

Long Term Care News

September 2020 Edition

We're ba-a-a-ck! The newsletter took a brief summer vacation, probably like everyone else, we'll call it a "stay-cation" or "porch-ville" if you prefer. Time does not fly when we're locked down, when a trip to the grocery store is a big deal, but somehow it's almost fall – so time flies, just on a prop-jet. We can look forward to some kids going back to school, to some kids partying like that's what college is for (it isn't? Wow!), to some sports resuming in some small way, go Bills, go 'Cuse, and to the flaming and eventually falling leaves. Here's a good question, what will Christmas at the mall look like?

Carrier News

- **GE** – no, not **Genworth** – has seen a reduction in their long term care liability due to deaths and cancelations thanks to Covid. Clients don't appreciate the difference between these two companies, many aren't aware of the fact that 99% of GE Financial's LTC business was spun-off to the separate independent entity Genworth back 20 years ago – all of the policies your clients own, plus all the Travelers policies acquired by GE Financial, are now owned by **Genworth**. **GE** still owns all those old **AMEX** policies, for example. However, when analysts make dire predictions for GE, the hair-on-fire stuff, your clients worry and your phone lights up.
- **John Hancock** has released a video/podcast covering the Informal Caregiver Crisis – namely spouses, parents, kids, neighbors and the "church lady" stepping up and helping out when a family member or close friend has a health crisis. And by definition "long term care" means that this situation can last for years. A helpful sales tool, link provided on request (that means send me an e-mail).
- **Mutual of Omaha** is doing a "rate refresh" – yes, that's the woke term for "rate increase, benefits decrease" – today in many states – and for once the "Not in New York" term is a good thing. Basically, the carrier is reducing the percentage of cash home care a policyholder may access each month, from 30-40 percent, down to 25% or a maximum of \$2,000 per month, while charging a higher premium. This carrier has actually been reasonable on rate increases, but for now, the cash home care benefit is on sale here in New York. For producers who have received illustrations prior to today for clients outside of NY, you will need to start over if/when those clients choose to apply for long term care benefits.
 - **Mutual of Omaha** also assures that their service levels, impacted by Covid just like all the other carriers, are returning to normal.

Mutual of Omaha has also increased the number of states where clients age 66 and older may submit applications, and has launched a pilot program, with Human API, which allows applicants to transfer electronic medical records from their own patient portals, to Mutual of Omaha directly. This pilot program is totally optional, applicants may choose to go through the usual process, sign a HIPAA release, wait for the carrier to assign the task to their vendor, for the vendor to reach out to a doctors' office that puts you on hold for 30-minutes, wait, wait -- you know the dance.

Lastly, MOO has produced a client video "Peace of Mind," available on request! Sometimes it's easier to send a link to a client than to talk to them about long term care!

In general, as State guidelines for policy grace periods extended by Covid have relaxed, carriers are handling requests from policyholders on a state-by-state basis – in other words, a national policy for extending grace periods, is now "by the State." Our advice, from the beginning, to those producers and clients who have enquired, is pay the premium on time anyway. Requesting an extension in writing, due to Covid, only delays premium payment by a month or so, not worth the effort.

Licensing and CE monitoring

One more extension from the Department of Financial Services, waiving the suspension of license renewals, the application of late fees, and the need to have an on-site monitor to take on-line CE courses, to November 5, 2020. Now's the time to go on-line and get your 15 hours in, before you have to come to my office, set an appointment, etc., for this service.

Association Meetings, etc.

No news here, most meetings canceled back in April, May and June – September usually kicks off the “meeting season,” so wait and see.

Media

All Covid all the time – except when it's “all politics all the time!”

Once piece of good news is a report that approximately 95% of “Green House” homes have reported zero cases of Covid-19 among residents and staff. These are the types of facilities where residents can do their own cooking, where resident rooms form the wheel of the living/dining area hub, and yes, we have these in Monroe County and around New York State.

On the other hand, stay tuned for hearings, etc., delving into early decisions made by Northeastern Governors, which caused our Covid deaths in skilled nursing facilities to lead the nation. All the more reason to have a plan to stay home, right?

Several other recent good articles and studies are available, if you have a topic you'd like to learn more about when it comes to planning for long term care, let us know and we'll find a study, a comparison, something helpful --

Belated “congratulations” to the passage of the 19th Amendment on August 26 – you can say “thank you” to our fore-mothers who persisted through the persecution, by getting out and voting this November. Yes, if you can go to Wegmans, you can go vote – just wear a mask! Our beautiful fall weather is also to be enjoyed. You don't have to adopt a dog for an excuse to take a walk 😊

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