

## **Building Our Annual Conference to a Destination Event With Your Help**

*Q3 Article, 2024*

---

Dear Members,

Did you know that the Wisconsin, Florida, and California assisted living associations have multi-day destination conferences? I reflect on this as we prepare for our Annual Conference & Tradeshow next month at the Newton Marriott.

I would like Mass-ALA to have our conference on Cape Cod, the North Shore or the South Shore, with two days of education and an evening networking event or dinner. It would be a fun respite for hard-working assisted living professionals that do impactful work every day. But there are barriers to planning that type of event.

When we've hosted networking events at the end of our fall Conference & Tradeshow or spring Regulations Training in prior years, attendance was thin as people rushed home to familial responsibilities or calculated how much traffic they could avoid if leaving by 4pm.

This is understandable for a one-day event. Hopefully, things would be much different if we had two days of workshops. But taking that plunge to plan such an event is risky, as we are often reminded of how people feel busy and over-scheduled, and how two weekdays out of the office can lead to work piling up or a strain on other colleagues who might be disappointed to not make the trip.

That being said, I have a strong conviction that since most executive directors and resident care directors don't make it to a national conference each year, and these events can energize teams and ignite a sense of professional growth and well-being, there is a latent demand for a true destination Massachusetts assisted living conference. What do you think? Should we stick with a one-day annual conference in a central location? Or transition to a two-day conference at a resort area? I [welcome](#) your thoughts.

The first step we can take to enjoy the present moment of assisted living community in our state is meeting at the Annual Conference & Tradeshow in Newton on October 24. As we grow demand and connection for our one-day event, we will make it better each year, and potentially plant the seeds for a growing enthusiasm for a destination event.

**Brian Doherty**

President and CEO

Mass-ALA