

10 Reasons Why America Must Address This Problem Now



1

America Doesn't Have A Way To Pay For The Long-Term Services And Supports (LTSS) Citizens Need. We're Stuck In 1965.

America's population is aging and with that comes unprecedented rates of chronic conditions and related care and support needs, such as basic daily activities, like walking, eating, and bathing. These critical needs are collectively referred to as long term service and supports or "LTSS." They are expensive, not covered by Medicare, and our country and its people are not prepared for or protected against such costs. Most Americans think Medicare will pay for the LTSS needed to help a person live with dignity and as independently as possible. It doesn't. Others think today's disability insurance covers these costs. It doesn't. Some think long-term care insurance will cover it. It can, but only about 5% of people have coverage today.

2

Millions Of Americans Live Many Years With Alzheimer's Disease, Parkinson's And Other Conditions That Don't Have A Cure. They And Their Loved Ones Need Help.

More than 5 million Americans have Alzheimer's Disease. Approximately 1 million have Parkinson's. And millions more live with conditions that don't have a cure. They need help bathing, eating and dressing to live with these illnesses. Over half of Americans age 65 and over need high levels of such supports and they are expensive.

3

Becoming Impoverished Isn't An Answer, Yet That's What We Make Millions Of Americans Do To Get Help They Need.

Across public and private funding sources, we expend approximately \$200 billion annually on high need LTSS, which is projected to grow to over \$3 trillion by 2070, more than a ten-fold increase. Approximately half of LTSS costs are borne by people who use LTSS and their families through out of pocket expenditures. Our country's lack of a LTSS financing options leaves millions of Americans of all ages unprotected against the catastrophic costs of Alzheimer's and other cognitive disabilities, physical disabilities and chronic conditions. Without help, people impoverish themselves to meet these basic needs.

4

America's Middle Class Is In A Dangerous Game Of Financial Roulette.

If you are in the top 1 to 5 percent of wealth in America, you can most likely pay out of pocket for LTSS. If you are in the bottom percentage of American wealth and cannot escape poverty, you qualify for Medicaid, which is America's safety net. But if you are middle income, private insurance is most often out of reach, and service and care needs for a long-term disability will likely impoverish you and your family.

5

Medicaid Wasn't Designed To Become America's Default LTSS Insurance Payer.

Medicaid was developed in 1965 to help people who cannot escape poverty. It wasn't meant to be America's 21st century default LTSS insurance plan. Today, Medicaid is paying for 1/3 of all LTSS. Medicaid has become the largest component of state budgets and millions more are next in line to become impoverished. Our state and federal budgets cannot sustain this pressure long term.

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6 Record Longevity Means The Problem Will Only Grow And Worsen If The Status Quo Remains.

Record longevity means more people are living longer with conditions that require long-term services and supports so people can live as independently and with as much dignity as possible. By 2055, there will be almost 90 million people aged 65+ and those age 75+ (heavier users of LTSS) will represent close to half of that number. If you make it to age 65, you have a 53% chance that you'll need high levels of LTSS and if you need LTSS, you have a 1 in 4 chance of needing it for 5 or more years.

7 The Problem Is Damaging Workplace Productivity And Employee Health.

Three out of every five caregivers are in the workforce. This brutal, unhealthy juggle between caring for a loved one and maintaining one's employment results in approximately \$34 billion in lost productivity due to employee caregivers cutting back or missing work, and that number is growing rapidly.

8 America's Women Are Put At Inordinate Health And Financial Risk.

Women have an 82% higher chance than men of needing LTSS for 5 years or more. Additionally, caregiving takes many more women from the workforce than men, which lessens their retirement savings. Female caregivers also put their health on the line. They have higher mortality rates and are more susceptible to coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, mental illness and poor immune function.

9 This Crisis is Devouring Governmental Budgets.

Beginning in 2012, Medicaid became the largest component of state spending which crowds out other state spending priorities. LTSS costs are a contributor to the Medicaid budget. We must curb this problem with meaningful solutions.

10 America Is Missing A Major Way To Improve Health.

Americans don't want to become impoverished. That means they hold off on getting the supportive services they need that would help them live better and address small health problems before they grow into much larger, more expensive problems. Our never-before-seen longevity demands a new solution that helps people living with chronic, debilitating conditions get the help they need.

References

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