

MVES Health Initiative Boosted by Cummings Grant

\$300K Award Will Sustain and Grow Housing Wellness Program

Mystic Valley Elder Services (MVES) is expanding a public health initiative thanks to a major grant award from the Cummings Foundation.

The Foundation awarded \$300,000 over 10 years to MVES as part of its \$30 Million Grant Program. Mystic Valley Elder Services will utilize the grant to expand its Housing Wellness Program, which brings MVES nurses and staff on-site to provide direct care in the community.

The Cummings Foundation program allocates funds annually to 150 nonprofits in Eastern Massachusetts, including 25 that receive ten-year grants of \$300,000 or more.

“We are honored to be one of the 25 nonprofits selected to receive a ten-year grant from the Cummings Foundation, and deeply grateful they support our investment into the health of our community’s older adults and people with disabilities,” said Lisa Gurgone, CEO of Mystic Valley Elder Services.

MVES launched the Housing Wellness Program as a pilot initiative in 2022 at two Malden locations, followed by expansion to sites in Chelsea and Everett. In addition to sustaining the existing sites, MVES plans to use the Cummings Grant to extend the program to the other eight communities in its service area: Medford, Melrose, North Reading, Reading, Revere, Wakefield and Winthrop. The Wellness Team will operate at sites where MVES already has a Supportive Housing Program in place, so staff can work in tandem to provide residents with the best care and support.

“The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the need to improve access to care and remove barriers to available services. We’re so thankful the Cummings Foundation recognizes this need and values our vision of bringing care directly into our communities,” explained Lisa Felci Jimenez, MVES Director of Client Services. “With the Foundation’s support, our nurses build relationships that help residents overcome barriers – such as mobility issues, past resistance to treatment, and in some cases language or financial limitations.”

The Housing Wellness Program embeds MVES nurses and other team members at buildings that are home to older adults and people with disabilities. The Wellness Nurse conducts weekly office hours with an open-door policy, enabling residents to check in for guidance and care. Nurses check vital signs, assist with medications and monitor conditions to ensure they don’t develop into serious health issues.

MVES team members also focus on prevention and awareness. Nurses and other staff members host educational workshops at senior centers and other community sites, and help residents complete File of Life documents, which convey critical personal health information to first responders in the event of an emergency.

“Our goal is to reduce avoidable hospitalizations and make it easier for older adults and people with disabilities to age in place,” Jimenez said. “The Housing Wellness Program plays an important role as MVES strives to build healthier, age-friendly communities.”

About Mystic Valley Elder Services (MVES): Since 1975, MVES has worked to ensure that older adults and people with disabilities have the support they need to live independently and with dignity. Located in Malden, Mass., the non-profit agency provides information, care and resources to residents of Chelsea and 10 nearby communities. Services include information and referral, management, home care, elder protective services, health insurance counseling, caregiver supports, transportation, Meals on Wheels, and more. For more information, call 781-324-7705 or visit www.mves.org.