

# BENEFITS BULLETIN

March 22, 2011

BULLETIN NO: 11-02  
SUBJECT: Long Term Care Insurance Open Season April 4 - June 24, 2011  
TO: All USGS Employees  
FROM: Kathy Shearman, Benefits Officer

The Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP) is conducting an Open Season from April 4 through June 24, 2011. The FLTCIP is administered by Long Term Care Partners. It is underwritten by John Hancock Life & Health Insurance company under contract with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

## **What makes this opportunity so special?**

Full underwriting applications for enrollment have been accepted by FLTCIP at any time. For the first time since 2002, during this Open Season you can apply using the abbreviated underwriting application (you answer fewer health questions)\*. Visit [www.LTCFEDS.com](http://www.LTCFEDS.com) to learn more about this special opportunity today!

## **Eligibility**

Abbreviated underwriting is available for actively at work federal civilian employees and their spouses or same-sex domestic partners who are not currently enrolled in the FLTCIP. Non-enrolled annuitants and other [qualified relatives](#) can apply for coverage at any time, but must complete a full underwriting application.

## **Planning Ahead for Long Term Care**

Thanks to modern medicine, we are living longer than ever before. But with a longer life comes an increased likelihood of disability, chronic illness, or cognitive impairment (such as Alzheimer's disease), which may spur the need for ongoing help with the most basic activities of daily living such as eating, bathing, dressing, or getting in and out of bed or a chair. Assistance with these types of activities is known as *long term care*.

One common misconception about long term care is that it is primarily nursing home care. Actually, most long term care recipients receive assistance at home from a family member, friend, or professional home health aide. Long term care is also available

within the community at adult day care centers. Additionally, assisted living is available for those who can no longer live at home, but need only a limited amount of support.

Because of the wide array of care options, we have a great deal of freedom when it comes to creating the best plan of care for our needs. Unfortunately, few plan ahead and save enough money to pay for the services that they need or want, which may limit their options. Planning for long term care is unpleasant — it is not something that we want to think about. But considering the high costs of care, planning ahead is essential in assuring as many options as possible if the need arises.

The cost of long term care can be measured in two ways:

### **In dollars paid**

- The average cost of a home health aide has risen to \$19 per hour. Five hours of care five days a week costs roughly \$1,900 a month, or \$22,800 a year.
- The national average for assisted living is \$2,962 a month, or \$35,544 annually.
- The national average for a semiprivate room in a nursing home is approximately \$5,566 a month, or \$66,795 annually.

### **In the toll on family caregivers**

While having friends and family provide care can ease the financial burden for the care recipient, this type of care still has its costs. Without support or assistance, these caregivers can suffer from depression, lost wages, physical injury, and disrupted personal relationships. Many are pulled in two directions, caring for both their children and their parents, which can be an incredible challenge.

So what can you do about it? First, recognize the potential for long term care needs and research how the cost of care could impact your future income and savings. Next, research payment options. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's National Clearinghouse for Long-Term Care Information at [www.longtermcare.gov](http://www.longtermcare.gov) and the long term care tools at [www.LTCFEDS.com](http://www.LTCFEDS.com) can be excellent resources for information about paying for long term care.

Many people have found that long term care insurance can offer the financial protection they need to be able to face the future with confidence. The best time to consider long term care insurance is long before you need it, so it is a good idea to research this option sooner rather than later, as the younger you are when you apply for coverage, the less expensive your premiums will be. And, waiting not only means a higher premium, it also means that you will be at greater risk of developing health problems that may prevent you from qualifying for coverage at a later date.

## Take action today

- Visit [www.LTCFEDS.com](http://www.LTCFEDS.com) for a wealth of information regarding Long Term Care coverage.
- Call the Customer Service line at 1-800-582-3337 (TTY 1-800-843-3557). A certified long term care insurance consultant will speak with you about your particular situation, your coverage options, and the application process, and of course will answer any questions you may have.
- Send an online request to have a [Certified Long Term Care Consultant](#) call you.
- [Request](#) to have Open Season enrollment materials mailed to you.
- [Apply online](#) using the abbreviated application during Open Season\*.
- Use the new feature on the website - [Interactive Online Consultant](#). This tool walks you step-by-step through the entire decision process.

\*Certain medical conditions, or combinations of conditions, will prevent some people from being approved for coverage. You need to apply to find out if you are eligible for this coverage.

## Questions?

Contact your Human Resources Benefits Specialist if you have any questions regarding the information in this Bulletin. All Benefits Bulletins are posted on the USGS Employee Benefits Intranet webpage at <http://internal.usgs.gov/ops/hro/benefits>.