



Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Aging

Quarterly Meeting/Listening Session The Pryde Community Center June 10, 2025 Minutes

Commissioners Present: Sen. Pat Jehlen, Rep. Sam Montaña, Kathy Betts, Barry Callis, Josie Dutil, Paul Glass, Lisa Krinsky, Tanya Neslusan, Lynn Vidler,

Commissioners Absent: Lenny Alberts, Bill Bogdanovich, Sean Cahill, Chris Erchull, Michelle LaPointe, Margaux LeClair, Jordina Shanks, Julie Watt Faqir,

Guests: Alex Bergson, Sarah Gentner, Vicki Halal, Carlos Rios, listening session attendees

Welcome and Introductions:

- Welcome to The Pryde from Gretchen van Ness
- Welcome to the listening session from Lisa Krinsky
 - WGBH recorded first 30 minutes of meeting for documentary
- Welcomes and introductions from the Commissioners
- Introduction for Kathy Betts as new AARP Commissioner

Commission Updates:

- New logo for the Commission
- Strategic Plan content is finalized – graphic design is being developed
- Developing a Commission website
 - Improve communication with public about Commission activities
- Working toward FY'26 state funding to hire a full-time Director for the Commission

Listening Session:

- What is LGBTQ life like living in the Greater Boston area?
 - The Pryde – supported, living in community, feel empowered by access to resources and diversity
- What is going well for you as an LGBTQ older adult?

- LGBTQ life in previous decades was scary and dangerous – life now is easier with hope for the future
- What do you want the Commission to know?
 - Need for programming and confronting stigma around end-of-life planning and death
 - MCOA has partnered with death doula to bring programming and education
 - Need for available LGBTQ housing in Greater Boston area
 - Need for education and preparation for long-term care
 - Some LTC facilities not providing HIV medications
 - Discrimination toward LGBTQ people has forced many to go back into the “closet”
 - LGBTQI Long-term Care Bill of Rights requires non-discrimination policies, practices, and trainings for long-term care facilities and staff
 - Ombudsman program as advocates for long-term care residents
 - Need for accessible health care (location, insurance, etc.)
 - Need for assistance with filling out paperwork for folks who do not have people to legally designate as representative
 - LGBTQ older adults are more likely to age alone without a spouse/partner, adult children or other biological family
 - Ethos is working on workshop for filling out healthcare and end-of-life forms
 - Discussion of how to approach, communicate about, and make decisions around health care proxies
 - Inclusion of resources and information planned to be on upcoming Commission website
- What are your experiences with caregiving?
 - Difficulty with mobility, emotional challenges with supporting another person, guilt of person being cared for
 - Decision-making as a caregiver is a difficult and often painful experience
- What are your experiences with transportation?
 - MBTA Mobility Center has expanded accessibility of public transportation
 - Lack of elevators to access MBTA stations
 - The Pryde provides taxi vouchers
 - Problems with utilization
 - Geographical location makes taxi navigation difficult
 - Age Strong shuttle can transport to non-emergency medical appointments
 - Need to be Boston resident to use the service
- What are your experiences with health care?
 - Travel to appointments is difficult – medical desert
 - Lack of primary care providers for older adults
 - Long-term survivors of HIV live with long-term side effects of older HIV medications – concerns with providers ignoring issues
 - Finding geriatric medical providers
- What are your experiences with multigenerational experiences?

- Would like to see more opportunities for multigenerational interactions
 - Not many spaces or events to have multigenerational exchanges
 - Value in sharing knowledge and experiences with younger generations
 - Particularly important in this political and social climate
- Older adults are multigenerational (40+ year window)
- What are your experiences with feeling connected to community?
 - Loneliness harms people
 - Lack of connection amongst neighbors
 - Spiritual community can be important
 - Living in community means you can choose when/how to show up and interact with others
 - Technology and virtual age can lead to social isolation
 - Peer-led education on technology
- What is your biggest concern as an LGBTQ older adult?
 - Long-term effects of experiencing violence and trauma
 - Anticipatory concern about being placed in hostile long-term care facility
 - Financial concerns – LGBTQ retirees are not on par with heterosexual cisgender peers due to history of discrimination
- Is there anything else?
 - Transgender older adults – resources and allyship
- What are you most grateful for as LGBTQ older adults?
 - Grateful to be alive
- How is the current federal administration affecting the MA landscape for LGBTQ older adults?
 - MA is monitoring in partnership with other states as watchdogs of new and changing policies
- MA is one of the best places to age as an LGBTQ older adult
 - First-in-the-nation legislation, Commission, and agencies working to establish equity for LGBTQ older adults
 - The importance and history of The Pryde