



## LONG TERM CARE FINANCING

### The Issue

The financing of services to persons needing daily assistance over an extended period of time is a patchwork of resources including private, federal, and state support. Whether the need is for skilled nursing care, home health care, or daily support for personal care activities, there is no national, cohesive or uniform long-term care or long-term acute care system for addressing these needs.

As the numbers of older persons *and* the need for long-term and long-term-acute care climb, it is becoming clear that a more rational system of long-term care financing is needed. Consumers face inadequate coverage for nursing home and other long-term care services and most cannot afford costs that can exceed several thousand dollars each month. Federal and state payments have not kept pace with these costs and inadequate financing is leading to poor quality and increasingly severe staffing shortages.

### **CHRISTUS Health's Position: Support long-term care financing.**

CHRISTUS Health supports building a consensus which calls for a national dialogue to transition long-term care financing to a more rational financing system. In addition, CHRISTUS Health supports:

- Medicare and Medicaid reform that better defines the federal and federal/state roles as part of an overall comprehensive system of long-term care financing, especially related to post-acute skilled nursing and home health care services as well as long-term services for the frail and chronically ill persons
- Adequate Medicare and Medicaid financing for those services covered by these programs
- Promotion of long-term care insurance, making it more affordable through tax deductions, tax credits, and subsidies
- Consumer protections in purchasing long-term care insurance
- Education of the general public on the potential need for long-term care, its costs, and the importance of responsible financing planning
- Continued support of specialty hospitals that primarily treat long stay Medicare patients, particularly those patients with multiple and chronic disease processes.

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