

FY '04 Report to the Massachusetts Legislature
from the
Massachusetts Commission on End of Life Care
(submitted September 1, 2004)

Background: The Massachusetts Commission on End of Life Care (the “Commission”) was created as a legislative commission with a membership that consists of seven state legislators, heads of certain state agencies, and representatives of organizations such as the state medical society, bar association, hospice and palliative care federation and extended care federation.

The Commission’s mission is “To improve the quality of life at the end of life.” The Commission strives to accomplish its mission by focusing its efforts on public, professional and institutional awareness, education and engagement; advocacy initiatives; and media outreach.

Funding: The Commission has not received a state appropriation since FY '02 but its activities have continued, primarily with volunteer labor and in-kind support from Commission members and their organizations. For FY '04, the legislature created a retained revenue account that permits the Commission to receive and spend funds from private sources.

FY '04 initiatives: Much of the Commission’s efforts this year have been devoted to fundraising to support the Commission’s work on the following projects:

1. A comprehensive update of the Commission’s signature products, its print *Massachusetts Resource Guide for End of Life Services* and its Web site and online searchable database of resources (www.endoflifecommission.org);
2. Collaboration with the DPH’s Office of Emergency Medical Services to improve the Massachusetts Comfort Care (out-of-hospital DNR) protocol; and
3. Gathering Massachusetts-specific data about end-of-life attitudes, beliefs and needs, and assuring that the data includes a multi-cultural, multi-linguistic dimension.

Fundraising efforts are continuing to assure that each of the projects can be successfully completed.

In addition the Commission has actively sought opportunities to collaborate with interested parties around the Commonwealth with a role to play in improving the quality of life at the end of life. These activities promote awareness, education and engagement and inform the Commission’s efforts to develop public policy

recommendations. Such collaboration allows all the key players to extend their reach and effectiveness.

The Commission has devoted substantial effort to working on the following projects in collaboration with other organizations doing important work related to end of life care:

- the Massachusetts Pain Initiative's effort to promote improved pain policy;
- the Massachusetts Compassionate Care Coalition's effort to promote better care at the end of life through education and engagement of clergy through a *Compassion Sabbath* initiative;
- the MA Hospice-Veteran Partnership's effort to improve end-of-life care for veterans;
- the Massachusetts Hospital Association's effort to educate health care professionals about end-of-life issues – this year the Commission co-sponsored a program called *Financial Implications of Promoting Excellence in End of Life Care*; and
- the MultiCultural Coalition on Aging's effort to assure that a multicultural perspective is included in efforts to serve the elderly.

In addition, the Commission was proud to have had John Fromson, MD, testify at Senator Moore's Caring Commonwealth hearings on October 3, 2002 and submit written comments on behalf of the Commission. The Commission also advanced its mission by providing background information to reporters for articles related to end-of-life issues.

With appreciation: Finally, the Commission wants to express its gratitude to the following organizations and individuals for their contributions to the Commission's efforts during FY '04:

Organizations

Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation
Hospice and Palliative Care Federation of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Medical Society
Tufts Health Plan

Individuals

Mary and George Bouchard
Dr. Robert and Ann Buxbaum
Joseph O'Neil
Elaine O'Reilly
Christine and James McCluskey
Margaret Ann Metzger
Ruth Palombo

The Commission also benefits from the dedicated participation of Commission members and their staff.