How to Avoid Going Broke in Long-Term Care

Cost of Care

The price of long-term care can be staggering. According to Genworth's Cost of Care Survey (2023), the average annual cost of care in Virginia is as follows:

- More than $69,640 for homemaker services
- More than $75,504 for a home health aide
- More than $64,200 for assisted living
- More than $104,025 for nursing home care (semi-private room)

Medicaid

For people who don't have long-term care insurance, Medicaid may be the only way to pay for long-term care in a nursing home. However, Virginia's income eligibility rules state that an individual must have no more than $2,000 in countable assets in order to qualify for nursing home Medicaid. Many more rules outline the details, including provisions for a spouse living independently (known as a "community spouse") and penalties for giving away assets in the five-year lookback period before applying for long-term care benefits.

Advance Estate Planning

Many people simply assume they'll have to spend almost every penny they have on long-term care, "going broke," and then qualify for Medicaid. But with good planning, there may be a better option for your family. Creating a plan in advance can ensure you legally retain what you need to support yourself and your family while becoming eligible for Medicaid, assuming you have the medical need. Even better, your family may not have to "go broke" paying for your care; but this is only possible with advance estate planning.

Time is of the essence, and asset protection planning requires planning *before* the need arises. The first step is education on your legal options. One place to start is a free, virtual estate planning workshop offered by Richmond, Virginia-based law firm Smith Strong, PLC. [Learn more and register here](#).

► [Genworth Cost of Care Survey](#)

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