



WHAT IS LONG TERM CARE?

My step-mom sadly developed dementia. As time progressed, it became apparent to her sister and their family that she needed to be in memory care since my dad had passed on already, and she clearly couldn't live alone anymore.

I was able to visit her on a trip to St. Louis. While I was sad because of her dementia, the memory care location that she lived in was beautiful. It looked like a nice Marriott or Westin. Every resident had their own apartment decorated with things from home. The staff organized activities, games and outings. The food was wonderful. My step-mom was happy and cared for.

It was heartwarming to see her comfortable and well cared for. The facility was almost \$8,000 per month. My father and step-mother were of modest means. But she was able to be in the lovely memory care unit, because she had LTC insurance. She stayed there almost 7 years, spending \$700,000. Her LTC insurance paid for it all; the cost was of no concern. The family was so relieved!

My mother-in-law was never healthy, so her obtaining LTC insurance was never an option for us. Recently, she needed more care and supervision due to dementia than my sister-in-law could provide. Since it was dementia and could continue for many years, affording the \$8,000/month was not an option for our family. Sadly, the only location that would accept her was a Medicaid nursing home. We all have an image of the nursing home we don't want to be in or want our family in. This facility is just that.

There are no games or outings, and the food is exactly like you'd expect. Sadly, she didn't have any other options, nor did the family. She's sad when she's lucid and it hurts down deep to think of her there for years on end. It brings my wife and sister-in-law to tears all too often, understandably so.

LTC can last for years. While it is rarely a happy event, there are vast differences between the two experiences for the individual and their loved ones. Taking control of your situation and not putting the burden on your children or siblings, can mean so much in the families' time of need. It can mean so much, for the quality of your care.

My step-father's cancer progressed and he needed more care. Many patients end up in a facility or hospital as the level of care intensifies. However, he wanted to remain at home regardless of the cost. That cost for around the clock care from a nurse's aide in the mid-west, was \$12,000 month a decade ago. He had some retirement money, and he had LTC insurance that would kick in to supplement the cost of care at that exorbitant rate. While he wasn't wealthy, none one worried about the cost because with the LTC insurance and his small nest egg, he could pay the \$12,000 per month for a very long time.

Without the LTC insurance, we would have been very concerned, as would he. He didn't last long enough to collect much from the LTC insurance, but we were happy to have him cared for in the manner he wanted whether it was for months or years. Thankfully, he had purchased LTC insurance many years prior.

—Kevin