

Commission Members

Massachusetts Legislators

Massachusetts State Agencies:

-Department of Public Health

-Executive Office of Elder
Affairs

-Division of Insurance

Hospice and Palliative
Care Federation of
Massachusetts

Massachusetts Medical
Society

Massachusetts Bar
Association

Massachusetts Extended
Care Federation

Ruth Palombo
Chair

Executive Director
Margaret Ann Metzger

FY '05 Report to the Massachusetts Legislature

from the

Massachusetts Commission on End of Life Care

(submitted January 6, 2006)

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, state 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 and Core Initiatives: The Commission was funded by the state legislature for FY '01 and FY '02 but has not received a state appropriation since FY '02. The legislature has created a retained revenue account that permits the Commission to receive and spend funds that it raises. By the end of FY '05 the Commission had raised funds and in-kind support from private and public sources (list attached) in an amount sufficient to enable it to undertake the following three initiatives, all of which were completed within the first months of FY '06:

- A second edition of the Commission’s *Massachusetts Resource Guide for End of Life Services*;
- An updated Web site with an online searchable database of resources (www.endoflifecommission.org); and
- A statewide Survey Project to ascertain Massachusetts-specific attitudes, beliefs and needs about end-of-life care and decision-making. The Commission convened an Advisory Committee of 37 professionals to provide input as the survey was refined and the survey methodology developed. The survey was distributed in March and data collection and tabulation continued through the spring by Life’s End Institute: *The Missoula Demonstration Project*. Data analysis continued into FY '06. The full reports are now available and can be found at:

www.endoflifecommission.org/download/AARP_survey_2005.pdf

www.endoflifecommission.org/download/MA_Commission_survey_2005.pdf

Other Initiatives: In addition to fundraising and work on the three major initiatives listed above, the Commission participated in and collaborated on a number of other educational and advocacy initiatives related to increasing awareness of and improving end-of-life care:

- Poster presentation at November, 2004 APHA conference in Washington, DC about the Commission's *Massachusetts Resource Guide for End of Life Services*;
- Workshop about the Massachusetts Comfort Care Out-of-Hospital Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Verification Protocol at the New England Hospice & Palliative Educational Conference on November 9, 2004;
- Symposium about end-of-life care at Brandeis on December 2, 2004;
- Lecture at Gerontology Institute at University of Massachusetts – Boston on November 8, 2004;
- Sponsor of Thou Shalt Honor Town Hall meeting filmed by PBS on July 27, 2004 – giving family caregivers, providers and experts a chance to voice their concerns and recommendations as a local follow-up to a nationally televised PBS special aired in October 2002;
- Executive Director served on Advisory Committee for nursing home project by the Health Policy and Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts – Worcester;
- Joined a national coalition developed by the University of Wisconsin Pain & Policy Studies Group to respond to the DEA's Solicitation of Comments dated January 18, 2005. See http://www.medsch.wisc.edu/painpolicy/DEA/DEA_261_response.pdf;
- Submitted comments from Executive Director in support of development and funding of a pediatric palliative care program and supplemental funding for the Commission (Senate Bill 2043, June 8, 2005); and
- Worked with the OEMS concerning possible improvements to the Comfort Care Out-of-Hospital DNR Verification Protocol.

In all these ways, the Commission worked to further its mission to “improve the quality of life at the end of life.”

Massachusetts Commission on End of Life Care Sources of Support

The Commission wants to express its gratitude to the following organizations for their contributions to the Commission's efforts through FY '05 in support of Commission projects, including (a) the updated Commission Web site; (b) the second edition of the Commission's *Massachusetts Resource Guide for End of Life Services*; and (c) the Commission's Survey Project:

AARP Massachusetts

Administration on Aging under Title III-E of the Older Americans Act through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and HealthCare Dimensions Hospice

The Commonwealth's Group Insurance Commission and its Indemnity Plan administered by Unicare

Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation

Hebrew Senior Life

Hospice & Palliative Care Federation of Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health

The Massachusetts Medical Society

National Center for Death Education, Mount Ida College

Partners Health Care

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation through its Rallying Points initiative

Tufts Health Plan

Wellpoint, Inc. (Unicare).