



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

Article from:

Long-Term Care News

January 2013 – Issue 33

500 LTCi Producers Gather to “Focus Forward”

by Jesse Slome

Why did over 500 insurance agents gather in Las Vegas this November? They came to get one question answered: Will there still be a long-term care insurance (LTCi) industry going forward?

On a daily basis I speak with insurance agents and brokers—some of whom have been selling LTCi for decades; some for just a few months. The discussions often start with generalities, but often, when you peel back the layers, there are some deeply rooted concerns about the future of the industry.

Their concern is appropriate considering the onslaught of negative events that have taken place over the past year. To paraphrase one agent, “I don’t want to be the last one looking for a lifeboat if the ship is sinking.” So writing about the 30 or so sessions taking place at the 2012 Long-Term Care Insurance Summit would be, in my opinion, missing the larger context about why over 500 insurance agents paid out of their own pockets to gather with their peers.

They are coming to hear about the future of an industry that has experienced several years of upheaval. And that’s why the summit’s theme, “Focus Forward,” is so appropriate because a look back is instructive; but a look forward is more valuable and vital than ever. The summit uniquely for the LTCi industry is the one venue that gathers a diverse spectrum of those who exclusively focus on marketing and selling LTCi.

This year the American Association for Long-Term Care Insurance partnered with Harley Gordon and the Corporation for Long Term Care Certification in developing the program. Sessions focusing on the changing landscape dealt with selling LTCi to those with no prior LTC experience. Other sessions focused on selling exclusively over the phone and Internet, a process being utilized by an increasing number of producers with a high degree of success.

Following the Republican and Democratic conventions, there was media discussion about the rele-

vance of these events. Do they serve a purpose? Couldn’t technology be used to replace them? One expert replied with an answer that I believe correlates to the LTCi industry: “They serve a value to motivate the troops who leave for home and then spread their excitement and their positive message.”

There may have been no more important time for the summit to be held—for the one simple reason that agents will leave Las Vegas knowing there is a future (albeit a changed one) for LTCi and will “spread their excitement” and positive passion to others. And, yes, a few will win at the blackjack tables or enjoy a good show. ■



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