



2019 | Year End Report



Expanding the Medicare Savings Plan

After six years of grassroots organizing, MSAC successfully persuaded state lawmakers and Governor Baker to include the first step in our three-step staircase bill in the budget.. Photos, videos, news articles, op-eds and social media all played key roles in our successful partnership. We are ready to expand MSP access to even more Seniors in 2020!

Read All About it

Medicare Savings Program (MSP)

Baker includes in his budget:

- [AP](#)
- [Boston Herald](#)
- [Boston 25](#)
- [Worcester Business Journal](#)
- [MassLive](#)

State officially expands MSP:

- [Telegram and Gazette](#)
- [Somerville Times](#)
- [Andover Townsman](#)
- [Haverill Gazette](#)
- [The Daily News](#)
- [Dot News - Edna Pruce Profile](#)





BOSTON Herald

Charlie Baker proposes Medicare eligibility expansion for low-income seniors

Gov. Charlie Baker is proposing to expand the eligibility for Medicare Savings Programs to allow more low-income seniors to qualify.

In his annual budget submissions, Baker is including the proposal to spend \$7 million every year to leverage more than \$100 million in federal funds for Medicare prescription drug subsidies for eligible seniors over 65.

Expanding the program would bring the number of eligible low-income seniors from 18,000 to around 43,000. Most of the current folks in the program would receive better benefits, and approximately 25,000 people who aren't now eligible would become so.

The Medicare Savings Programs pay for Medicare premiums and out-of-pocket expenses for low-income eligible seniors. Currently, one in three low-income seniors in the state spend less than 20 percent of their income on health care.

telegram.com
WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

Gov. Baker proposes expanding Medicare savings program

BOSTON — Low-income seniors would see a break on how much they pay for health care under a plan Republican Gov. Charlie Baker is including in his state budget proposal.

Under the plan, seniors who earn 130 to 165 percent of the federal poverty level — from just under \$16,000 to about \$20,000 each year — would be eligible for Medicare savings programs, which help reduce health care expenses, including out-of-pocket costs.

Currently seniors earning from 100 to 135 percent of the federal poverty level — from just over \$12,100 to \$16,400 — are eligible for the savings programs, which also help cover hospital and general medical services. They also automatically qualify for help with prescription drug coverage.

Baker's budget would set aside about \$10 million in state dollars for the expansion, which would leverage about \$100 million in additional federal Medicare dollars for nearly 40,000 seniors — 25,000 of whom are currently not eligible. "This will make a big difference to a lot of people," Baker said Friday.



Mass Senior Action Council
July 11 · 🌐
No one should ever need to decide between food and crucial medication. That's why MSAC members poured into the State House Tuesday to tell lawmakers that the time for meaningful healthcare reform is now!
The staircase bill (H.B.1199/ S.B.699) will expand access to affordable healthcare to 70,000 low income seniors over 3 years. #BridgeTheGap #SeniorPower #AffordableHealthcare



33

3 Comments 9 Shares



Mass Senior Action Council
 October 2 · 🌐

When we fight, we win! #SeniorPower has won expanded access to the Medicare Savings Program for Massachusetts elders. What's next? A 3-step staircase to expand it even further. Stay tuned! #WeTakeCharge



👍❤️👎 53

5 Comments 11 Shares

Transportation Justice for Seniors

Seniors need accessible, affordable public transportation options to stay independent. Traveling to buy groceries, medicine and being able to access healthy meals, exercise and social support are essential for Seniors' wellbeing. This year, we secured affordable transport to the grocery store for Seniors in New Bedford. Through a two-year grassroots campaign in Springfield, including news stories, op-eds, videos and social media, we finally achieved a pilot program that answers our calls for a workable plan to get Seniors from neighborhoods where senior centers closed, to the centralized Jordan Senior Center.

Read All About it

- [Mass Live](#)
- [Springfield Republican](#)
- [Seniors Demand Real Solutions to Access Services - Springfield Republican](#)
- [Following Pressure From Seniors, City To Offer Free Rides To Springfield Senior Center](#)
- [Tripp Towers seniors upset after SRTA stops service to Stop & Shop](#)
- [SRTA and Tripp Tower seniors reach compromise on grocery shuttle](#)

SPRINGFIELD

Elders demand respect

Seniors protest transportation, food prices at senior center

By PETER GOONAN
pgoonan@repub.com

A group of senior citizens protesting yesterday on the steps of City Hall, seeking improved transportation to the Raymond Jordan Senior Center and lower-cost meals, triggered a face-to-face encounter with Mayor Domenic J. Sarno, who defended his efforts.

Approximately 30 seniors, supporters and advocates called for action by the city to relieve their concerns, chanting and holding signs spelling "Respect."

The demonstration happened to coincide with a Greek heritage flag raising ceremony, also on the City Hall steps, involving Sarno and other officials.

After the ceremony, Sarno walked over and told the seniors that his administration built the \$12.5 million senior center at Blunt Park, which opened in February 2018. He said his office recently allocated city funds to

SEE SENIORS, PAGE A6

purchase a handicap-accessible bus for senior events that will help at the Jordan Senior Center.

Sarno said his administration also listened to the wishes of seniors who favored improved, but more expensive, meals at the Jordan Senior Center. Advocates say meals at senior centers typically cost \$2, while at the Jordan Senior Center they cost \$3.50.

"Here is the bottom line — seniors are near and dear to my heart and I love you so," Sarno said.

On Tuesday, Sarno said he was "a bit surprised and miffed" by news of the protest.

Seniors attending the protest, advocates from the [Massachusetts Senior Action Council](#), and some candidates for city office on the Sept. 10 preliminary election ballot, said they are not convinced, and have not seen or heard a specific plan for how their concerns will be met.

Seniors said Pioneer Valley Transit Authority buses are inconvenient and far away from many of their homes, and vans are too costly at \$6 per round trip.

Mattie Lacewell, president of the Springfield chapter of Senior Action and a 50-year resident of the city, said the group was protesting "because we want access and affordability to the new Ray Jordan Senior Center."

Lacewell said four neighborhood senior centers were closed and replaced by the new center on Roosevelt Avenue.

"The Ray Jordan Center is a beautiful, beautiful (site)," Lacewell said. "What we want is to have access to it, not just the people who can drive, not just the people who can afford the bus to get there. We want all of our community to be able to access this wonderful, lovely building.

"We will not go away," Lacewell said. "We will not stop





Springfield Mayor Domenic Sarno 'miffed' as seniors plan rally for lower-cost meals, transportation at Raymond Jordan center

SPRINGFIELD — Mayor Domenic J. Sarno said he is “miffed” that a group of senior citizens is planning a rally at City Hall Wednesday to protest the cost of meals and transportation at the Raymond A. Jordan Senior Center at Blunt Park.

The Massachusetts Senior Action Council announced that dozens of seniors are expected to gather at 11 a.m., protesting that the price of lunch is \$3.50 — compared with a previous price of \$2 — and that the cost of a round-trip van shuttle to the center is \$6. Van trips are provided by the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority





Following Pressure From Seniors, City To Offer Free Rides To Springfield Senior Center

Responding to pressure from activists, city officials in Springfield, Massachusetts have announced a new transportation plan for the senior center.

Starting next month, free door-to-door rides will be offered to seniors who wish to go to the Raymond Jordan Senior Center to enjoy lunch, activities, and camaraderie.

The new city-provided transportation is a response to complaints that many seniors are finding they cannot afford to travel to the \$13 million state-of-the-art senior center that opened last year.

It is also an upgrade from the stopgap plan announced by Mayor Domenic Sarno at the senior center last month when he said the city would offer van rides to the senior center from three neighborhood pickup points.

REPUBLICAN

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MATTIE LACEWELL | GUEST VIEWPOINT

Seniors demand Springfield City Hall offer real solutions to access services

SPRINGFIELD'S SENIORS rallied in front of City Hall this week, with a simple demand: offer a plan to make sure all seniors can access the services and subsidized meals offered by the Jordan Senior Center.

Seniors have been struggling mightily since City Hall's decision to close many of our neighborhood senior centers. More of us are traveling further, and paying more, to reach the new center; others are not getting there at all. It's not just a place we get together and socialize, but it's a hub for seniors' wellbeing — including our health and nutrition.

The senior citizens living in Springfield deserve access to affordable, nutritious food. Until recently, we had seven senior centers serving low-cost meals. But nearly two years ago, the city shuttered the doors to four of the seven centers as it prepared to open the new citywide Raymond Jordan Center. This action, coupled with the rising price of meals, has resulted in major hurdles when it comes to seniors' access to food in Springfield and the surrounding areas.

The lack of affordable and accessible transportation to the new Jordan Center is one of the key issues keeping seniors from accessing meals and the opportunity to engage. Those unable to drive themselves are left taking multiple buses, depending on

friends and family, or paying \$5 round trip on the PVRTA Van. This might not sound like a lot, but for seniors like myself that are on a fixed income, this cost quickly adds up and becomes a barrier to accessing the nutritious meals that many of us rely on to survive.

In addition to inconvenient and costly public transportation, the price of the meals at the Jordan Senior Center nearly doubled due to the city's decision to subsidize the international food management corporation Sodexo. In addition to the \$3.50 we are charged the city pays an additional \$14,000 a month. Previously we made a \$2 donation and the city paid \$0. The city's failure to negotiate an affordable price for seniors, with the massive corporation that also contracts with the school district, is unacceptable. It has created yet another roadblock for seniors that are desperately in need of access to food.

The Massachusetts Senior Action Council has worked tirelessly to propose realistic solutions to the food access problems created by senior center closures and rising food prices. One of the most exciting proposals we suggested to the city was a plan to partner with Putnam Vocational Tech High School or Holyoke Community College's culinary arts programs. This plan would have created an intergenerational solution that would give seniors eas-

ier access to healthy food on a regular basis. Unfortunately, the city decided against this idea, without proposing alternative solutions and continues to drag its feet when it comes to actionable solutions to this pressing problem.

The City of Springfield can't balance its budget on the backs of our seniors. The choice to consolidate neighborhood-based senior centers without an affordable transportation plan, while also increasing the cost of meals has been devastating for some of our neighbors.

Fortunately, it is not too late for the city to right its wrongs by investing in creative and actionable solutions that will ensure seniors are able to access the services that we need for a dignified retirement.

We think this issue is important enough — and we seniors (who vote, mind you) are important enough — that the Mayor should take a meeting with us as soon as possible. He should listen to our concerns, help us problem solve, and come up with a plan that ensures access for all.

We're the Massachusetts Senior Action Council, and we won't sit by idly as needed community resources are taken from us. We're waiting for your call, Mr. Mayor.

Mattie Lacewell is a member of the Massachusetts Senior Action Council



Making Senior Voices Count!

In Lynn, Greater Lynn Senior Services shut out Senior voices and harassed our Senior Center director, prompting her to leave her post. Seniors wouldn't stand for it. Through grassroots events, media coverage, social media and pressure on local officials, MSAC secured a commitment from Lynn's Mayor to hire a first-ever city worker to oversee Senior Affairs. The mayor will also launch a planning committee, including Seniors, to ensure that Seniors have a say in the future of their Senior Center.

Read All About it

- [Seniors Take Action Against GLSS CEO](#)
- [Greater Lynn Senior Services CEO Under Scrutiny](#)
- [GLSS CEO Paul Crowley Resigns](#)
- [City Will Take Over Management Of Lynn Senior Center](#)

Mass. Senior Action Council Endorses Lynn Mayor's Commitment to Seniors

Lynn, MA - Massachusetts Senior Action Council (MSAC) is commending Lynn Mayor Thomas McGee for his unprecedented leadership on Senior issues. At a Senior Center town hall, Mayor McGee made a series of commitments that will ensure that Lynn Seniors have a seat at the table in City Hall.

Mayor McGee will solicit applications for a new Senior Center director in January. This will be the first-ever city employee dedicated to Seniors' issues. He or she will oversee the process of choosing a permanent site for the Senior Center, and will oversee the hiring of other Senior Center staff.



 **Crystal Haynes** 
@crystalhaynes 

#Lynn Tenant rights group, labor unions form coalition to protest mixed use development project citing unsafe working conditions and lack of affordable housing. @boston25



14 2:46 PM - Jun 19, 2019

 See Crystal Haynes's other Tweets 

 **Mass Senior Action Council**
about a month ago 

"I want to thank the many seniors who have spoken out advocating for such an action for the better part of the last year, including many members of the Massachusetts Senior Action Council. It was their voices that brought this issue to the forefront, and it is a fine example of how residents can truly make a difference by standing up and getting involved in their local government." - Springfield City Councilor Jesse Lederman



MASSLIVE.COM

With few takers for senior center shuttle, Springfield offers ...
Interested seniors should call a dedicated reservation line at 413-575-044...



NEWS

CITY WILL TAKE OVER MANAGEMENT OF LYNN SENIOR CENTER

BY GAYLA CAWLEY | September 4, 2019

LYNN — Mayor Thomas M. McGee announced on Wednesday that the city will be taking over management of the Lynn Senior Center, which would include a move to a new facility. But some seniors are skeptical they will see much benefit from the transition.

The city and Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS) have come to an agreement to move the Senior Center from the GLSS building at 8 Silsbee St. to a new, undetermined facility in June 2020.

Kathy Paul of Lynn, a member of Mass Senior Action Council wants more programming for seniors (Jim Wilson/File Photo)

Standing For Dignity

Standing with Stacey



Lynn Seniors Deserve Better!

Dear Mayor Thomas McGee:

We ask for your help in our fight for Dignity at the Lynn Senior Center. Any lease agreement for the Lynn Senior Center should include:

- The Lynn Senior Center's Council On Aging Board members should reflect the people who use the center and be representatives for the Lynn Seniors.
- The Lynn Council On Aging Board should oversee the senior center's activities, funds, and along with the Mayor choose the Senior Center/Council On Aging Director.
- The Lease for the Senior Center must include respect for everyone.
- The Lynn Council On Aging appointments to the GLSS Board should be recognized immediately.

Name _____

Address _____

Never Ag

Our Taxes! Ou

BUSINESS, NEWS

GREATER LYNN SENIOR SERVICES CEO UNDER SCRUTINY

BY THOMAS GRILLO | October 7, 2019

LYNN — The controversial CEO of Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS) was ordered to take a 90-day leave last month following a critical performance evaluation, *The Item* has learned.

The action by the Board of Directors followed receipt of a 200-page job performance evaluation on Paul Crowley. The review by a North Shore attorney and human resources consultant was started at the request of the board. It took six months to complete.

GLSS declined to release the report. But sources said the review was critical of Crowley's conduct and administration of the agency's \$67 million budget. The 13-member panel received an executive summary of the document in late August and placed Crowley on leave after Labor Day.

"You can surmise there's a connection between the report and Paul being put on leave," said a source who declined to be identified because they are not authorized to speak for GLSS. "The 90 days is time for the board to fully research the information provided in the evaluation and complete their due diligence."

A decision on Crowley's future is expected at the end of the three-month period in December. His salary last year was \$346,742 in total compensation, according to GoldStar.

Two board members contacted by *The Item* declined to discuss the controversy.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS, NEWS

GLSS CEO PAUL CROWLEY RESIGNS

BY DAILY ITEM STAFF | November 4, 2019

LYNN — Following months of speculation, Paul Crowley is out as CEO of Greater Lynn Senior Services.

The Board of Directors of GLSS announced on Monday that the embattled CEO resigned from his position, effective Oct. 31.

No reason was given for Crowley's resignation, including whether it was voluntary, but he was placed on a 90-day paid leave in September following an unflattering job performance review ordered by the Board of Directors.

Crowley did not return a phone call seeking comment.

Last year, he earned \$346,742 with GLSS, according to Guidestar.

Ken Halkin, chief financial officer, and Valerie Parker Callahan, director of planning and development, will continue their roles as interim co-CEOs while the board undergoes a search process to hire the organization's next CEO, according to a statement from the GLSS Board of Directors.

Holly Jarrell-Marcinelli will continue to serve as the liaison for all ASAP-related network activities in the interim period, according to the board.

We closed out our year with a sense of victory and celebration. We visited the State House for one last time in 2019, offering our thanks to lawmakers in the form of new versions of popular Christmas Carols. But we also reminded them that we will be back in 2020 with an even greater commitment to fighting for Senior Justice!

Commonwealth Seniors to Christmas Carol to State Legislators in Support of Medicare Expansion

Boston, MA -- Mass. Senior Action Council Seniors from across the state plan to meet at the State House Wednesday for a twist in their usual advocacy efforts -- Christmas Caroling at legislators' offices in support of Medicare Savings Program (MSP) expansion.

Seniors will change the lyrics to popular holiday songs to both applaud the steps legislators have taken thus far to expand MSP to more low-income Seniors, and also convince them that there is more work to be done.

Massachusetts' premiere Senior advocacy group, Mass. Senior Action Council, won a historic victory for Commonwealth Seniors last year when they successfully secured the first step of their three-step MSP expansion plan -- approved as part of the state budget after six years of grassroots action.

