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[Create an Account](#) [Login](#) [Menu](#)

- [About Argentum](#)
  - [Leadership](#)
  - [State Partners](#)
  - [Membership](#)
  - [Advertising & Sponsorship](#)
- [Advocacy](#)
  - [Silver PAC](#)
  - [Advocacy News](#)
  - [Federal Advocacy](#)
  - [State Advocacy](#)
  - [Grassroots Resources](#)
- [Events](#)
  - [Senior Living Executive Conference](#)
  - [Senior Living Symposium](#)
  - [Chief Executive Summit](#)
  - [Executive Director Leadership Institute](#)
  - [Public Policy Institute & Fly-In](#)
- [Media](#)
  - [Senior Living Executive Magazine](#)
  - [Argentum Daily](#)
  - [Press Releases](#)
  - [Members in the News](#)
  - [Search by Topic](#)
- [Research & Initiatives](#)
  - [Senior Living Impact](#)
  - [Senior Living IQ](#)
  - [Senior Living Works](#)
  - [Women in Leadership](#)
  - [Argentum Quarterly](#)
  - [Awards and Recognition Programs](#)
  - [Standards for Senior Living](#)
- [Professional Development](#)

- [Resource Library](#)
- [Professional Certification](#)
- [Executive Roundtables](#)
- [Senior Living Career Center](#)

## Benchmark Associate Wins 2019 Excellence Award from Massachusetts Assisted Living Association

May 31, 2019

**Michelle Tristani**, corporate director of memory care for Benchmark, was named the recipient of the Employee Leadership Award by the Massachusetts Assisted Living Association (Mass-ALA) at the organization's annual Excellence Awards Dinner in May. The awards are presented each year to individuals at every level of assisted living who have demonstrated their desire to make a positive difference in the lives of residents and who, in the view of their peers, stand out as role models in the industry.



Michelle Tristani, Corporate Director of Memory Care for Benchmark, Accepts Mass-ALA 2019 Employee Leadership Award

Tristani was recognized for setting an example for how those with dementia should be treated and cared for. In her 17 years in health care, Tristani has developed and delivered dozens of educational programs and pilots, including a dining assistance training program and a “Connect First” caregiver program. Tristani’s peers say she “believes in the importance of education and research and never accepts the status quo, which constantly challenges our resident care teams to re-evaluate, adjust and improve how they deliver care or manage particular situations. She is truly a leader who leads by example.” Michelle has also personally trained hundreds of first responders, hospital personnel and others in the health care industry on what it’s like to live with dementia.

Tristani joined Benchmark in 2016 as regional director of resident services and was promoted to corporate director of memory care last year. She began her health care career as a speech pathologist, having received her master’s degree in speech-language pathology from the University of Rhode Island. She holds a number of advanced certifications, including Dementia Capable Care Instructor, MBSImp, Spaced Retrieval and Neuromuscular Electrical Stimulation for Dysphagia. She lives in Medfield, Mass., and in her free time serves as a help-line volunteer for the Alzheimer’s Association.

“Michelle is someone who truly has been *Called to Care* for our residents and epitomizes our value to *Be the Benchmark* in all she does,” says **Karen Bain**, vice president of resident care for Benchmark. “She works tirelessly to touch residents and families who are affected by dementia as well as our community associates who care for these residents every day. And she does it with such humor and grace! We are extremely fortunate to have Michelle’s talent and experience to help ensure our memory care residents receive the highest level of care and stay connected to what matters most in their lives.”

The Employee Leadership Award recognizes department managers or supervisors at a Mass-ALA provider member organization who exemplify leadership through team-building and strong communication skills and also act as role models. These individuals help set the standards for the community by exhibiting consistent and high-quality work performance.

“We are honored to recognize the amazing employees, caregivers and volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to ensuring the highest quality of care for assisted living residents across the Commonwealth,” says **Brian Doherty**, president and CEO of Mass-ALA. “In their commitment to treating all with dignity and respect, our 2019 award winners embody the values and high standard of care for which the assisted living industry is known.”

### **About Mass-ALA**

The Massachusetts Assisted Living Association (Mass-ALA, formerly Mass-ALFA) is a non-profit association dedicated to professionally operated assisted living residences in Massachusetts that provide housing and services for individuals with varied needs and income levels. Established in 1990 as a state affiliate of Argentum (formerly ALFA), Mass-ALA has grown to hundreds of members including assisted living providers and associated professionals. Mass-ALA serves as the voice of assisted living in Massachusetts, providing information and education, and advocating on behalf of our members and the seniors they serve. Mass-ALA promotes a model of care which treats all residents with dignity, provides privacy and encourages independence and freedom of choice.

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