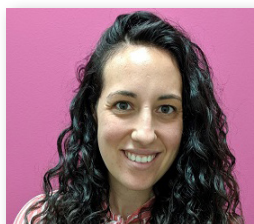




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## Helping People Age at Home

The nationwide shortage of in-home care workers has made it difficult for many of the people Springwell serves to get the help they need and deserve as soon as they need it. It is frustrating for everyone when we must wait for a worker to be found to provide services that are needed. It is our mission to help older adults as they face the challenges of aging, and we see the difference we make for people, like Arelis, when all the connections work.

Arelis, who is relatively new to receiving Springwell services, is retired after living and working in Massachusetts for more than 40 years, first as a nanny and then as a bank teller. She has always loved Massachusetts: “Whenever I am away and return, I am so happy to be home.” Arelis lives with her son in West Newton and her daughter visits often from West Roxbury. At this point, Arelis, who lives with multiple sclerosis, has some challenges walking and moving around. While her son and daughter help her a great deal, they cannot be with her all the time. She feels fortunate that a neighbor told her about Springwell.

“Springwell arranged for homemaking and personal care services for me,” shares Arelis.

“My care manager is kind and understands me very well. The aide who helps me is sweet

*“My case manager is kind and understands me very well. The aide who helps me is sweet and makes an incredible difference in my life.”*

and makes an incredible difference in my life. She prepares my breakfast and lunch, helps me with bathing and laundry and other things I can’t do myself.”

When Arelis originally contacted Springwell, she was initially approved for and enrolled in the Home Care Basic program, which enabled her to receive six hours of assistance weekly. Due to her condition, however, Arelis and her family hoped for more support. Her assessment specialist identified that she was likely eligible for the Choices program and managed the process to enroll her in that higher-level support program under which she now has fifteen hours of help weekly. She is very grateful to Springwell for coordinating this help for her. “It allows my son to go to work without worrying about me and lets me continue living at home with him safely and with a very high quality of life.”

Every person we serve is facing unique circumstances, but for most of them, like Arelis, their connection to Springwell results in solutions for the challenges they face and a better quality of life. While the challenges we face in accomplishing our mission are greater than ever, our commitment to help the people we serve get the help they need to age in the way they want has not waived.



Springwell Care Managers spend hours each week coordinating care and solving problems for the people we serve.



# Advocating for Residents in Care Facilities

*we listen to you*



Julie Arias (left) and Mary Brooks (center) - in the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program - and Maura Donahue (right) - in the Assisted Living Ombudsman Program - work together to make sure residents' rights are protected.

An Ombudsman is an advocate working to resolve problems related to the health, welfare, and rights of individuals living in nursing homes, rest homes, and assisted living residences. As part of a federal program, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services manages the Ombudsman Program in Massachusetts, and aging service agencies in the state operate them. At Springwell, the Long Term Care (LTC) Ombudsman Program is led by Mary Brooks and Julie Arias, while the Assisted Living (AL) Ombudsman Program is led by Maura Donahue.

With last year's merger of BayPath and Springwell, the LTC Ombudsman program now serves facilities in twenty-two communities. Mary and Julie said that while the merger brought the two programs together officially, they have always worked together. Julie noted that "not much has really changed for us because we already knew each other, shared ideas and resources and covered for each other when one of us was away. It does simplify things being one organization now."

The LTC Ombudsman program is facilitated by many volunteers who work with Mary and Julie to visit all the nursing homes and rest homes in our communities weekly. "We don't wait for complaints. We are proactively in there visiting. We knock on doors, introduce ourselves, and offer residents the chance to talk with us and share concerns. If they don't want to talk, we respect that. If they share a concern or problem, we ask their permission to advocate for them to come up with a resolution. By being there regularly, we are also observers and can often spot changes in how someone is doing from visit to visit." Maura provides this function for residents of assisted living facilities who many need help resolving a challenge.

"For a resident, frustrations and dissatisfaction often arise from the little things. It might be something about the food choices or a preference about what time someone assists them to take a shower. Resolving an issue such as these can really enhance the quality of life for these older adults," shares Julie. "Even if it is not possible to fully resolve an issue, a resident often feels better knowing that they have been heard. Sometimes, the ombudsman is the only person advocating for them," adds Mary.

The LTC Ombudsman Program always needs more volunteers to help visit every long-term care facility and rest home weekly. Virtual trainings are run monthly by the State, so a volunteer can typically begin learning the role very quickly. Currently the AL Ombudsman program is in a pilot stage and is not yet utilizing volunteers, but that may change within the year. Mary, Julie, and Maura agree that volunteers who thrive in this role are good listeners who respect confidentiality and have good communication and diplomacy skills with both residents and the staff at the facilities. If you are interested in learning more about becoming an ombudsman, Mary and Julie welcome the opportunity to talk with you. Please call Julie at (617) 926-4100 or Mary at (508) 573-7200.

*did you know?*

- The Ombudsman Program is a free service, available to any long-term or assisted living care facility resident.
- Ombudsman volunteers are carefully screened, trained, and supervised. They come from all walks of life and include professionals and retirees.
- Many volunteers have worked in the same facility for several years and have built strong relationships with residents and staff.

## CEO Notes

*info you need*



Don't miss out on any of your MassHealth benefits! While MassHealth maintained members' coverage and benefits due to requirements put in place during the COVID-19 emergency, they have now returned to the normal renewal process. All MassHealth members will need to renew their health coverage over the course of the coming year. If MassHealth has enough information to confirm your eligibility, your coverage will be renewed automatically. If they are not able to confirm your eligibility automatically, you will receive a renewal form in a blue envelope to the mailing address on file.

If you receive a blue envelope about your MassHealth benefits, it is important to respond in order to maintain your benefits. The renewal documents will outline what documents you need to gather and provide to MassHealth, as well as the date by which you need to respond.

Springwell is here to help! Please reach out if you or someone you know needs help with the MassHealth redetermination process.

-Trish Smith, Springwell CEO

## Accessing In-Home Services

*problem solvers*

If you have worked with Springwell to access support at home as you age, you have met with our professional care managers and nurses to discuss the type of help you want, need, and are eligible for given our existing programs. After that assessment is complete, our job of finding the services that meet your needs begins. It may surprise some people to learn that the home-care workers providing these services are not Springwell employees. To address the needs of the aging adults in the communities that Springwell serves, we have contracts with many home health agencies and other businesses who meet the qualifications and standards established by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

Springwell works with these businesses to coordinate and facilitate the complex process to find a service or a worker that will meet each person's needs. The challenge of finding the right solution at the right time for every person we assist has become even more difficult than normal in recent years. In addition to our usual challenges finding services for people who live far from public transportation or who smoke or have pets, many home care workers left this line of work at the height of the pandemic. Fewer than expected have returned to the workforce, leaving far more people in need of services than providers. Springwell staff members throughout many departments, including our finance, quality, and service delivery teams work together daily on all of these challenges.

Springwell's multidisciplinary teams help support our care managers as they strive to find home care solutions in this tough environment. We are using multiple strategies so we can get services in place in a timely fashion. Springwell has increased the rates we pay to the contracted agencies and we offer incentives to encourage them to provide higher pay to attract more workers. We are developing relationships with additional businesses who can provide home care workers for our expanded geographic area. In



areas without easy access to public transportation, we are addressing the transportation difficulties for workers by mapping geographically close service recipients with similar needs together to make it easier for one worker to provide help on a given day.

While things are harder for organizations like ours across the state, in most cases Springwell care managers can find a home care worker to meet an individual's needs in a timely manner. In the cases where it is more challenging, we are always striving to meet those needs as quickly as possible.



# Volunteering: The Engine that Makes Lives Better

*helping people*



Peg Camp, shown above (left), volunteers two days a week delivering meals in MetroWest. Nutrition Supervisor, Allison Park (right) says that, depending on the location, volunteers are welcome to make weekly, bi-weekly, or even monthly commitments.

Peg Camp, a volunteer home-delivered meals driver in Hopkinton and Holliston, believes that, “volunteerism is the engine that makes our society work.” Camp gained this appreciation for the value and necessity of volunteers in her career with the American Cancer Society, a volunteer health organization. “I love being a home-delivered meals driver and the two mornings a week I volunteer, I try to put a smile on people’s faces. Yes, I deliver a good balanced meal that the recipients look forward to, but just as important is the friendly conversation we have that may make a difference in their day - it does mine!”

“I learned about the home-delivered meals program from a woman who volunteered with the American Cancer Society and was also a home-delivered meals driver, shares Camp. I was so impressed with what she did and the joy she got from it that as soon as I retired, I called to volunteer with Springwell. My mother lived to be 98, and I spent a lot of time with her and her peers as they faced the challenges of aging. I also saw how the smallest gesture would make their day. As an HDM driver, I check

in to see how they are doing and maybe just talk about the weather or the latest ballgame score.”

“Some people may not realize that many of the meals are delivered by volunteers and that there is a great need for more volunteers,” notes Camp. “We must keep making people aware of the need. The job of a home delivered meals driver is simple but the impact is immeasurable. With a GPS, I have no trouble finding the delivery addresses. The time goes by fast. It is a small effort for a big reward. Everyone is grateful to receive a well-balanced meal. I often wonder what they might eat if they didn’t have this meal. People are almost surprised by this gift of time and attention. It is humbling to see how much it means to people.”

Peg Camp believes that volunteers keep communities moving and looking out for our neighbors keeps us human. If you would like to learn more about becoming a volunteer home delivered meals driver, please contact our Volunteer Office at (617) 926-4100 or by email at [volunteer@springwell.com](mailto:volunteer@springwell.com)



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## Solutions in Support of Health and Independence

Springwell is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to helping people who need long-term services and supports to remain independent and healthy in the setting of their choice. Services are made possible in part by contracts with or grants from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs, the Federal Administration for Community Living, MassHealth, insurance providers and health care entities. Generous philanthropic support from individuals and institutions is also critical to our success.