

Northwestern Mutual Study Shows Most Americans Understand the Need for Long-Term Care Planning, Yet Few Have Taken Action

MILWAUKEE ([BUSINESS WIRE](#)), November 01, 2011 - A new study from [Northwestern Mutual](#) reveals that nearly eight in 10 Americans acknowledge the increasing need for long term care (LTC) planning, yet nearly half (45%) are “not sure” how they plan to address future LTC needs.

The [study](#) also found that almost two thirds of people believe the cost of providing LTC services will rise faster than the return on their savings, and more than half (53%) believe that long-term care costs will double in the next 14 years. Yet, less than one third (28%) are currently saving for future LTC needs.

“There is a clear disconnect between what Americans understand about long-term care needs and the steps they’ve taken to prepare,” said Steve Sperka, Northwestern Mutual vice president of long-term care. “In order to create flexibility and options in retirement, people need to address long term care risk as part of financial security planning.”

Long term care issues for women

When it comes to being a caregiver, more women report that they have been a caregiver than men (27% vs. 22%), particularly women over the age of 45 (36% vs. 28%). Additionally, women are significantly more likely to report that the physical demand of caregiving is their biggest challenge (64% vs. 49%).

Compounding the issue is the fact that women, on average, live five years longer than men, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control. Despite this fact, the study showed that fewer women are saving for their future needs (24% vs. 32%).`

“There’s no doubt that long-term care is a pronounced issue for women, who tend to live longer and are more likely to provide care during their lives,” said Sperka. “This just amplifies the importance of planning for women, in order to maintain control over their finances and lifestyle through retirement.”

Former broadcast journalist Meryl Comer knows what it means to be a caregiver to her husband, who was diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer’s 17 years ago. She shared her personal story with Northwestern Mutual in this [video](#).

Experienced caregivers more likely to have a plan

People with direct experience are more likely to take control of their own long term care needs which, according to Sperka, is likely a direct result of them having a better understanding of the realities of long term care for individuals and their friends and families.

The study found that respondents with caregiving experience are:

Almost twice as likely as those who haven’t had caregiving experience to have discussed long term care options with family and friends (43% vs. 23%)

Almost twice as likely to have addressed the need for long term care within their retirement plans (30% vs. 17%)

More likely to understand their options and the resources available when it comes to LTC planning (56% vs. 34%)

“First-hand experience as a caregiver appears to be a reality check for many Americans,” says Sperka. “They’re more likely to recognize that deliberate planning steps early on alleviate a great deal of unnecessary stress, giving families important choices and some control in otherwise overwhelming situations.”

Planning resources

This [Cost of Care Calculator](#) is helpful to understand the potential cost if you were to require long-term care services

The company’s [Lifespan Calculator](#) provides an estimate of how long you might live, which impacts your financial security planning needs

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online by Harris Interactive on behalf of Northwestern Mutual from October 11-13, 2011 among 2,194 American adults ages 18 and older. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. Contact Northwestern Mutual for complete survey methodology, including weighting variables.

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