

JANUARY 2021

MALNUTRITION CONNECTION

Providing Malnutrition Awareness and Advocacy Information to Share

Massachusetts #BeANutritionNeighbor Campaign

Late last year, Massachusetts employed a grassroots “surround sound” activation--the #BeANutritionNeighbor Campaign. The Campaign recognized malnutrition among older adults as a serious problem in the state, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, and encouraged people to stay connected in a socially distant way with the older adults in their life.

This Campaign brought together internal and external stakeholders engaged in the Massachusetts Malnutrition Commission and their respective organizations, agencies, and health systems. Through the Campaign a customized social media toolkit was disseminated during Malnutrition Awareness Week™ to strengthen social media conversations about malnutrition in older adults.

"Be a Nutrition Neighbor" underscored the needs of the population (43.1% live alone, 36.5% live in rural areas--making COVID-appropriate neighborly check-ins even more important) and provided timely education and support resources during unprecedented times. The Campaign also directed people to online state-specific resources located on the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs website, including detailed information about available food insecurity programs and local resources.

This Campaign could launch as a pilot in other states with updated memes and links to state-specific programs/resources. If you are interested in starting a #BeANutritionNeighbor campaign in your state, please see [Defeat Malnutrition Today](#) or contact: info@defeatmalnutrition.today.

“The COVID-19 crisis disproportionately impacts older adults and thus ensuring older adults and their caregivers are provided with information on how to access services and supports to meet their needs is **more critical than ever**. Mass Home Care, and our member agencies, were so proud to participate in the #BeANutritionNeighbor campaign as a means to raise awareness, provide education, share malnutrition resources during these unprecedented times.”

Lisa Gurgone, MS, Executive Director,
Mass Home Care

About Mass Home Care:

Mass Home Care (MHC) is the non-profit trade association representing the Commonwealth's network of 28 Aging Services Access Points (ASAPs) and Area Agencies Aging (AAAs). This single, statewide network of coordinated care delivers home and community-based services to over 60,000 individuals per month, providing over \$600 million per year in services.

"During these unprecedented times, reaching out and connecting with our older adult neighbors who may be at risk of poor nutrition has never been more important. The #BeANutritionNeighbor Campaign addresses social isolation and loneliness that many older adults are experiencing now during the pandemic by ensuring that their nutrition needs are met to fight and recover from infections and acute illness."

Carole L. Malone, Assistant Secretary,
Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs

"Malnutrition among older adults is so easily overlooked; with our #BeANutritionNeighbor campaign, we were able to raise the awareness of malnutrition prevention to so many people. I want to thank the 32 participating organizations and all the stakeholders for their hard work, and for sharing their stories with older adults, their families, and the general community. I trust that by continuing to work together, we will someday combat the malnutrition epidemic among older adults."

Shirley Y. Chao PhD RD LDN FAND, Director of Nutrition, Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs

About MA Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA):

EOEA manages services to hundreds of thousands of older people across the Commonwealth through state and federally funded programs and is located within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. Through the statewide older adult network, EOEA provides services locally via 21 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), 25 Aging Services Access Points (ASAPs), 350 Councils on Aging (COAs) and senior centers, and 11 Aging and Disability Resource Consortia (ADRCs) in communities across the Commonwealth.