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Contact: Gene A. Mazzella, Chair
Multicultural Coalition on Aging
PH: 508.479.9828
Email: genemazzella@gmail.com
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Immediate Release:

Multicultural Coalition on Aging Hosted Conference on Alzheimer's Disease:
One Message – Many Voices


More than 200 attendees representing a myriad of groups from different backgrounds, cultures and origins from the City of Boston attended the free conference. Workshops focused on providing more specific information about Alzheimer’s disease, including Memory Loss and Brain Health, Dementia and Early Detection, Treatment Options, and Community Resources, Research and Advocacy.

“Our primary goal was to educate and assist cultural groups in identifying, understanding and dealing with those who may be exhibiting signs of Alzheimer’s,” said Gene Mazzella, chairperson of the Multicultural Coalition on Aging. “Workshops not only emphasized a specific cultural group’s values and barriers, but were also delivered in that group’s native language.”

Opening remarks were given by two speakers who have emerged as leaders in bringing this disease to the forefront: Massachusetts Secretary of Elder Affairs Alice Bonner and Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh.

On the state level, Secretary Bonner and her colleagues have led a national initiative to improve dementia care. She has also served on a number of national panels related to the National Alzheimer’s Strategic Plan.
In Boston, the older adult population is the fastest growing demographic in the City. It is estimated that currently 10,000 Bostonians suffer from Alzheimer’s disease and this number is expected to grow as the population grows. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) rank Alzheimer’s as the 6th leading cause of death in the United States; 8th leading cause of death in the Hispanic and Asian population; 10th leading cause of death among African Americans and 13th leading cause of death among Native Americans.

Soon after being elected, Mayor Walsh launched Boston’s Alzheimer’s initiative, led by the City’s Commission on Affairs of the Elderly which is charged with increasing awareness of the disease, strengthening partnerships, training City staff, as well as increasing support services for caregivers.

“Mayor Walsh committed to helping our City’s residents deal with this disease, and this conference supported his goal of ensuring that Bostonians of all backgrounds have access to vital information and resources,” added Mazzea.

The consumer conference reached out to those who are included in the new definition of culture, beyond language and origin. This year’s attendees included groups from the Asian, Haitian, Native American and Latino communities while also extending to Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Veterans, Formerly Homeless and LGBT groups. The work of the conference will be delivered to Russian, Vietnamese and Portuguese speaking communities at a future date.

This conference was made possible through the generous support of the Tufts Health Plan Foundation, Tufts Health Plan and the City of Boston Commission on Affairs of the Elderly. Attendees were transported to and from the conference and provided food and entertainment.

For more information about the conference and its content please contact Gene Mazzea, chairperson of the Multicultural Coalition on Aging, at 508.479.9828.

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The Multicultural Coalition on Aging, founded in 1994, is a culturally diverse coalition whose values, mission and goals are driven by its membership. It is dedicated to the delivery of culturally competent health care and social services and the fight to reduce cultural and linguist barriers.