



“LTC Policies helped protect what my parents built.”

-Pam Mellor
Associate General Agent
Certified Financial Services, LLC

November, 2019

When the Unimaginable Happened, LTCi Was There for Our Family - TWICE

No one ever wants to think about being in a situation where long term care will be needed. But it happens. In fact, it happened to both of my parents. My mom always said the biggest fight they ever had was whether they could afford to spend \$1,200 a year for Long Term Care insurance. Dad was a teacher and Mom ran a food pantry, so with 4 daughters we didn't have much money. What we did have was a mother obsessed with planning, who even managed to send us all to college without loans. Thankfully, she won the LTCi fight. **This is my story about how LTC insurance protected my family while allowing us to provide our parents with the quality of care they both so deserved.**



My parents were both born in 1939. My mother, Thelma, born in the projects of Union City was a tough, brilliant, German lady who always understood the value of money in dollars. My dad, Ralph, born in West New York, coached sports in addition to teaching. Family summers were spent on

the Jersey Shore where he managed a bar for extra income. They divorced at age 55.

My dad retired and moved to the Jersey Shore. As he was enjoying retirement, in a place he so adored, an uninvited guest showed up: Alzheimer's. We saw it happening from the very beginning.



In November of 2007 at age 68, we moved him into an assisted living facility.

The facility required the first few months and a community fee paid up front, totaling \$13,125. The entire first year entire cost was \$88,000. Everything was charged in an a la carte fashion, down to increasing fees for each pill they had to distribute to him. **The LTC Policy ended up reimbursing \$72,000,** leaving him with an out of pocket expense of \$16,000. Had he not conceded to my mother's planning process, it all would have come from his savings, which was not much as he had given the family home to my mom when they split.

As the disease progressed, Dad was moved to a different wing as more care, medication, and a safety bracelet to control his wandering were needed. During this time, Ralph had become the Casanova of his facility, dating much older women and managing to have a good time. But within 3 years, he had become incontinent, uncontrollable, and combative and was asked to leave. He could talk one day and the next he could no longer speak. I went for a walk with him and a few days later he stopped and never walked again. He was suddenly wheelchair bound and unable to clean, feed, or dress himself. Tragically, our wonderful, funny, kind father no longer knew who his daughters were. Alzheimer's often takes ugly and unpredictable turns, and we knew it would have been impossible physically or financially for us to take care of him. We found a healthcare center with strong men who could care for him, but I had to show he still had assets to get accepted and I had to personally co-sign. **By 2011, he was in a facility that cost over \$125,000 for the year.** Towards the very end, his brain no longer remembered how to swallow. Through all of this, two visits from an Occupational Therapist to help feed him were the only costs covered by Medicare.

Dad passed on December 20th, 2012. The cost of his 60-month illness amounted to \$540,000. He had received over \$284,000 in LTC reimbursements, after paying only about \$14,000 in premiums. When he had maxed out his lifetime LTCi benefit, we had accumulated nearly \$300,000 from his pension and social security so we could cover his remaining costs. He lived modestly because all he ever wanted was to leave everything, "for his girls". There was enough to pay the \$9,000+ funeral costs. If it had not been for the LTCi policy, his entire savings would have been depleted, plus an additional \$100,000 from our pockets. Our dad now rests peacefully in the ocean he loved so deeply.



Throughout this, my sisters and I were thinking. Thelma, our tough German mother was going to live forever. She had a tough childhood and worked full time until age 75. She had many slips and falls, breaking both femurs, both hips, her pelvis, and her arm. Turns out, **my mom had Hydrocephalus, a condition where there's too much fluid in the brain. Ironically, it presents itself like Alzheimer's,** affecting walking, memory, and speech, causing her at least 15 trips to the ER.

In 2013, two weeks after my father's funeral, my mother had her first brain surgery, placing a shunt to drain the fluid. She recovered nicely and retired from work in 2014, seemingly doing well. We noticed occasionally something was a little off, like her makeup wasn't applied correctly, or she wasn't driving properly. She routinely received shunt adjustments or surgery and things were better for a while. Then she started having migraines lasting for 3 days. She began to mess up balancing her check book and started donating tons of money. Here was a woman who could tell you every single penny she had ever spent for decades, who meticulously captured and organized every dollar on a spreadsheet, who never spent frivolously, now suddenly spending \$400 a month on a commercial shampoo scam and \$500 on vitamins. She just wasn't herself and we soon realized she was not alright.

In 2016, my mom entered an assisted living facility. The expenses here were bought in blocks of hours, starting relatively low. The facility was nice, providing 3 meals a day, laundry services, and a happy hour. She was the happiest she had ever been and ended up

falling in love with a 97-year-old man. They were so popular, like the Kanye and Kim of the facility! But she was getting worse. She kept forgetting things, had a few more falls, one in which resulted in her entire arm having to be rebuilt. After her arm surgery, she needed nurses with her 24/7, **costing an extra \$2,400 per month to the facility, and another \$3,000+ of private nursing care.** Even with the extra care, she managed to jump up from her chair and fall, hitting her head. She was talking, alert, and in a good mood but her brain was bleeding from the impact and nothing could be done. At age 79, she entered hospice where we sat with her for over 12 days

Mom died on April 20th, 2018. Her cost of care was \$98,011, of which \$91,032 was reimbursed through her LTCi policy. She still had a pool of over \$200,000 for care left unused in her policy. Because my mother was an impeccable planner who purchased these policies for our parents, they were *both* able to get the best care possible. Through her Guardian annuities, social security, and my father's remaining pension, she was also able to leave a legacy behind for her children.

When your parent needs care, you want them to be safe, to be clean, to be fed, and that's it – these policies allowed for that to happen without draining our savings. My sisters and I never fought once through this process. It's hard enough watching your parents melt in slow motion right before your eyes, I couldn't imagine adding fights about care and costs on top of it all.



I found my voice about Long Term Care after going through this. I'm helping as many people as I possibly can—making sure my sisters, my husband, and I will be taken care of if the time ever comes for us. In my perfect world, everyone would have Long Term Care insurance. You can have all the retirement and life insurance protection in the world, but a Long Term care event could potentially wreck your financial life.

Our parents sacrificed greatly for us our whole lives, and the LTCi policies helped them protect what they had built and reach their goals better than anything else they did. □

[CLICK HERE for INNOVATIVE UNDERWRITERS LTCi Resources](#)

[CLICK HERE for GUARDIAN LTC RIDER Resources](#)