

Celebrate Older Americans Month with a Gift!

You Can Make a Difference!

Join us for Access Care Partners' Annual Giving Day on May 30!

With uncertainty around federal funding and budget cuts, we need your support now more than ever! Anything you can give will help us keep our critical supports available for the most vulnerable in our community.

Use the envelope included in this newsletter or go to <https://givebutter.com/acpgivingday> to make a gift now—and together, let's ensure that our essential services will be there for those who need them.

Thank you for your generosity and commitment to making a lasting impact. Your support is the heart of our mission.



Scan code to donate

Greetings!

We are thrilled to send you our first newsletter featuring our new brand! While we have a new name, we are committed to our mission and providing services to you and your family as a trusted community partner. Access Care Partners remains fully committed to providing care and support for older adults, persons with disabilities and caregivers.

We are a non-profit, incorporated 50 years ago with modest federal funding to plan, advocate and use Older Americans Act (OAA) funds to provide nutrition and access to social supports. Federal funds are a small, but important, part of our revenue as Massachusetts has built a robust home and community-based system (HCBS) with state resources and Medicaid at the federal level. The goal is to prevent or delay those with long term chronic needs from moving to a nursing home. People want to live at home. It is a cost-effective use of public dollars as the cost of care in the community is less than in an institution.

Changes have occurred very recently at the federal level, and we don't yet know the full extent of the changes. The Administration for Community Living (ACL), which has overseen policy and federal initiatives focused on older adults and persons with disabilities, has been reorganized. Its functions are expected to be dispersed to the Department for Children and Families and other parts of the Department of Health & Human Services. The staff at ACL has been reduced. OAA funding for this year, which ends September 30, 2025, is delayed and has not been awarded to states and agencies like ours. Draft information on the FY26 budget indicates that functions of the OAA law will be level funded at best while other programs will be reduced or eliminated.

The future commitment to critical income supports such as Social Security and Medicaid remains unclear. Social Security services such as field offices and phone access have been cut back. Medicaid, MassHealth in Massachusetts, is funding which contributes to home and community-based services (HCBS) as well as long term care. For some older adults and people with disabilities, this is an essential part of their health care because they have a long-term disability or have lived into their later years and have chronic or complex medical conditions requiring daily care or 24-hour care in a facility.

Depending on what happens with federal Medicaid, states may also face pressure to eliminate coverage of specific Medicaid "optional services" such as home modification, adult day care, home-delivered meals, caregiver support and transportation. HCBS are optional services and can be reduced if states receive less federal Medicaid spending. Medicaid benefits, such as nursing home services, are required by Federal law. But a whole host of other benefits, including HCBS, are available only at the discretion of the states. Because states have the option to cover HCBS, they can make changes based on available funding, meaning that they may limit enrollment, reduce benefits, or eliminate entirely if they face spending pressures.

Food security is basic support for people who live on fixed income. Food Banks have already begun to experience reductions in food delivery from USDA. SNAP benefits may face reductions. Our agency should expect to see a 26% decrease in the number of coupons we receive once per year for older adults to purchase fresh produce from local farmers markets. The Farmers Market coupon benefit this season will be reduced from \$50 to \$25.

In this time of uncertainty and heightened anxiety about funding cuts, we are all asking ourselves: What can we do to help? We know the demographic of older adults will be increasing in our state for the next 15 years. Here's how you can help to stabilize resources for older adults, persons with disabilities and caregivers: volunteer your time, make a contribution and contact your state and federal lawmakers. Your gift of time, resources and making your voice heard will make a difference. Thank you for your support of our community. We are here for you and your family.



Roseann Martoccia, Executive Director



Access Care Partners Hosts Legislative Breakfast to Spotlight Urgent Funding Needs

On Friday, March 28, Access Care Partners hosted a Legislative Breakfast, bringing together legislators and key stakeholders in aging services to discuss timely challenges and opportunities that Access Care Partners is currently facing.

Executive Director Roseann Martoccia emphasized three critical areas in her remarks. First, she noted that in 2025, home care agencies are facing a significant funding gap due to a sharp increase in the number of individuals being served—outpacing current budget allocations. She also underscored that while food prices have risen dramatically due to inflation, funding for the state’s nutrition program has remained flat, making it increasingly difficult to maintain access to consistent, nutritious meals for older adults.

Martoccia also addressed the upcoming conclusion of the successful, grant-funded Hospital to Home program. To ensure the continuation of this vital service, Senator John Velis—who co-sponsored the breakfast—has filed a bill in the Massachusetts Senate to codify the Hospital to Home partnership program. The bill has been referred to the Joint Committee on Elder Affairs.

Access Care Partners is grateful to the legislators who participated in our first-ever legislative breakfast, and remains committed to advocating for strong, sustained investment in programs that help older adults and individuals with disabilities thrive in their homes and communities.

What can you do to help?

**Join Us for
Older Adult Lobby Day**

Please join us at the Massachusetts State House on May 13 to let your legislators know that older adults are here and urge them to fund and support quality, effective, and cost-efficient home and community-based services! For more information, visit <https://agingaccess.org/lobby-day/>

More Than a Meal: The Heart of Our Nutrition Program

Every day, Access Care Partners delivers more than just meals—we deliver comfort, care, and connection.

Through our Nutrition Program, hundreds of older adults receive warm, nutritious meals right at their doorsteps. But for many, the most meaningful part of this visit isn’t what’s in the bag—it’s the person handing it to them. Our drivers often provide the only face-to-face interaction recipients have all day. They bring not just food, but friendship, safety checks, and a reminder that someone cares.

This simple, daily ritual makes a world of difference. It helps older adults stay healthy, independent, and emotionally supported. The smile of a driver, a few kind words, a quick check-in—these moments are nourishment for the soul. But the truth is, this lifeline is under strain and in danger of unraveling for over 2,700 individuals who rely on it in our service area.

According to a Statewide Consumer Satisfaction Survey administered by the Executive Office of Aging & Independence, 86% said receiving home delivered meals helps them to live independently, and approximately 59% said it contributes to half or more of their daily food intake.

Federal funding for this program has remained flat for several years, while the cost of food and delivery has soared with inflation. We are doing everything we can to meet the need, but we can’t do it alone. Without additional support from individuals and businesses in our community, we face the real risk of having to place individuals in need on wait lists for meal services.

This program is a promise—that no older adult in our community will be forgotten. With your help, we can keep that promise.

To support the Nutrition Program or to learn more about receiving meals, call us at 413-538-9020 or visit www.accesscarepartners.org/nutritionprogram.



Scan code to learn more

Older Americans Month: A Time to Reflect on Real Challenges

May marks Older Americans Month, a time to honor the contributions of older adults. But this year’s observance comes amid growing challenges that many can’t afford to ignore.

Social Security, the backbone of retirement and disability benefits for millions, is now a source of growing anxiety. With policymakers debating the program’s future, older adults are left wondering whether the benefits they depend on will remain secure.

For countless older Americans, prescription drug costs are becoming unsustainable. Even with Medicare, high out-of-pocket expenses mean many are forced to make impossible choices—paying for medication or putting food on the table. Affordable insurance options remain limited, and long-term care coverage is often out of reach. Gaps in coverage leave far too many vulnerable to financial hardship.

Meanwhile, Medicaid faces the threat of funding cuts, just as more older adults rely on it for long-term services and supports. With the end of pandemic-era protections, many are losing coverage due to paperwork barriers or confusing eligibility processes—often without knowing until a medical need arises.

This Older Americans Month, let’s do more than recognize our older neighbors, friends & loved ones—let’s advocate for them. Call or email your elected officials and tell them these issues matter. You can find your state and federal legislators here: <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>.

At Access Care Partners, we remain deeply committed to protecting the dignity, independence, and care of older adults—this month and every month.

Community Champions Deliver Meals and Smiles in Meals on Wheels *End the Wait* Campaign

Thank you to the legislators and town officials who supported us in the Meals on Wheels End the Wait campaign this March by delivering meals to their constituents. End the Wait refers to the very real possibility that Meals on Wheels programs will have to institute waiting lists due to lack of funding combined with rising food costs.



Access Care Partners Driver Evelyn Hatch, Friends of South Hadley Seniors Board Member Cheryl Pelland-Lak, South Hadley Town Administrator Lisa Wong and South Hadley Police Chief Jennifer Gundersen

We also thank the Friends of South Hadley Seniors who provide a bit of spring brightness each year by delivering daffodils to our home-delivered meals consumers in South Hadley.



Holyoke City Councilman Juan Anderson Burgos, State Representative Pat Duffy, and Access Care Partners Executive Director Roseann Martoccia

