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# Residents sue assisted living facility over fees that drain their income

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Jack MacMaster, a plaintiff in the suit, in his apartment at Prospect House in Revere.

**Meghan Smith / GBH News**



By **Meghan Smith**

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**All Things Considered**

Jack MacMaster has 10 grandchildren. He wants to buy presents for them. But for the past three years, his disposable income has shrunk to a tiny amount, usually just \$100 each month.

“When the holidays come, birthdays — I can’t afford to buy anything,” he said. “I can’t tell you the last time that I was able to afford a new shirt or slacks.”

Since he moved into Prospect House, an assisted living facility in Revere, he has been charged “ancillary fees” in addition to his rent, leaving him with very little leftover for all other expenses. He’s not the only one.

MacMaster and several other low-income disabled residents at Prospect House have joined a class action lawsuit recently filed in U.S. District Court in Massachusetts, alleging that the fees that they are being charged are a violation of state and federal housing laws. They want answers.

“There’s so many people there that [have] no idea what they’re paying for,” MacMaster said.

Sean Ahern, a senior attorney at Greater Boston Legal Services, which is bringing the suit, says that it’s unclear what the fees are for that is not already paid for from separate sources.

“It seems to be that this is an arbitrary and unfair and deceptive fee,” Ahern said. “The fees are very, very oppressive in terms of their impact on the residents and their ability to navigate life day to day.”

Prospect House is managed by HallKeen Management, Inc., based in Norwood. Because it is part of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program, rents are capped for many of its units, which some residents pay for with social security. The ancillary fees take nearly all of the residents’ leftover income.

MacMaster and other residents are part of the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), through MassHealth and Medicare, which provides low-income older adults with support so that they can live in the community. The PACE Program pays Prospect House for services like meals, dressing, bathing and cleaning.

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