

The Voice, Q3, September 2023: Strategic Planning

Dear Members,

I am pleased to announce Mass-ALA's new [strategic plan](#). In the Q1 issue of the Voice, I [shared](#) the successful completion of our prior strategic plan, which was adopted in 2018 and executed in the following four years. I also asked for your input as we developed a new strategic plan this spring. Associations employ strategic plans to guide their focus and efforts from a broad perspective to impact day-to-day efforts with the knowledge that we are working towards, and in alignment with, something greater than the tasks themselves. I find that as societal trends of daily life shift more towards distraction and short attention spans, strategic plans are more important than ever for guiding work in the present with a bigger picture, longer-term view of what is most meaningful.

We partnered with one of the most accomplished association executives in New England, former MA League of Community Health Centers leader [Jim Hunt](#), as our strategic planning consultant. He worked with our Board, staff, lobbying, and public relations consultants to define our goals and strategies.

Our plan is focused on six goals. Some address the most pressing concerns we hear from members and stakeholders, and others advance our mission, *to lead the assisted living industry in its service of seniors through advocacy, education, operational support, and enhanced growth opportunities*, in a more future-focused way.

The ever-present challenge that impacts all of our work every day and requires new solutions is workforce recruitment and retention. There was a strong consensus that helping members with new workforce programs should be our top strategic goal, with both short-term and long-term strategies.

We have admired the work of other organizations in enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and have already taken steps to do so at Mass-ALA with the formation of a new DEI committee. There are myriad paths to enhancing DEI in assisted living and at Mass-ALA, which we look forward to exploring and taking a leadership role in helping members do the same.

Members often look to Mass-ALA as the leading association in our state for shaping legislation and regulations in assisted living. Everyone in assisted living has observed changes in the aspirations of residents and in their daily needs, and we welcome the challenge of changing policy to better serve older adults and strengthen assisted living.

Education and training are evolving quickly, and we have embraced that at Mass-ALA. Our shift over the years from all in-person trainings, to adding webinar trainings, to all education being virtual at the height of the

pandemic, and a new era of a combination of virtual and in-person offerings with new content being added to improve care and quality of life for residents, reflects a nimbleness and responsiveness that we can build upon in the years ahead. Our updated education and training goals recognize that our training should evolve to be more participatory and focused on peer-to-peer learning, while also expanding offerings to staff in a way that helps alleviate workforce challenges.

One of the pillars of Mass-ALA's service to the community is our [Resource Guide](#), which is updated and published annually to help consumers and those who work with them. We have enhanced our public awareness campaigns with [workforce recruitment campaigns](#) a video promoting and explaining the [Resource Guide](#), and appreciation of assisted living staff through our [Unsung Heroes campaign](#), and promoting our [award winners](#) through [video messaging](#) and social media. Mass-ALA will amplify our voice for assisted living by increasing awareness of how the setting combats the epidemic of loneliness and isolation and gives consumers easier and practical paths to selecting a community.

And for something completely different: our new strategic plan emphasizes innovation and business efficiency projects that benefit Mass-ALA members. We have been focused on fine tuning the fundamentals of the association's work in recent years, and we are now excited to build on that to take risks and explore new ideas that could improve assisted living.

Here is Mass-ALA's new [strategic plan](#). I [welcome](#) your ideas and feedback.

Brian Doherty

President and CEO

Mass-ALA