



The Caring Force - FAQ

The Caring Force is a new initiative capturing the commitment, energy and compassion of individuals sharing a vision for a human services sector and engaged towards its realization.

What is *The Caring Force*?

- *The Caring Force* is a coalition for of individuals affiliated with human services who care about creating a stronger, more powerful and unified sector. *The Caring Force* will allow volunteers, human services workers, board members and the families and friends of the people we serve to come together and advocate for the people we take care of – the people we care about.
- *The Caring Force* will be an effort to communicate with our policy makers using one unified voice to ensure the needs of the human services sector are fully heard.
- *The Caring Force* will advocate for providing the best possible care to the one in ten vulnerable state residents who assistance and achieving better pay for direct care staff in Massachusetts.

Why now? Can our organization simply do advocacy on its own?

- There is strength in numbers. This is magnified by having one well-focused message that is delivered from thousands of voices statewide.
- Being seen as a cohesive political block gives added strength to our requests to government for proper and predicable funding and fairness to all of our clients/consumers, staff and organizations.
- Human services cuts affect all of us – from our clients and their families to our boards and staff. By joining together in *The Caring Force*, we can all speak with one voice and affect change for our sector.

What will *The Caring Force* do?

- Create a coalition of human services organizations their service recipients, staff members, leaders and interested parties that want to participate in more advocacy-related opportunities.
- Be identified through a unifying logo and a symbol that represents our common interests for fairness, and use common messages and themes that speak truth about the essential nature of our sector.
- Launch a web presence to engage with human service supporters, including: volunteers, direct care professionals, administrative staff, board members, clients, consumers and their families, many of whom use social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, etc. Will also include a website, which will be hosted on our domain, thecaringforce.org.
- Hold periodic meetings in different areas of *The Caring Force* and encourage all to come out and discuss human services issues with each other. *The Caring Force* will build a sense of community within the sector, as we can all belong to something that is bigger than any of us.

- Meet with policy makers and help shape policy that is focused on improving the lives of the people we serve and the people serving them.

What's expected of me? How about some quick examples?

People have to be involved in advocacy and make efforts to see positive change. When you sign up for *The Caring Force*, you will get information about how to become involved in the following ways:

- Join *The Caring Force* on our website (www.thecaringforce.org) and sign up for action
- Invite your staff, board, volunteers, clients, consumers, families and others to join
- Attend a rally organized by *The Caring Force*
- Advocate for legislation promoted by *The Caring Force*
- Visit with your legislators, city officials and federal representatives
- Write a letter to the editor in support of *The Caring Force*
- Participate in our social media campaigns, retweet our tweets and write on our Facebook wall

I'm a staff member at a human services organization. Why is *The Caring Force* important to me?

The Caring Force would benefit staff at human services organizations in many ways:

- By joining *The Caring Force*, you become a part of a larger movement comprised of staff, managers, volunteers, clients, consumers, board members and families who are committed to maintaining the high quality services we provide to clients and strengthening the state's human services sector.
- You will receive vital information about *The Caring Force* and information from the Providers' Council. Through your involvement in *The Caring Force*, you will discover what others are doing to advocate for better funding and policies that support you and your work and join with colleagues in opportunities to advocate for the sector.
- *The Caring Force* directly benefits from the Council's policy agenda. We will be advocating for legislation and a budget that – among other things – could adjust your compensation and benefits fairly, increase your health insurance options, help you in repaying your student loans and assist with other benefits.

That sounds good, but how much does this cost? What are the benefits of membership?

- Being part of *The Caring Force* is absolutely free of financial cost. There's no charge to join, and there's no charge to renew. We simply want your energy, your thoughts and your willingness to advocate. As long as you are committed to building a stronger human services system in Massachusetts, you are eligible to be a member of *The Caring Force*. What we need most is your energy and spirit.

This sounds like something I'd like to be involved with. Who do I talk to for more information?

Contact **Kevin Gilnack at the Providers' Council**. You can reach him at 617.428.3637 x124, e-mail him at kgilnack@providers.org or reach him on Twitter ([@kgilnack](https://twitter.com/kgilnack)). He'll talk to you about next steps and let you know what you can do to be involved with *The Caring Force*.

Revised December 2011