



1st Dementia Friendly Massachusetts Regional Meetings

Meetings Summary

Overview of Meetings – Goals and Participation

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 specific goals of this first round of meetings were:

- Networking and Sharing Resources
- Seeing all of us in DFM
- Thinking regionally; acting locally
- Understanding resources for our efforts
- Considering next steps

The 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.

Active and Emerging Communities

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
- 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 example, several communities have met most of the active community criteria but need help meeting the last criteria – getting people living with dementia, involved. Some have identified a point person but have not been able to commit to setting goals, in which case, technical assistance will be provided for achieving these steps.

Targeted technical assistance will be developed to respond to these findings re meeting the active DF community criteria:

- 46% have not yet identified a point person or community team leader
- 41% still need to commit to setting goals
- 43% still need to garner participation of 3 or more sectors; and
- 54% have not yet included persons living with dementia and care partners on their team.

Areas of Involvement

Participants were asked to identify all their areas of involvement. The chart below reflects the areas of Involvement listed in the order of number of responses received. Councils on Aging and Community-Based Services are the areas most involved in by respondents. We also asked participants to rank the three highest areas of involvement. The highest involvement areas include: Councils on Aging, Health Care, First Responders, Residential-Assisted Living, Community-Based Services, Libraries, and Other.

Areas of Involvement – Ranked by Number of Responses (n=127 surveys completed)
Councils on Aging – 104
Community-Based Services – 75
First Responders – 67
Residential-Assisted Living – 59
Local Government – 57
Health Care – 56
Transportation – 52
Housing – 48
Faith Communities – 45
Libraries – 43
Hospitals – 37
Legal and Advanced Planning – 28
Businesses – 28
Banks and Financial Services – 27
Other – 26

Aligning Dementia- and Age-Friendly Efforts

When asked to identify which of their areas of involvement were specifically age- and/or dementia-friendly efforts, we found the following:

Dementia-friendly efforts included: Councils on Aging - 14.13%; Community- Based Services- 10.73%; Residential- Assisted Living - 9.48%; and First Responders- 9.12%. Parks and Recreation were least - .89% and banks and business were second least – 3.4%.

Age-friendly efforts included: Councils on Aging - 15.53%; Transportation and Community-Based Services- both 9.88% each; and Housing- 7.66%. Least were banks and businesses.

Both dementia- and age-friendly involvement included: Councils on Aging- 13.5%; Community- Based services-9.7%; First responders- 8.7%; Transportation 6.7%; and Residential- 6.2%. Least was Parks and Recreation – 1.9%.

Community Pride

One of the most significant findings from the surveys and meeting discussions is that many communities are already very engaged and proud of their efforts. Others, while not yet established, are eager to garner support for getting started. We are hearing about innovations in various sectors. We hope that peer-mentors will emerge to help others aiming to do similar work.

Participants said they were most proud of efforts in the following areas: sector-based trainings (first responders, businesses, etc.), memory cafes, libraries, high schools, etc. Here is a list, in their own words, of the efforts they are most proud about:

- Initiative in getting started
- New venture—Dementia training, support group for our caregiver partner Dementia Ambassador, Chairing Boston Alzheimer’s Walk. We do 8 hours of Habilitation training every quarter for all of our caregivers. We offer CDP training for all caregivers.
- Grassroots effort to bold awareness of Dementia and the need for a supportive environment across sectors.
- Memory Café—Community accomplishment
- COA partnership with Library
- We have just begun through a grant from Bay Path to offer Medical Escorts on our vans to individuals with physical and cognitive challenges. We now run a very successful program in partnership with the Metro West Regional Transit Authority.
- Training our high school students, future trades people, in dementia friendly strategies.
- I work with a few communities under Bay Path helping them become Dementia Friendly
- The town of Westborough has formed a great team and set strong DF goals



- Elder Community Collaborative-Focused on needs of elderly in nearby towns. Started 15 years ago.
- Educating police and fire, sponsor Dementia Live presentations
- Served on committee for EOEA/DPH to develop recommendations for acute care of dementia
- I hope to see culture change in health care environments especially the hospital
- Come to be Dementia Friendly Co-Chair—Memory Café, Dementia Ambassador
- Facilitate Dementia Caregiver Support group monthly
- Launching a Memory Café at the Shrewsbury Library
- Since 9/15 participated with Hudson and Marlborough to create “Come 2 B Dementia Friendly” organized local action team based on ACT model. Organized a diverse action team and completed a project that is being shared with the community
- Dementia Friendly/ Marlborough, The collaboration with Northborough, Hudson and Marlborough with the assistance of BayPath Elder Services
- All first responders trained—some banks trained as well
- Caregiver Support Group for people caring for people with Alzheimer’s and Dementia. Partnering with library on programs, had cut out in sidewalk put in so COA van can drop off in front, check out and delivery at COA (Library has challenging physical access). Made transportation available for evening concerts, weekend parades, town meetings. Reaching out to neighboring towns to include in lunches, events, trips. Music and photo slideshows at lunch.
- Collaboration—11 volunteers who present to community orgs. 35 partner orgs including public access media—meet EOM. Public access made DVD of a session
- Training staff at local businesses
- Community education through program I wrote “Demystifying Dementia” to reduce/ eliminate stigma associated with Dementia
- AARP applying for and being accepted as an Age Friendly community—Agawam, MA
- First Responders- EMT, fire, police—Very impactive!
- At risk task force—about 3 years multi discipline group stakeholders and first responders
- Our advocacy efforts; trainings for urgent care sites (for 3 different towns) and purple table
- Training front line healthcare workers on Dementia
- Memory Café and Silver Alert—a partnership with Somerville police, similar to the Amber Alert system. i.e. quick response by police, senior has a current picture on file and registered as having dementia.

Help Needed

We also learned from participants what types of help they need to move forward. These include: funding, staff, time, space, training and training materials, collaborations including with Councils on Aging/ local government/businesses, help with getting started and strategizing re outreach, buy-in from stakeholders, technology, Alzheimer’s Association resources and trainings, etc.

Next Steps

May Meetings: Starting and Resources – May 2018 regional meetings will focus on sharing: 1) specific resources, such as trainings, available to support the community-level effort; and 2) lessons from



communities about how to start and sustain local initiatives. Registration for May meetings will be available on the MCOA website.

Town/City Profiles – We will begin to develop profiles of each town/city that will include local contacts and an inventory of dementia- and age-friendly resources and events. Ideally, each local team will eventually have a point person responsible for updating this inventory. Meeting notes and participant surveys will be used in creating these profiles.

Sector Profiles and Working Groups – Sector Champions/Conveners are emerging. Examples include: law, schools, hospitals, research, and more. If you, or someone you know has expertise in a certain area and is interested in helping convene others in your sector, please let us know. Much appreciation to all of you who indicated your interest in presenting and inviting your colleagues to join DFM going forward!

Targeted Outreach – We will be developing a strategy to provide technical assistance to support communities and to help move them toward becoming fully “active” dementia-friendly communities.

Future Meetings – Sector-based panels will present at future meetings, for example, banks and financial planning, Alzheimer’s research and clinical studies, etc. are already identified as having champions willing to present. We will also be rotating meeting sites once we get established. Thank you to all who indicated in the survey your interest in hosting!

Others – We are looking forward to your ideas about how to move DFM forward! Contact Emily Kearns at: emily@mcoaonline.com to share your ideas, innovations, and resources.

*Additional regional sites may be added, as necessary.