



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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Spring Is in the Air ...

By Denise Liston

... and suddenly we are surrounded by the bright sunshine and the promising colors of great things to come. Each year, spring arrives like a breath of fresh air. You can almost smell it in the air—or at least that is what everyone says. Myself, I am not so sure but I always look forward to the great things that the changing season will bring.

We are experiencing another spring in long-term care (LTC). Changes continue, and we must all try to find ways to embrace them in order to grow and thrive. There is much to be learned as we balance the consumer's need for LTC now and in the future along with the insurer's need for sustainability.

Change is coming from all directions, and we must keep abreast of the literature and legislature to assure our success. Companies are investigating new underwriting tools to improve risk selection. Claim teams are looking at ways to improve contact with the policyholder to promote wellness and to assure care and safety needs are met. Companies are looking at ways to proactively work with policyholders to keep the flower of health blooming brightly. Product changes continue to evolve and there are more to come—it is time to embrace the growth and change as a bright bloom for the future of the LTC industry.

Other insurance lines have begun to incorporate some of the lessons learned from LTC into their product offerings, and LTC is doing the same. With the average age of new applicants declining, companies have turned to tools typically utilized by life insurance to gather medical data on younger applicants who rarely see the need to visit physicians. The industry is collaborating more frequently with other business lines to learn how to better manage younger claimants toward recovery whenever appropriate.

As we gaze toward the bright sun we can only wonder what is next on the horizon. LTC is still a very much needed product that is evident by re-entrants into the traditional marketplace and combination products continuing to grow—as the flowers bloom and the grass becomes green, we all need to work toward assuring the LTC industry is able to balance risk and reward toward future sustainability.

I invite you all to join me in celebrating the spring of LTC and its continual summer bloom for many years to come! ■



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