

## **An Innovative Option for Long Term Care Protection**

by Miri Citron, Director, Senior Choice at Home®

We are, for the most part, mature, educated, responsible adults. We've held significant positions in diverse industries; we've raised children and provided them with tools to contribute to society; we put away savings for a rainy day; we pay our taxes; we maintain our home insurance, auto insurance and medical insurance, all of which have relatively small utilization rates. So why do so few people protect themselves against potentially overwhelming long term care costs when more than 50% of individuals will require that level of care? It's an interesting question.



**Odds of Your Home Having a Fire: 1 in 1,200**



**Odds of Your Auto Being Totaled: 5 in 1,200**



**Odds of Being Hospitalized: 105 in 1,200**



**Odds of Needing Long Term Care: 720 in 1,200**

We go about our lives under the assumption that we are going to live life the way we are currently, or pretty close to it: healthy, vigorous and vital. We tell ourselves things like, “It won't happen to me; I eat right...I exercise...I have regular check-ups.” And if something does go wrong, we will deal with it then. Of course we assume that our mental and emotional capacity will be similar to what it is now with a clear-thinking and fast-acting state of mind. And should we decline, our spouse, partner or children will take care of us, as challenging as that may be.

Children often tell their aging parents that they will be there to help in a time of need. These children really do have those intentions – to care for their parents as their parents had cared for them. But they may not realize what caregiving involves. Being a caregiver can take its toll physically and emotionally. It may mean:

- Ensuring that their loved one is able to get to their doctor appointments regularly
- Ensuring that their loved one has their appropriate medications and is taking them as prescribed

- Helping a loved one with their hygiene, bathing, eating, getting dressed and physically moving them from location to location – not everyone is comfortable with doing this
- Making arrangements for a loved one’s care, either with an unfamiliar home care agency and/or a long term care facility, if they aren’t able to provide the care themselves
- Missing work regularly, or needing to take a leave of absence from work, loss of income and perhaps loss of one’s position

What if we don’t have anyone on whom we can depend? Many of us, who have looked ahead and planned for the future, may have purchased Long Term Care Insurance (“LTCI”). LTCI plans that were purchased 10-20 years ago, with a 5% compounded interest inflation benefit as an example, likely have terrific protection against long term care costs for the policyholders. Others may have decided to live their golden years in a Continuing Care Retirement Community (“CCRC”), planning to move into a ‘resort like’ environment with five-star services that include meals, events, activities, entertainment, and a continuum of care.

Without a long term care plan, one’s assets could be at risk. If we require long term care for any significant period of time, we would almost certainly start to use our assets to pay full rate for their long term care. In the April 11, 2015 edition of *Barron’s*, an article about long term care insurance stated that “anyone with \$500,000 to \$5 million in assets should consider long term care insurance.”

So what are our options? Aside from purchasing an LTCI policy or moving to a CCRC, the newest innovation in long term care planning is joining a Continuing Care at Home (“CAAH”) program. Currently there are approximately 20 such programs across the country and more are in the process of development in their respective states. Research shows that more than 85% of seniors prefer to age in the comfort of their home. They may choose to downsize to a condominium or apartment, but still enjoy the independence of living in their own space while remaining in the community in which they have been a part of for many years. This is one of the primary goals of CAAH programs; to help people remain at home as long as is safely possible.

In Fairfield and New Haven counties, Senior Choice at Home® is the Continuing Care at Home program managed by Jewish Senior Services® in Fairfield, formerly known as The Jewish Home for the Elderly. Senior Choice at Home is a comprehensive, lifetime program that pays for, provides, and coordinates long term care. It is designed to provide protection for individuals who wish to remain in their homes, ensure their care is paid for, and protect their assets as their health care needs evolve. Should one need to live in an assisted living community or receive nursing home care, the program will cover these costs as well. The program benefits can also blend with an existing LTCI policy to fill gaps.

Senior Choice at Home initiates a relationship with its active, independent members from the start, prior to their needing services. We get to know our members well early on, so that if and when an incident occurs, small or significant, planned or unplanned, we can insert ourselves efficiently. Our care coordinators (social workers, nurses) are available 24/7 to advocate, support, guide and navigate care as our members travel through the health care maze.

Covered benefits include trips to medically necessary doctor appointments, delivered meals to help someone through a short-term illness and the coordination of carefully-screened personal homecare staff. When a member cannot perform one (or more) Activity of Daily Living (“ADL”) (i.e., bathing, dressing, eating, transferring, walking, mobility, grooming and continence) and/or a member has ADL deficiencies that may include, but may not be limited to, those with Alzheimer’s Disease or any type of dementia disorder, those who are bed bound or homebound, or those who need special equipment to ambulate (i.e. wheelchair, walker), services are implemented and covered by their membership. We strive to provide support for custodial needs early on, thereby containing a situation and hopefully eliminating worsening conditions. The goal is always to assist members in reaching their highest level of independence given their current circumstances.

Being a member of a continuing care at home program also means becoming a member of a *community*. While Senior Choice at Home addresses members’ physical needs, their emotional needs are of primary concern as well. A mix of social and intellectually stimulating adventures ranging from trips, cultural events, round table discussions and lunch outings are scheduled each month, with many members enjoying these benefits as well.

A large portion of Jewish Senior Services’ departments are under the regulation of the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health. Senior Choice at Home falls under the regulatory supervision of the State of Connecticut Department of Social Services (“DSS”). DSS oversees CCRCs and has now added CCAH programs to their oversight.

Senior Choice at Home members pay a one-time membership fee plus a monthly fee ranging from \$375-\$500 (determined by age and plan selected.) Many members have taken a tax deduction for their Senior Choice at Home payments, as they are viewed as a pre-paid medical expense. Following are the various plan levels that are offered along with the corresponding benefits for each:

<b>PLAN OPTIONS</b>	<b>Senior Choice at Home Plan Level</b>		
	<b>ALL-INCLUSIVE</b>	<b>SECURITY</b>	<b>CO-PAY</b>
<b>SUPPORT SERVICES</b>			
Care Coordination	100%	100%	100%
Social & Wellness Programs	100%	100%	100%
Home Safety Assessment	100%	100%	100%
Emergency Response System	100%	100%	100%
Medically Necessary Transportation	100%	100%	100%
Meal Delivery (limited)	100%	100%	100%
Concierge & Referral Services	100%	100%	100%
<b>HOME BASED SERVICES</b>			
Home Health Aide	100%	85%	50%
Companion/Homemaker	100%	85%	50%
Live-In Assistance	100%	85%	50%
Adult Day Care	100%	85%	50%
<b>FACILITY BASED SERVICES</b>			
Assisted Living Care	100%	70%	50%
Nursing Home Care	100%	70%	50%

As a not-for-profit organization, Jewish Senior Services has committed to paying the monthly fee for members who, through no fault of their own, can no longer pay the monthly fee. We are

committed to honoring the trust our members have put in us and the quality of care for which our organization has been recognized for more than 40 years.

Whether it is a supplement to an LTCI policy with the Co-Pay membership, or the comprehensive All-Inclusive membership, Senior Choice at Home ensures that one does not have to pay \$90,000+ a year for a home health aide or \$170,000+ a year for a nursing home. It is a guaranteed way to ensure that long term care is provided and paid for, whenever and for however long one needs it. It also ensures that while loved ones can provide emotional, loving support, they do not need to carry the burden of being a caregiver. Further, it ensures that one can continue to live the lifestyle to which they are accustomed while having the peace of mind knowing that the majority of their assets will be protected and preserved for whomever and whatever they wish.

\*Statistics for illustrations from:

<http://www.crnstone.com/life-division/pdf/The%20odds%20you%20need%20LTC.pdf>