

Long Term Care policies offer protection, require careful analysis



Because long term care policies vary wildly, they present challenges to responsible consumers seeking to invest in them. We offer the following tips to help clients figure out how and when to think about purchasing a policy. It is important to make this decision very carefully. Our insurance specialist Lyn Moser has been working in the industry for more than 16 years. We suggest you make an appointment with her to discuss your long term care needs prior to making your final decision. In the meantime, we offer the following tips:

- 1) Don't wait too long. Almost all long term care insurers require you to health qualify for their policies. Because your health situation will change as you get older, it makes sense to look into your options well before you reach retirement age. Some prescription drugs or chronic health conditions can limit the options available to you.
- 2) Don't assume you will never need a LTC policy. According to the New England Journal of Medicine, 40% of people receiving long term care are under 65, but only 15% are in nursing homes. This is due to accidents, sickness and stroke (nearly 30 percent of stroke victims are under age 60). At least 70 % of people over 65 will require Long Term Care at some point in their lives.
- 3) Check the rates before you purchase. It is important to work with someone with access to policies from multiple insurers so you can work together to find the policy that is right for you. Available discounts and options can vary the purchase price as well. Be prepared to share your health information in order to match your needs with the company offering the best protection for the best price. Cost is an issue for everyone, but long term care policies can be more affordable than you might think.
- 4) Understand what your policy will cover. Everyone thinks of nursing home care when they consider long term care insurance. But today's policies actually cover much more.

Other options include:

- Skilled Nursing Care. This can include direct care or hiring someone under the supervision of a professional, such as an RN or licensed practical nurse
- Intermediate Nursing Care. This is for periodic medical supervision
- Personal or Custodial Care. This includes care that can be performed by individuals without medical training and is designed to meet personal needs.
- Home Health Care
- Assisted Living Facility
- Adult Day Care
- Respite Care
- Hospice

No one can say for sure whether you will need long term care insurance in your lifetime. But the fact is that Americans are living longer. The fastest growing group in the United States is people over the age of 85. Experts estimate that by the year 2040, we will have over a million people in the United States over the age of 100. Along with these statistics is the realization that our aging population will require more specialized health care. Owning a long term care policy can give you a sense of control over the way you spend your golden years. If you have specific questions regarding long term care policy, email Lyn Moser and she will address them in her blog. For a more detailed analysis, please call the office to schedule an appointment.