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What Are The Real Costs of Long Term Care?

When it comes to long term care, many of us mistakenly believe that this is a future event that will not impact us. Research demonstrates, however, that many Americans will need some kind of long term care at some point after the age of 65. What exactly is long term care? It is often defined as “a range of services you may need to meet your personal care needs. Most long term care is not medical care, but rather assistance with the basic personal tasks of everyday life...”

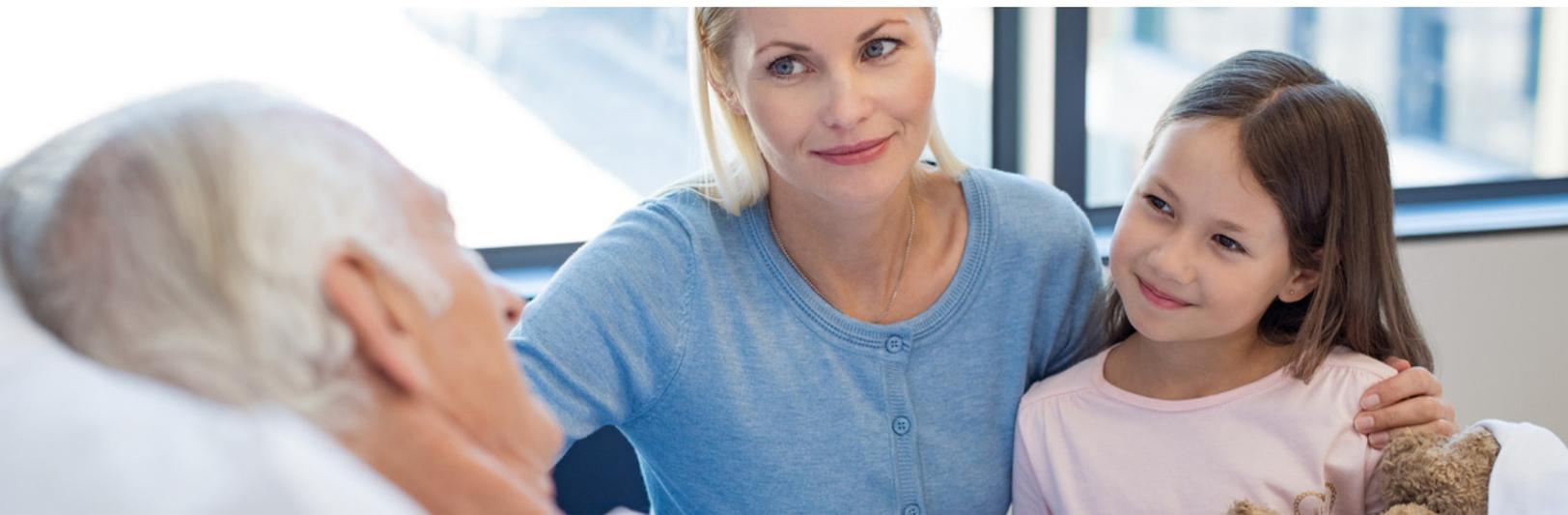
Long term care daily tasks are often referred to as activities of daily living and include things that becomes more difficult as we age such as bathing, eating, using the bathroom, getting dressed and more. Additional daily long-term care services that become more difficult to manage as we age, referred to as “Instrumental Activities of Daily Living,” include shopping, pet care, managing money and taking medications.

This type of support can be expensive no matter where you receive it. A recent report shared that the cost of long term care is on the rise across America, including in Wisconsin. Most of us want to stay at home but, as we age, in order to do so and get the help we need, we will need a caregiver. For many of us, a family caregiver is not a possibility, so we will need to pay for a caregiver to come into our homes to provide homemaker or home health aide services. In Wisconsin, according to the most recent Genworth study, the cost of this care on average is \$4,200 per month.

There may come a time when we or the seniors we love are no longer (Continued on Page 2)

(Contd. from Page 1) able to live at home safely. At this time, we may need assisted living facility care or 24/7 care in a skilled nursing facility. According to the same Genworth study, the average cost of the former is on average \$3,900 per month while the latter is \$7,800 per month. There are very few of us who can afford this additional monthly payment in our household budgets and we will very quickly have to turn to our savings to pay for this cost of care.

When we are facing the need for long term care support, it is crucial that we determine how to get good care and find a way to pay for it. In our firm, we work with families each day to accomplish these two goals. Whether you have time to plan or find yourself suddenly in crisis and need immediate solutions, we are here to help you. Does this article raise even more questions for you? We are here to answer them for you. Call us at (715) 843-5001 to schedule an appointment with Attorney Alan Hougum.



Medicare Is Great But It Won't Pay for Long Term Care

Medicare is a great national health insurance program that was created in 1966 by the federal government. While the program is utilized by millions of people throughout the United States, it is important to know that Medicare is an acute care system. This means that in the majority of instances, Medicare will not pay for long term care.

How many seniors are using Medicare? According to AARP, "44 million beneficiaries—some 15 percent of the U.S. population—are enrolled in the Medicare program." What exactly is long term care and what is the relationship to Medicare? Medicare itself shares "long-term care is a range of services and support for your personal care needs. Most long-term care is not medical care, but rather help with basic personal tasks of everyday life, sometimes called activities of daily living." Unfortunately, for seniors who need this type of care the reality is Medicare will not pay for this type of long term care. In order for Medicare to pay the care must be categorized as "medically necessary" or as short term care such as physical therapy. Medicare will help for a limited time with nursing home services after a qualifying hospital stay.(

If the Medicare program does not include paying for the majority of long term care needs, what can you and your family do? There are three steps that need to be taken (Continued on Page 3)

(Contd. from Page 2) away. First, determine the type of care that is needed. Long term care needs are not the same for everyone. While there may not be a need for 24 hour skilled care, there may be a need for in home assistance in housekeeping or in preparing meals. Second, find a provider who can give the care that is needed. It is crucial that the long term care be provided by a trusted person or company. Third, you need to find a way to pay for the care.

Now is the time to plan for long term care! Begin to study and understand what kind of plan you may need to put in place. Our firm helps seniors and their families every day to accomplish their long term care goals. We want to help you not only get the care that you may someday need but assist you in developing a long term care plan and the ability to fund this plan. Call us at (715) 843-5001 to schedule an appointment with Attorney Alan Hougum.



Are You Treating Loved Ones with Dementia Fairly?

It can be hard to talk to a senior loved one suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's Disease. Our clients share with us and we see firsthand, the significant challenges associated with memory loss. We must remember that even if they do not have the ability to care for themselves, elderly people are not children.

However, many elderly people with dementia are often treated as if they were young children. Most of us will understand and recognize that many adults have a different way of speaking to young children than to other adults. Unfortunately, research shows us that there is a trend on the rise where elderly people with dementia are often talked to in a form of baby talk, that researchers have dubbed "elderspeak."

While the speaker does not mean any harm, it can be harmful to the patients. This treatment can be harmful to their emotional well-being and sense of self, together with being harmful to the family relationship. Talking to dementia patients in that way comes across as patronizing and may increase their feelings of isolation. It can worsen their problems.

This is something caregivers and elder law advocates should be aware of. We must be mindfully refrain from using it. Does this article raise even more questions for you? We are here to answer them for you. Call us at (715) 843-5001 to schedule an appointment with Attorney Alan Hougum.



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Attorney Alan Hougum and his compassionate team will help you protect yourself and the people you love with strategic planning strategies, such as wills, asset protection and trusts, powers of attorney, estate trusts, elder law planning, Medicaid crisis planning, Medicaid eligibility and application, probate and estate administration, avoiding probate, charitable planning and giving, special needs, and estate tax planning. Hougum Law Firm, LLC, serves the entire Wausau, Wisconsin area.

Our office is located in Wausau at
305 S. 18th Avenue, Suite 200, Wausau, Wisconsin 54401. Do you have questions you need answered before or after your appointment? Just let us know! Contact us by email at info@hougumlaw.com or call us at 715-843-5001.