Long Term Care University

Long Term Care University – Question of the Month

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Q: Some insurance companies offer Partnership Qualified long term care insurance policies. Can you explain what that means, what advantages it may provide and details on the Texas Long Term Care Insurance Partnership Program?

The Problem – Limited Long Term Care Insurance Benefits, Limited Medicaid Benefits and Limited Medicare Benefits
Most long term care (LTC) insurance policies provide a limited amount of benefits. Even lifetime benefit policies generally have a daily, monthly or annual limit. The cost of long term care after a policy has been exhausted can be financially devastating for you and your family. To compound the problem, assistance in the form of Medicare is limited to those who have been hospitalized and only then will Medicare pay for care in full for up to 20 days. To further compound the problem, assistance in the form of Medicaid is generally limited to the impoverished.

The Solution – Partnership Qualified Long Term Care Insurance Policies
The Partnership Program is based on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation program called the Program to Promote Long Term Care Insurance for the Elderly, initiated in 1987. Today, a Partnership Program is a "partnership" between a state, an insurance company and state residents who buy long term care Partnership policies. With a Partnership Qualified policy you can apply for Medicaid with 'asset disregard'. This allows you to keep assets that would otherwise be disallowed. In almost all states that have Partnership Programs, the amount of assets Medicaid will disregard is **equal to the amount of the benefits you actually receive** under your LTC Partnership Qualified policy. This type of disregard is often referred to as **Dollar for Dollar**. So, you can qualify for Medicaid without being impoverished. Almost all states (including Texas) participate in the National Reciprocity Compact for the granting of Medicaid Asset Protection for states with Partnership for Long Term Care programs.

The Texas Long Term Care Insurance Partnership Program
Let's say you are a 50 year old Texas (TX) resident who purchases $235,000 (the average rate of a private nursing room for an average three year stay in TX in 2018) worth of insurance through a TX Long Term Care Partnership Program Qualified policy. When you need care at age 80, the policy actually pays for $571,000 of care (due to 3% compound inflation protection). Under the TX Long Term Care Partnership Program, you would then have $571,000 (plus an additional $2,000 that is provided to all TX residents) of assets protected from Texas Medicaid and states that participate in the National Reciprocity Compact. Thus, the Texas Long Term Care Partnership Program for provides **Dollar for Dollar** asset protection. With this example, you could qualify for Medicaid without being impoverished and keep $573,000 of your assets. However, your income is considered in determining your eligibility for Medicaid.

Long term care costs in Texas have been increasing at an average annual rate of 2% to 4% for the last 15 years. Long term care costs across the U.S. have been increasing at an average annual rate of 2% to 4% for the last 15 years. The TX Long Term Care Insurance Partnership Program has **inflation protection** requirements, designed in part to protect the policyholder and in part to protect the state's Medicaid program. Lest we not forget, this is a Partnership Program. Those requirements are as follows:

- If you are younger than **61**, your plan must include **compound annual inflation protection**.
- If you are age **61 to 75**, your plan must include **some form of inflation protection**, but it need not be compound annual inflation. If you choose to purchase compound annual inflation protection, your coverage will still qualify.
- If you are **76 or older**, your plan does not need to include inflation protection. **However, you can select an inflation protection option and still qualify.**

Action Step – Purchase a Texas Long Term Care Insurance Partnership Program
When you purchase a Texas Long Term Care Insurance Partnership Program Qualified policy, you gain the safety of long term care insurance and the peace of mind provided by asset protection.

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