support is available through the JF&CS Percolator Memory Café Network. The free Toolkit is available to download in English here: [www.jfcsboston.org/MemoryCafeToolkit](http://www.jfcsboston.org/MemoryCafeToolkit) and Spanish here: [www.jfcsboston.org/GuiaCafeDeMemoria](http://www.jfcsboston.org/GuiaCafeDeMemoria), where you can also watch a 20-minute webinar in Spanish on how to start a Spanish-speaking memory café. Please contact Beth Soltzberg at [bsoltzberg@jfcsboston.org](mailto:bsoltzberg@jfcsboston.org) for more information.

### Spotlight on Dementia Friends

Dementia Friends is a global movement changing the way people act, talk and think about dementia. Almost 14 million people have participated worldwide. JF&CS is bringing Dementia Friends to Massachusetts. Visit our website at [www.dementiafriendsma.org](http://www.dementiafriendsma.org) You can attend an

Information Session to become a Dementia Friend, or be trained as a volunteer Champion, and lead Information Sessions in your community. Participants at an Information Session learn five key messages about dementia, how it affects people, and how we each can make a difference. Materials are currently available in English and Spanish. Please contact Beth Soltzberg at [bsoltzberg@jfcsboston.org](mailto:bsoltzberg@jfcsboston.org) for more information.

### Spotlight on Age- and Dementia Friendly Alignment

Here is an engaging story on how one community is aligning their dementia- and age-friendly efforts – covered in the Worcester Telegram. <http://www.telegram.com/news/20180121/on-front-lines-of-alzheimers-making-towns-businesses-dementia-friendly>

***Integrated age-friendly and dementia friendly approach:*** The Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) is working with key stakeholders to develop an integrated approach to help communities pursue their age-friendly and dementia friendly activities in a streamlined manner. For more information, or to volunteer to help, contact Pam McLeod, of EOEA, at [pam.macleod@state.ma.us](mailto:pam.macleod@state.ma.us).

***Age-Friendly Massachusetts and Community Compact:*** In January 2018, Massachusetts became only the second state in the nation to be designated as an age-friendly state. This means that the Commonwealth is now a member of the [AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities](#) and the [World Health Organization Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities](#). Under the leadership of the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) and Governor's Office, MA state government is committed to advancing healthy aging, age-friendly and dementia friendly communities throughout the state by promoting policies and practices that are inclusive, relevant, and enhance the quality of life for people of all ages and abilities. For more information, see [Age-Friendly Communities in Massachusetts](#). As part of the state's new age-friendly designation, EOEA plans to play a key role together with the Governor and his Cabinet in reviewing policies across all state agencies with an eye toward aging and equity.

### Spotlight on Awards

**Percolator Memory Café Network at Jewish Family & Children's Services (JF&CS)** was one of three winning organizations—each with outstanding programs that address the needs of caregivers for people with Alzheimer's disease—to receive \$20,000. In celebration of the 10th year of the Rosalinde Gilbert Innovations in Alzheimer's Disease Caregiving Legacy Awards, Family Caregiver Alliance and The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation awarded the JF&CS Percolator Memory Café Network this grant, in the category of Creative Expression. JF&CS Alzheimer's/Related Disorders Family Support coordinates the Percolator Memory Café Network, which meets regularly to offer memory café coordinators a forum to share ideas and work together toward common goals. Winners were honored at the 2018 Annual Conference of the American Society on Aging. Please contact Beth Soltzberg at [bsoltzberg@jfcsboston.org](mailto:bsoltzberg@jfcsboston.org) to learn more about this award, memory cafes, and the Percolator Memory Café Network.

## News from Dementia Friendly America (DFA)

Dementia Friendly Massachusetts (DFA) is part of the national movement, Dementia Friendly America. Visit [www.dfamerica.org](http://www.dfamerica.org) for the toolkit, sector guides, videos, and webinars information. Go to <https://mailchi.mp/dfamerica/dfa-newsletter-ciumkt8d1u-755509?e=7a1230dfcd> for their most recent newsletter.

## Articles and News from around the World

Learn about the town that's found a potent cure for illness – community | George Monbiot | Opinion | The Guardian <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/feb/21/town-cure-illness-community-frome-somerset-isolation>

Check out this article on Virtual Reality (VR) technology and how its potential so positively impacts the lives of those living with dementia and entire communities!  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/sponsored/vmware-2017/headset-architecture/1724/>

For comments or suggestions about the DFM newsletter, please contact DFM Project Manager, Emily Kearns, at [emily@mcoaonline.com](mailto:emily@mcoaonline.com).