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Five Things to be Aware of in November: Long-Term Care Awareness Month

Easton, CT October 24, 2019 -- If you or a loved one may someday need help with the activities of daily living, November may be the time to focus on it. "It's been designated Long-Term Care Awareness Month by the American Association for Long-Term Care Insurance," says David Katz, CT-based agent with ACSIA Partners LLC. "But what, exactly, should you be aware of?"

Katz points to facts supplied by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS):

(1) What is long-term care (LTC)? It's help with the activities of daily living (ADLs) such as bathing, dressing, using the toilet, transferring (to or from bed or chair), caring for incontinence, and eating.

"Most long-term care is not medical care," the HHS agency points out, but rather assistance with the basic personal actions everyone must perform to get along in life.

(2) Who needs care? According to recent research, almost 70% of Americans turning age 65 will need LTC services at some point, HHS reports. Advancing age and gender are key factors.

"The older you are, the more likely you will need care," says the agency, and "women outlive men by about five years on average, so they are more likely to live at home alone when they are older," requiring paid care or care by relatives.

(3) How much care will you need? "One-third of today's 65 year-olds may never need long-term care support, but 20 percent will need it for longer than 5 years," says HHS. Also, women need care longer than men, 3.7 versus 2.2 years.

(4) Who will provide your care, and where? Care may be provided by an unpaid caregiver (family member or friend); or by a paid caregiver such as a nurse, home health or home care aide, and/or therapist who comes to the home; or by adult day care services in the area or a variety of long-term care facilities.

"Most long-term care is provided at home," says HHS, and "about 80 percent of care at home is provided by unpaid caregivers and may include an array of emotional, financial, nursing, social, homemaking, and other services."

(5) Who pays for long-term care? Medicare may cover some skilled and rehabilitative services, but "does not pay for non-skilled assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs), which make up the majority of long-term care services," HHS reports. Unlike Medicare, Medicaid does pay for the majority of care services, "but to qualify, your income must be below a certain level and you must meet minimum state eligibility requirements."

Most employer-sponsored or private health insurance covers only the same kinds of limited care as Medicare. So Americans must look to other means of payment. These include long-term care insurance, reverse mortgages, life insurance options, and annuities, according to HHS.

"November is a great month to focus on these realities," says Katz, "and more important, to do something about them. At ACSIA Partners LLC, we're here to bridge the gap between information and action."

Katz's company starts by helping people nail down whether LTC insurance makes sense in their particular case. "If it does make sense, we advise them on their policy options and set them up with a top-rated carrier. Or if the insurance doesn't make sense, we guide them to alternative means of protection." These alternatives include:

- "Hybrid" policies (typically life insurance with LTC riders),
- Worksite LTC (voluntary plans with group advantages),
- Annuities with tax-advantaged LTC features,
- Critical illness insurance,
- And additional protections including LTC education and referrals to care services.

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