Momentum building for Providers’ Council’s SpeakUp4Equity virtual event Oct. 27-30

Headliners include Martin, Baker, Pressley, Sudders and more. Receive group discounts when your team registers at www.providers.org

COVID-19 creating food insecurity across Massachusetts, advocates say

The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to have a profound impact on food insecurity across the nation. In Massachusetts alone, an estimated 15 percent of the state’s residents will be considered food insecure by the end of 2020, according to Feeding America, the nation’s largest hunger-relief organization.

More than 54 million Americans may find themselves staring at sparse or empty plates before 2020 is over – nearly a 46 percent increase than before the pandemic.

Food insecurity is typically compounded by other systemic challenges, such as poverty, low wages, affordable housing shortages and chronic/acute health problems, high medical costs and social isolation. The issues are expected to be exacerbated by the Massachusetts unemployment rate, currently one of the highest in the nation. Impacts fall disproportionately on low-income and nonwhite communities.

A July survey conducted by the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition found that nearly 60 percent of immigrant households reported food insecurity or had to rely on at least one source of support, including public programs or charities.

Providers’ Council members say they are seeing these impacts every day on the front lines in the communities they serve.

Central Boston Elder Services CEO Michael Vance said significantly more than half of the 9,000 consumers his agency serves receive food assistance and supplements, although the numbers have been hard to count because city officials have dropped most program monitoring.

GOTV is vital in advance of Nov. 3 ballot

Due in large part to the COVID-19 pandemic, Massachusetts residents will have more ways than ever this fall to cast a ballot in the Nov. 3 general election.

Residents are able to vote by mail by requesting a mail-in ballot from the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s office, take part in early voting in-person from Oct. 17 through Oct. 30 or cast their ballot in person on Tuesday, November 3.

The deadline to register to vote in the general election is also later than ever before, on Oct. 24, 10 days before the election.

The Providers’ Council has been heavily involved with voter registration efforts, encouraging members to register to vote and make a plan to cast their ballot in November.

In September, the Council urged members to appoint CareVote Captains to be the point person for encouraging non-partisan voter engagement at their organization.

MTW making a difference

State Representative Russell E. Holmes (second from left) dropped off donations at the Boston donation center of More than Words last month and greeted More Than Words Youth Leaders Yonis (far left), Raqunan and Kenny (far right).
Square One CEO Joan Kagan to retire at year's end

Joan Kagan, president and CEO of Springfield-based Square One, will retire Dec. 31 after leading the organization since 2003. She will continue to serve as an advisor to the organization to support the leadership team during transition. A search committee has been established to identify her successor.

During Kagan’s tenure, Square One expanded its service offerings from childcare to a full range of family-support services, building on her ... back to 1883, offers parent education, support and training programs, home visitation and personalized case management.

“Joan is an incredible leader who has been a champion for the well-being of children and committed to helping parents and caregivers,” said Peter Testori, chair of the organization’s board of directors.

New interim executive director at Fairwinds

Michael Kellerman has been named interim executive director of Fairwinds-Nantucket’s Counseling Center, replacing Tessandra de Alberdi who served in the post for a decade.

Prior to joining Fairwinds, Kellerman served as executive vice president of Gemma Services and director of strategic partnerships at the Pew Charitable Trusts in Washington, D.C. Kellerman holds a Master of Public Affairs from the University of Texas at Austin and a bachelor’s degree from The New School University in New York.

Yates becomes interim president and chief executive of Hope House Addiction Services

Paul Yates has assumed the role of Interim President and Chief Executive Officer at Hope House Addiction Services. Yates is an 18-year staff member and served most recently as the agency’s vice president of operations.

“Paul is a proven leader with a firm commitment to our mission and has the experience, skills, integrity and vision to lead us into the next chapter. He is a key member of our leadership team and we look forward to his continued leadership,” said the agency’s Board of Directors.

Eileen Maguire will serve as the chief operating officer at Hope House, managing clinical services. Hope House is the oldest, and among the largest, residential treatment programs in Massachusetts for adults with substance use disorder.

18 Degrees and Bay State Community Services join Council's membership

The Council is pleased to welcome two new members!

Formerly Berkshire Children & Families, Inc., new member 18 Degrees operates out of West Springfield, serving communities throughout western Massachusetts. President & CEO Colleen Holmes leads the organization. Its mission is to promote the well-being of children and youth, and the strength of families, to build better communities in western Massachusetts. Learn more about them at www.18degreesma.org.

We are also pleased to welcome Bay State Community Services as a Council member. The south shore organization was formed in 1991 as a merger of five long-standing community agencies (Survival Inc., South Shore Council on Alcoholism, Mayflower Mental Health Association, Center for Community Counseling and Education, and Billings Human Services.) BSCS also operates three Community Centers south of Boston. President & CEO Daurice Cox leads the agency.

Left: A staff member helps an individual enter Lifeworks’ new residential program in Westwood in September. Right: The ranch-style house, which opened earlier this year, is staffed by nurses 24/7 and is designed to support five individuals with developmental disabilities and serious and complex medical needs. Lifeworks built the house through a collaboration with DDS, MassHealth, the Town of Westwood, and The Green Company, a Newton-based real estate firm that donated the site.

With dedicated local resources, depth of expertise, and specialized industry experience, People’s United Bank delivers a full array of banking services and financial solutions designed specifically to support the unique needs of human service providers.

Let’s discuss your business needs.

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**CENTRO**

**About the Agency**

CENTRO was founded in 1977 as Centro Las Américas by a group of volunteers from Puerto Rico. Its original mission was to serve, empower and advocate for Puerto Rican and Latino communities in the Greater Worcester area. In the years that followed, CENTRO has grown into a tri-district, fully integrated, health and human services delivery system. CENTRO is the largest minority-led, community-based, multiservice, multicultural, multilingual, non-profit organization in central Massachusetts. It serves more than 3,500 individuals and families in over 51 cities and towns in Massachusetts and provided over 24,000 incidents of client contact services in FY’19.

Today, more than 40 percent of the clients we serve are non-Latinos. The three operating divisions of CENTRO are CENTRO Family Services, our legacy LTSS services; our expanding health care division; and our whole-owned subsidiary, the New Americans Community Development Corporation, founded by CENTRO’s CEO Juan A. Gomez.

**Mission is to help central Mass. residents**

Through community support services, CENTRO offers assistance with permanent resident renewals, the citizenship process, case management services, as well as help with EBT, WIC, SNAP and MassHealth Applications. This division is also responsible for our Emergency Food Pantry Services, providing our community with emergency provisions in collaboration with the Worcester County Food Bank.

While currently inactive due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the community support division is also responsible for our Latino Elder Program. This offers seniors the opportunity to participate in health awareness programs, case management services, and recreational activities.

Our Family Support Centers are funded by the state’s Department of Developmental Services. This program serves children and adults with developmental disabilities by providing assistance navigating available community resources, transitional coordination between schools, employment, requisite programs, and some basic life programs. Our Intensive Family Stabilization program provides culturally sensitive, intensive intervention by utilizing a team approach led by a master’s-level clinician and a BA/BS-level or equivalent case worker.

CENTRO’s Health Programs include Shared Living, Behavioral Health, Adult Foster Care and Group Adult Foster Care. Shared Living is a model of care that allows individuals with disabilities to choose to receive the support they need by joining a companion and becoming part of their home life. Our behavioral health services offer in-home therapy with a licensed clinician, therapeutic training & support, and Therapeutic Mentoring for children. The services are geared towards giving families the tools they need to address stressors encountered in daily life and to navigate behavioral issues. Our adult and group adult foster care program provides assistance to adults, 16 years and older, who because of illness, weakness, disability, or advanced age, cannot live safely at home alone.

In addition to these major divisions of CENTRO, there is also the Institute of Latino Arts & Culture, which is responsible for preserving and sharing Latino culture with the greater Worcester community.

**President & CEO**

Juan A. Gomez has been president and chief executive officer of CENTRO since 1998. Under his leadership, CENTRO has grown from 23 employees and an operating budget of $1.1 million to 71 employees, a $10 million operating budget and over 50,000 clients in 51 Massachusetts cities and towns.

In addition to his role at CENTRO, Gomez has served as an adjunct professor, teaching intercultural communication and government at Becker College in Worcester.

Gomez holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Assumption College and a master’s degree in Public Administration from Clark University. He serves on the United States Marine Corps Reserve and is a founder and past president of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Latino Alberto Alba.

Gomez is the proud father of Juan Eric Gomez, 31, and James Andre Gomez, 28, as well as a loving husband to Lourdes Gomez.

**About the President & CEO**

Gomez holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Assumption College and a master’s degree in Public Administration from Clark University.

Juan A. Gomez

**About Juan A. Gomez**

Gomez is a member of the Providers’ Council of Board of Directors and served for more than five years on the Worcester City Council, including as vice chair.

Gomez is the proud father of Juan Eric Gomez, 31, and James Andre Gomez, 28, as well as a loving husband to Lourdes Gomez.

**CEO’s Message**

Gomez is the proud father of Juan Eric Gomez, 31, and James Andre Gomez, 28, as well as a loving husband to Lourdes Gomez.

**About the Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors is comprised of community leaders and elected officials who are dedicated to the mission and vision of CENTRO. The Board of Directors is responsible for providing strategic direction and guidance to the agency.

**CENTRO’s Impact**

In 2020, CENTRO served over 51,000 individuals and families in 51 cities and towns in Massachusetts. CENTRO’s programs provided over 24,000 incidents of client contact services in FY ’19.

**Mission**

CENTRO’s mission is to help central Mass. residents achieve their full potential. To that end, the Amesbury Chamber of Commerce has honored CCI with the Pillar of the Community Award. We were humbled and honored by this recognition and it reflected the hard work of the entire staff and all the individuals served by CCI.

**CCII staff staffs challenges**

In hard times, Coastal Connections remains exceptionally strong. CCI provides robust, individualized services that support each unique individual to achieve their goals.

Established in 2008, Coastal Connections is a non-profit, community-based agency providing dynamic supports to 110 individuals with a workforce of 41 highly dedicated, compassionate and loyal staff. A primary drive of our mission is to become “part of the fabric and culture of the greater Amesbury community by showcasing the strengths and talents of the people we serve.”

To that end, the Amesbury Chamber of Commerce has honored CCI with the Pillar of the Community Award. We were humbled and honored by this recognition and it reflected the hard work of the entire staff and all the individuals served by CCI.

CCI furthered its recognition in the community by sweeping the awards in the Amesbury Firefighter’s Chili Cook-off: the 2019 People’s Choice and Best Chili Award. All of these achievements were completed with the fierce dedication of the staff working with all the individuals served by CCI.

**Saluting the Caring Force**

Paola Miranda joined the City Mission team in 2017 and serves as its director of homelessness prevention.

She oversees all homelessness prevention programs including A Lift Up, Emergency Youth Housing, and the Homelessness Prevention Employment and the Public Voice Project.

She supervises the case managers and other program support staff; meets with A Lift Up participants and accompanies them to housing court; works with landlords on issues around eviction; and keeps the department apprised of housing related policies at the local, state and federal level.

“I have worked in the human service field for many years and I can unequivocally say that Paola is one of the finest staff persons I have worked with many colleagues and friends. In spite of the challenges, when asked for a few words to describe the staff, the individuals we serve readily shared the following: energetic, awesome, very friendly, very considerate, fantastic and fun. Their positive words, together with the loyalty of this staff, indeed make a difference in the lives of the people who choose to work with CCI now, and in the future.”

**About Paola Miranda**

Paola Miranda joined the City Mission team in 2017 and serves as its director of homelessness prevention.

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“I have worked in the human service field for many years and I can unequivocally say that Paola is one of the finest staff persons I have worked with. She is competent, committed, and caring. She goes beyond the call of duty in service to our program participants,” said Rev. June R. Cooper, City Mission’s executive director.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Miranda jumped into action. She immediately designed and implemented a user-friendly system on the City Mission website in three languages so that people in need of basic necessities, such as cleaning products and food, could apply for assistance.

She created a new section about COVID-19 with information and resources and quickly reached out to partner organizations to work together to help as many people as possible.

Homelessness prevention is the epitome of social justice, and it has given me the chance to strengthen my advocacy skills and learn effective strategies to impact our communities and systems at different levels,” Miranda said.

In 2020, she graduated from the Executive Nonprofit Management and Leadership Program at Boston University School of Business. She holds a master’s degree from Boston University School of Law as well as a Master’s in Criminal Justice from Salem State University. She has been working in the nonprofit field for over ten years.

One of Miranda’s greatest passions is learning new languages. While her native language is Spanish, she also speaks English, Italian, and Portuguese. She also loves to travel and has visited South America and has the ability to create meaningful relationships with people from different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds.
EDITORIAL

Michael Weekes
President / Publisher

A
follow up “troublemaking” actions by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. did prompt an attentive President Lyndon B. Johnson to take action and push through the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that was signed into law in August of that year. We, figuratively, stand on the shoulders of the good troublemakers like Dr. King, Fannie Lou Hamer, Rep. Lewis, and in earlier pursuits of women gaining the right to vote and equality, Susan B. Anthony and Sojourner Truth. And as a nation, we stand as more diverse than ever.

The Council has embarked on a focused course of discovery and learning to help us and our sector understand and heal from the pervasive and entrenched systemic racism in our society.

It permeates our social and economic structures, corroding the very ideals that are the framework of America’s democracy—freedom, justice, equality and respect for all. Those who we support in our programs and efforts, often pushed to the margins of society, are too often disregarded or ignored. And far too often, they and the people that support them are people of color—racism.

It is racial equity that holds promise and is in that spirit that our Race, Diversity and Inclusion Committee encouraged the theme of SpeakUp4Equity for our 45th Annual Convention & Expo. And while we are on this national journey for a “more perfect union” and we now better recognize that Black Lives Matter, join us.

The Council constructed a definition, after reviewing and borrowing from many others, for racial equity that may be imperfect and may evolve. It helps us to discuss, listen, learn, educate and take action.

A partial definition of racial equity we are using to guide our work is, the “condition where one’s race identity has no influence on how one fares in society. Race equity is one part of racial justice and includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race. A racial equity culture is focused proactive countering of social and race inequities inside and outside of an organization.”

We ask you to join us and participate in promoting anti-racism. Join us October 27-30, throughout the next year and into the future. We can—no strike that, we must—make a difference.

Join us to SpeakUp4Equity

Let Erica Noonan know: 508.599.2245 or enoonan@providers.org

Want additional copies of The Provider? Interested in writing a letter to the editor? Have a topic that would make a good subject for Viewpoints from across the State?

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Correction: We stated that the Voting Rights Act was signed into law in August of 1966. It was signed into law in August of 1965. The editorial was written with this correction in mind. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused.

Need some troublemakers

A

Get America back on course with its true democracy. Maya Angelou—poet, author and playwright—referred to a Dr. King quote that “all progress is precarious” when sharing her thoughts on voting in 2012.

“So don’t sit on the sidelines,” Angelou wrote. “Don’t hesitate. Don’t have any regrets. Vote.”

Michael Weekes
President / Publisher

Interested in writing a letter to the editor?
Have a topic that would make a good subject for Viewpoints from across the State?

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Have a topic that would make a good subject for Viewpoints from across the State?
Nonprofits vital in promoting voting

By Lisa Lambert

The election rapidly approached during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that equally affected all residents. For the millions of residents who were homebound, the only way to register or vote was through the mail-in process. The majority of families (60 percent) thought the process would be more challenging, and that those who don’t live near their mail-in ballot at home were at a disadvantage. The number of families (60 percent) who thought the process would be more challenging is also significant, as many residents don’t have a computer or internet access. The election was a crisis, and that affected many, including those who live in rural or remote areas.

Nonprofit VOTE’s extensive library of online resources, toolkits, and webinars is available at www.nonprofitvote.org.

The COVID pandemic we face has landed on families, communities of color, and young adults – get a fraction of the contact others do. Not being contacted, or feeling that they were not counted, significantly impacts the outcome of elections. As nonprofits, we are a vital part of the communities we serve and a key partner in ensuring that all voices are represented.

Families, youth and providers have been so critical to the work of our organization, and we know that if nonprofits don’t, chances are, no one will.

As we approach the 2022 elections, we are stepping up and building nonpartisan voter engagement into our core mission. Across the nation, nonprofits are stepping up to help ensure this year’s National Voter Registration Day on October 28. We strongly encourage voters to help ensure this year’s National Voter Registration Day on October 28. We strongly encourage voters to encourage others to register to vote.

Voters can use the state’s online ballot tracking system to verify their registration, track their ballot, and when it was received. Voters can use the state’s online ballot tracking system to verify their registration, track their ballot, and when it was received.

We can continue to feed the need and grow leaders. On top of that, when the community served by a nonprofit participates in an election, they show an 11-percentage point increase in voter turnout. We have seen that individuals who participate in an election show a significant increase in voter turnout.

Nonprofit VOTE’s executive director of education, outreach, and advocacy, Jodi P. Falk, is director of Rachel’s Table, the food rescue program of the Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts. Since 1992, Rachel’s Table, in Springfield, Mass., has been focused on reducing food waste on farms and in the community. The table has delivered more than 12 million pounds of food to date. Rachel’s Table delivers food to over 100 agencies, serving the needs of our volunteers, others in the community, and families of color.

The COVID pandemic we face has landed on families, communities of color, and young adults – get a fraction of the contact others do. Not being contacted, or feeling that they were not counted, significantly impacts the outcome of elections. As nonprofits, we are a vital part of the communities we serve and a key partner in ensuring that all voices are represented.

Rachel’s Table has been finding creative ways to carry on its mission during the pandemic. We have seen a significant increase in the number of agencies, and we continue to serve our volunteers, others in the community, and families of color.

This healthy and edible food was offered to the local community. Rachel’s Table has been finding creative ways to carry on its mission during the pandemic. We have seen a significant increase in the number of agencies, and we continue to serve our volunteers, others in the community, and families of color.

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At the same time, her robust volunteer corps of local seniors and workers from Trail Court programs were suddenly unable to work due to the lockdown. Volunteers were keeping close track of people who had signed up to be their food service providers. Since the weather was turning cold, "People will need food as soon as possible," said Vance. "We are working to ensure that the people we serve have food on their tables." Haven had to lay off a staff member who was instrumental in preparing meals for the seniors who were suddenly unable to work.

"We are seeing over 1,000 meals delivered a day now," said Vance. "It's a big increase in demand." The agency has been able to meet the needs of anyone who has come to them in need of food assistance, said Vance. "We are working to ensure that the people we serve have food on their tables." Haven is working with local organizations to provide additional resources to help combat food insecurity in Massachusetts. The agency is currently receiving state and federal funding to help provide food assistance to those in need.

The opinions expressed in "A View from the Hill" do not necessarily reflect the views or opinion of the Providers' Council or its members.
CONVENTION: Council to offer more than 30 workshops to event attendees

The annual Awards of Excellence and Peer Provider Awards will also be presented and dozens of exhibitors will be on hand at the convention’s virtual exhibit hall to help organizations save time and money.

Attendees will be able to sign up for workshops and event programming through the Council’s virtual platform, which will be available for iOS and Android devices. The app is available as a free download in each company’s store, and users can find it by searching for “Providers’ Council.”

Users will note the Council’s trademark starburst is the app logo.

Diamond Sponsors USI Insurance Services and Citizens have returned for the virtual event, and People’s United Bank has signed up as a Platinum Sponsor.

Registration costs are $90 for members and $160 for non-members; registration closes on Tues., Oct. 20.

Groups of 10 or more people receive 10 percent off and groups of 20 or more receive 20 percent off.

Registrants do not need to indicate workshop preferences at this time, but each individual must have a unique email address to access our event platform. Once registrants use their email address to access the event platform, they will be able to register for workshops and add them to their daily schedule.

Register now to join us! Details of registration, workshops, speakers and more are posted on the Council’s SpeakUp4Equity Convention & Expo page at www.providers.org and online at the event web platform. Once registered, all the information is available to view on the app.

MHA takes suicide-prevention messages to the streets

MHA’S Stand Out Truck messaging campaign was visible throughout Hampden County last month, making rounds between Springfield to Southwick, from Chicopee to Longmeadow and from West Springfield to Westfield to commemorate Suicide Prevention Week from Sept. 6-12. “Conversations Can Save Lives,” “We Hear You,” and “Let’s Talk 8 Out” are just a few of the headlines created to encourage conversations about mental health in English and Spanish.

GOTV: Council seeks to “voterize” the human services sector

“The Providers’ Council, through our participation in National Voter Registration Day on Sept. 22 and our CareVote initiative, is seeking to ‘voterize’ the human services sector,” said Council President/CEO Michael Weekes.

“We look forward to our community casting ballots to support caring communities on or before Nov. 3.”

In addition to all of the congressional and state races, there are two important questions on the ballot as well. Question 1 concerns access to motor vehicle mechanical data, also known as “right to repair,” and Question 2 is a proposal to implement a ranked-choice voting system in Massachusetts.

Voters in Massachusetts set a record in the state primary, casting more than 1.7 million ballots. Nationally, more than 11 million ballots for the Nov. 3 general election had already been cast by Sept. 29 in reporting states, according to the United States Elections Project.

With so much interest in voting, the Council plans to use its non-partisan voter engagement initiative, CareVote, to ensure that human services workers, clients, families and staff have the information and reminders they need to access mail-in ballots and early voting.

Organizations can assign CareVote Captains at their organizations by emailing ravi@providers.org.

Residents can check their voting status and/or register at the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s website at www.sec.state.ma.us.
### Calendar of Events • Fall/Winter 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What:</th>
<th>When:</th>
<th>Time:</th>
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<th>Trainer:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unlocking Potential Through Organization Design</td>
<td>Thursday, October 8</td>
<td>1 p.m.</td>
<td>via Zoom</td>
<td>Eric Curtis, Curtis Strategy</td>
<td>Free, members-only</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managing Your Time, Talents and Productivity While Working From Home</td>
<td>Wednesday, October 14</td>
<td>9 a.m.</td>
<td>via Zoom</td>
<td>Christine Singer, Your Personal Best</td>
<td>$70 members, $130 non-members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic Planning</td>
<td>Thursday, November 5</td>
<td>10 a.m.</td>
<td>via Zoom</td>
<td>Brenda Bond Fortier, Suffolk University Institute for Public Service</td>
<td>$50 members, $95 non-members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success as a New Supervisor</td>
<td>Tuesday, November 17 and December 1</td>
<td>9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>via Zoom</td>
<td>Jim Ognibene, Visioneer Consulting</td>
<td>$140 members, $200 non-members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Register today for 45th Annual Convention & Expo
**SpeakUp4Equity**
Oct. 27-30, 2020

Visit providers.org/events

*Pre-registration for these events required unless otherwise noted.
Visit www.provider.org/events to learn more and register. Questions? Contact Eliza Adams at 508.598.9700 or eadams@providers.org*