**Media Release**
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Jennifer Harnish Named Executive Director of**
**the Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired**

Brookline, MA — May 12, 2025 — The Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MABVI), a MAB Community Services program division, is proud to announce the appointment of Jennifer Harnish, PhD as its new Executive Director. Jennifer, who has served as MABVI’s Director of Social Services since September 2024, brings a wealth of experience in nonprofit leadership, disability advocacy, and program innovation to her new role, positioning MABVI to deepen its impact across the Commonwealth.

A licensed Clinical Psychologist in Massachusetts, Jennifer has been a powerful advocate and public voice in the field for more than two decades, educating families, service providers, legislators, and the broader community on the importance of emotional adjustment services and the significant contributions that people with blindness or low vision make to our communities. Her background also includes strategic planning, operations management, and community engagement — all essential components for MABVI’s continued growth and evolution.

“Jennifer is a passionate, mission-driven leader who brings the right blend of experience, vision, and heart to MABVI,” said Michael R. Panicola, PhD, CEO of MAB Community Services. “Her commitment to equity and inclusion, coupled with her deep understanding of the needs of people living with vision loss, make her the ideal person to guide MABVI into its next chapter. Under Jennifer's leadership, I'm confident that MABVI will grow its reach, enhance its programs, and continue to be a leader in the field.”

“I’m honored to be selected for this leadership role,” said Jennifer Harnish, PhD. “MABVI’s commitment to hiring blind leaders like me and to empowering the growing population of adults who are aging into vision loss is unique.”

In Massachusetts, an estimated one in three residents will develop a vision-reducing eye disease by age 65. Vision loss increases the risks of falls, depression, social isolation, and anxiety, and can lead to serious injury, poorer overall health, and reduced life expectancy. Research highlights the increased burden and risk for family caregivers.

“Many services for people who are aging into vision loss are uninsured or poorly reimbursed,” Jennifer continued. “This often results in people failing to access the support they need to live their best and fullest lives.”

MABVI provides resources, training, and support that promote health, safety, and independence. As Executive Director, Jennifer will oversee programs that close statewide service gaps and empower older adults to live full and active lives.

While MABVI offers many services at no charge to 1,200 annual clients, they are not free to deliver. Nearly two-thirds of MABVI’s $2.3 million annual budget relies on philanthropy.

### About the Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MABVI)

Founded in 1903, the Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired is one of the nation’s oldest social service organizations serving adults from the blind and low vision community. A division of MAB Community Services, MABVI provides comprehensive, community-based services including vision rehabilitation, adjustment to vision loss counseling, low vision support groups, access technology training, volunteer support, and advocacy initiatives. MABVI is committed to empowering clients to live their best lives. To learn more about MABVI's services, visit [www.mabvi.org](https://www.mabvi.org) or call (888) 613-7777.

### About MAB Community Services

For more than 120 years, MAB Community Services (MAB) has been dedicated to the inclusion of people with disabilities in our communities. Today, MAB is a statewide human services organization that annually empowers more than 1,600 clients with a variety of disabilities to live their best lives. MAB has three program divisions: the Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MABVI, since 1903), MAB Adult Disability Services (since 1973), and Ivy Street (since 1993). To learn more about MAB’s services, visit [www.mabcommunity.org](https://www.mabcommunity.org).

**Social Media Post**

🚨 **Leadership Announcement**
 We’re excited to welcome **Jennifer Harnish, PhD** as the new **Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MABVI)**!

Jennifer brings more than 20 years of experience in disability services and nonprofit leadership — and previously served as MABVI’s Director of Social Services. Her dedication to empowering people with blindness or low vision, combined with her strategic vision and compassion, makes her the perfect person to lead MABVI into its next chapter.

🗣️ “Jennifer is a passionate, mission-driven leader... I am confident that MABVI will grow its reach and continue to be a leader in the field,” said Michael Panicola, CEO of MAB Community Services.

Please join us in congratulating Jennifer as she begins this important new role! 👏

🔗 Learn more: [www.mabvi.org](http://www.mabvi.org/)

#Leadership #DisabilityServices #BlindnessAwareness #MABVI #Inclusion #Accessibility #NonprofitLeadership #VisionRehabilitation #Massachusetts

**Email Announcement**

Subject line: Don't miss this! Exciting announcement about MABVI's new Executive Director!

Dear Friends,

I'm thrilled to share that Jennifer Harnish, PhD has been appointed as the new Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MABVI), effective immediately.

Jennifer brings more than 20 years of experience in nonprofit leadership, disability services, and program development. Throughout her career, she has championed equity and inclusion, developed high-impact community programs, and led collaborative teams to meaningful results. Her passion for empowering people with disabilities aligns perfectly with MABVI’s mission.

In her new role, Jennifer will oversee MABVI’s statewide resources, training, and support that promote health, safety, and independence. She will oversee programs that close statewide service gaps and empower older adults with visual disabilities to live full and active lives. Jennifer will also work closely with MAB Community Services leadership and our valued partners to help MABVI grow its impact across Massachusetts.

Jennifer is a passionate, mission-driven leader who brings the right blend of experience, vision, and heart to MABVI. Her commitment to equity and inclusion, coupled with her deep understanding of the needs of people living with blindness or low vision, make her the ideal person to guide MABVI into its next chapter.

Please join me in warmly welcoming Jennifer as MABVI's new leader. We look forward to working alongside her as we continue to innovate and expand services that empower people with disabilities to live their best lives.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Panicola, PhD
CEO, MAB Community Services

P.S. Join me in signing this accessible card to welcome Jennifer!