

# WestMass ElderCare

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## WMEC is a great place to work because...

*The team approach to care lends itself to a more inclusive understanding of the elders' needs in hopes to aide them in remaining safely home. The mission of the agency is close to my heart. I feel respected by the agency and my coworkers.*

**Terry Lozyniak, Care Manager, Home Care**



## I know I have made an impact when...

*A consumer has received the services and support needed at home (meals, adaptive equipment, caregiver support, etc.); they have a reduction in hospitalizations and readmissions; they understand the importance of routinely taking their medications; they have the knowledge to prevent/reduce falls; and they openly express gratitude for giving them space/time to express their needs and concerns.*

**Amanda Guyette, Health Services RN**



## I know I have made an impact when...

*I'm able to assist the consumer/family with getting the services they need.*

*Health care is hard to navigate. People need to feel that they're not going through their struggle alone...especially the families.*

**Kat Mangiafico, Care Manager, Home Care**

## Greetings!

As we celebrate the close of 2023, we reflect on a year marked by stability and significant investment for WestMass ElderCare (WMEC). The COVID public health emergency ended on May 11, 2023, generating an activity level at our agency best characterized as “full steam ahead.”



With a focus on recovery and rebuilding, this year has brought exciting opportunities for growth and expansion in several program areas, providing targeted new services that respond to demonstrated needs in our community. In response to the removal of MassHealth pandemic protections, four new Certified Application Counselors have joined our team to help minimize disruptions in coverage and navigate benefits for consumers with MassHealth. Beginning in December 2022, WMEC partnered with Taino Restaurant in Holyoke to provide older adults authentic Latino meals and vital social connections in this community setting. Critical mental health supports were created for older adults in our community through WMEC's Elder Mental Health Outreach Team, which provides visits to people in their homes and at community sites, as well as ongoing resources and counseling.

WMEC was also awarded two grants to innovate service delivery models. In our “Hospital to Home” collaboration with Holyoke Medical Center, two WMEC Care Managers work alongside the HMC discharge team ensuring efficient and seamless transitions home by swiftly organizing services and resources. Additionally, the CARE (Caregiver Assistance, Respite and Enrichment) program offers family caregivers the navigational support of our Family Caregiver Specialist as well as flexible respite care options. Read more about these exciting initiatives on the center pages.

We also invested in key building renovations this year, renewing our commitment to keeping our office “home” here in Holyoke. This included remodeling and expanding our Nutrition Program's packing and delivery space, thanks to a Food Security Infrastructure Grant from the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

In 2024, WMEC will celebrate our 50th Anniversary milestone year. As we move into our next half century, our core services and recent innovations reinforce our resolve and commitment to caring and compassion for our staff, consumers and caregivers. WMEC continues to be driven and inspired by our mission to preserve the dignity, independence and quality of life of older adults and persons with disabilities desiring to remain within their own community. Our staff's dedication and hard work make our daily mission possible. We eagerly anticipate planning for the upcoming milestone while continuing to honor our consumers' wishes to remain at home with their chosen supports.

As you'll read in the pages that follow, WMEC's core services, all centered on addressing health disparities and improving health equity, have positively impacted thousands of older adults and persons with disabilities in our community this year. This would not be possible without a true team effort. We express gratitude for the advocacy and support of local officials, and state and federal legislative delegations. We are grateful for the invaluable guidance, time, and skills of WMEC's Board of Directors, Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council, and Money Management Advisory Council. We thank each consumer and caregiver for their trust and the opportunity to support their commitment to home and independence for themselves or their loved one. We appreciate all the contributions of our staff, volunteers, the direct care workforce, and our community partners that empower us to continue to care for our community, one person at a time.

*Roseann*

**Roseann Martoccia**  
Executive Director



WestMass ElderCare is a private, nonprofit agency founded in 1974 and funded in part by grants and contracts from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs. We are part of a network of Aging Services Access Points and Area Agencies on Aging.



# HOW WE HELP

in the words of our consumers

Being a full-time caregiver is exhausting, lonely, and incredibly stressful, but it's much better than the alternative, which is my mom living alone. The other alternative is her living in a nursing home, which I really don't want. Having her at home gives me a sense of peace, knowing she is safe all the time. Even before we got home health aides or meals, WMEC helped with information.



Once I had you guys on my team, it was just great to have a place to call when I had a question, and I feel more confident and a little more prepared. The aides have helped me get the chores of life done, like going to the grocery store, mowing my lawn, and going to the doctor for myself. I'm really grateful for that.

~ Vance Chatel, Family Caregiver



My husband recently had surgery and was sent to rehab. When we left, we were accidentally given the wrong patient's meds. He took the meds, thinking they were his, and he aspirated and ended up in the ICU, not expected to live the night. Thankfully things went well once we figured everything out, and he is now doing well, but it took quite a bit out of him.

Through everything, Elba Pires (WMEC Ombudsman Director) has held my hand, both professionally and psychologically, and has gotten me through it. I knew we were heard, which made all the difference, and she was going to do everything in her power to make sure it never happens to anyone else. She went above and beyond to make sure we were ok and I knew she had my back. She was professional, courteous, kind and just a good human being, and that's saying a lot in these days.

~ Judy Nadler, Family Caregiver

 Sign-up to receive our bi-monthly email newsletters and be entered to win a \$100 gift card, just in time for the holidays! Sign-up now at [www.wmelder.org/signup](http://www.wmelder.org/signup)

Through our services, programs, and partnerships with community organizations, we have continued the work we firmly believe in, rooted in the principles of self-determination, independence, dignity, and choice for older adults and people with disabilities. We've provided vital, life-saving community resources, such as home-delivered meals, senior care options, personal care management, and outreach to thousands of individuals in need.

With the help and support of our incredible staff, devoted community partners, and generous donors, we made an indelible impact this year, including:



1,721 consumers hired and managed their own Personal Care Assistants to help them maintain their independence with activities of daily living.



Our Community Resource Specialists took 13,844 calls and provided support and information to 6,787 consumers.



Our Care Alliance of Western Massachusetts team provided compassionate case management to over 2,017 persons with disabilities from ages 3 to 64.



3,012 consumers received knowledgeable and caring case management from our Senior Care Options and One Care Team.



Our 43 Meals on Wheels Drivers delivered over 359,500 nutritious meals and vital daily wellness checks to consumers in their homes.



968 consumers were kept safe by personal alert systems provided through our Home Care Program.

# MAKE A DIFFERENCE

This holiday season, join us in the spirit of giving by contributing your time or financial support. Our Nursing Home Ombudsman, Money Management, and Meals on Wheels programs rely on volunteers to bring comfort to the older adults and vulnerable individuals in our community, and your time can make a difference. If you prefer to give financially, your generous donations enable us to provide essential services to those in need. Your support brightens lives, so visit [wmelder.org](http://wmelder.org), use the **enclosed envelope**, or call us at 413-538-9020 to make your gift today. Together, we can create a more caring and compassionate community.



# GIVING BACK

WMEC was honored with the opportunity to take part in the Holyoke Community College Giving Tree initiative again this year. Thanks to the generosity of HCC students and staff, 182 WMEC consumers will experience the joy of receiving a Christmas gift during this holiday season.

Additionally, on November 13, WMEC joined in the festivities at the Chicopee River Mills Center's "Festival of Trees." This event served a dual purpose: to support senior center programming through fundraising and to craft an enchanting, luminous array of trees for the pleasure of Chicopee's older adult community. As part of the "Festival of Trees" initiative, River Mills Center visitors have the opportunity to purchase tickets for a chance to win one of these beautifully decorated trees, with the winners set to be drawn on December 1st.



# CELEBRATING 2023

Thanks to two grants from the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, we were able to launch two new programs in 2023: the Hospital to Home Program, in partnership with Holyoke Medical Center, in which our Hospital Liaisons work with the discharge team to procure services for individuals transitioning from hospital care back to home, and the CARE (Caregiver Assistance, Respite and Enrichment) Program that provides caregivers much needed time off with paid respite care. Those who want to review WMEC's year-to-date accomplishments can access the 2023 Annual Report at [wmelder.org/report](http://wmelder.org/report).



Hospital to Home Liaisons Olga (Lydia) Yanginski and Rosa Ramos



Family Caregiver Specialist Monica Crespo with a caregiver respite recipient