AGING in MASSACHUSETTS
Shaping the Future

Confidential draft for policy development only
On April 12, 2017, Governor Charles D. Baker signed Executive Order 576 establishing the Governor’s Council to Address Aging in Massachusetts. The Council will develop a plan to promote healthy aging in Massachusetts, and to achieve the goal of making the Commonwealth the most age-friendly state for people of all ages. Older adults are the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population and will make up 23% of the Commonwealth’s population by 2035. The Council’s recommendations may address a broad range of issues including current practices that support healthy aging, how to improve public awareness of and access to services for older adults and caregivers, and how to leverage innovation and technology to support aging in communities. The Council is made up of 24 members, including co-chairs Secretary Marylou Sudders and Eileen Connors.
The Council’s Charge

1. The most effective means of encouraging efforts by each municipality and region to address the unique strengths and self-identified needs of older adults and families, whether by recognition in Community Compacts or through other incentives and arrangements.

2. Each community’s special strengths in technology, innovation, research, health care, and business, and how those strengths may be leveraged to support healthy aging and the work of family caregivers.

3. Opportunities for improved alignment and coordination of aging and aging-related programs and policies among public and private partners.

4. An assessment of how community-based care is provided to older adults in each region of the Commonwealth.

5. Recommendations on changes to laws, regulations, and policies that will promote capacity building in housing, transportation, elder abuse prevention, job opportunities and training, civic engagement, public safety, caregiver support, and other aspects of age-friendly communities.
6. Opportunities for meaningful engagement in the arts, humanities, music, athletics, life-long learning, volunteer activities, and civic engagement for older adults, including a focus on inter-generational opportunities.

7. Policies and programs that promote respect and inclusivity and celebrate the contributions of older adults in their communities and that combat ageism and negative stereotypes about older adults.

8. Social determinants of health for older adults such as poverty and economic insecurity, lack of affordable, accessible housing, homelessness, food insecurity, high prescription drug costs, and other health care costs.

9. Ways to address the special mental, behavioral, and cognitive health needs of the older adult population, with particular attention to the issues of loneliness and isolation and the need to address access to mental and behavioral health services.

10. Policies that encourage employers to identify and support employees who are family caregivers.
Sources of Public Input

- 4 listening sessions (over 400 attendees)
  - 6/21/17 Rose Baker Senior Center, Gloucester, MA
  - 6/26/17 U Mass Medical Center, Worcester, MA
  - 7/25/17 Barnstable Council on Aging, Hyannis, MA
  - 8/2/17 Elder Services of Berkshire County, Pittsfield, MA

- Comments submitted to date on website (over 80 submissions) and still open for comments
  - Aging.coversation@state.ma.us
What We Heard

Vision loss  Purpose
Mental health  Information
Stay in home  Respect
Independence  Connection
LGBT  Caregiver
Assisted living  Accessible
services  Affordable
Grief  Isolation
Transportation
Housing
Economic security
Ageism  Dementia

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Opportunities for Council to Have Unique Impact

- Tackle issues that cross many sectors and domains such as:
  - Ageism
  - Economic Security
  - Planning for later stages of life (how to Age in Community)

- Change the conversation:
  - Get people talking about “Optimal Aging”
  - Promote assets of older workers
  - Implement aging in all policies