

# Understanding Long Term Health Care

This is a topic on which mountains could be written. To say that the Long Term Care (LTC) system is in a state of flux would be a mild understatement, as there is no care system in as much operating trouble as the one in place today. I am not a medical professional writing about the perceived needs of the LTC system; rather, I want to make people who will need this care aware of my own perceptions based on personal experience. As a nation faced with exceptional needs for LTC and explosive elder growth, our care system requires help now.

Regardless of how we have gotten ourselves into such a predicament, it will require a solution. Many people across our nation will be affected, therefore the solution must address the care of millions of elderly, especially those who are frail and/or who require assistance with toileting, dressing, taking a bath, eating, etc. Speaking to Brevard County alone, we are already experiencing the problems of an aging commu-



**HELPING SENIORS OF BREVARD**  
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nity. FYI, the State of Florida has about 50,000 on the Medicaid waiting lists, a number that has not changed for many years.

Many of us have been in hospitals and remember the not so good food, but generally that experience only lasted a few days before we returned home. Consider a five-month stay in a rehabilitation center – receiving cold eggs every day or hot soup only once. Cold food can be tolerated, but how about poor chicken cuttings that cause bone slivers? Imagine pulling the call cord for an urgent need such as a bowel movement or a partial fall from your bed and waiting 15, 30, or 60 minutes for help. These

are real experiences that occur all the time, though you never hear about them.

There is a real lack of people willing to serve in facilities performing such care. How much money would you want to turn patients every few minutes and clean up after bowel movements? The majority of people who work in the industry do so for low wages, about \$10 an hour, and the work of the good aides is a labor of love. I learned a lot during my stays in this care environment and appreciate the job done by these mostly untrained members of the work force. I also value those aides who have ten people to get ready for the day and feed.

Since my recent care in several different facilities, I have some knowledge of what care should be like no matter where placed. Not all facilities are the same, but certain problems are shared by the majority of LTC facilities. Every facility can use the time a family can give once a member is placed. It is not an out of sight, out of mind program. The placed family member needs your help.

In the not-so-recent past, these people we now place in a facility were cared for in the home, but societal need brought about new and innovative ways to address care for family members who needed help outside the home.

We now have progressed to a point where the system needs fixing. This fixing will require a coming together of many parts of the care system and a lot of give and take. It will also require assistance from the government if we are to succeed. A good LTC system is needed if we expect to treat our elders as people and not a number. The current system can not continue as it is being managed if we want those needing care to receive the quality care needed. I do not have an answer, but this is a time for politicians to be involved in a positive way, for the care numbers are increasing. I wish all every success in 2022.

Contact Helping Seniors at 321-473-7770, at [www.HelpingSeniorsofBrevard.org](http://www.HelpingSeniorsofBrevard.org), or at P.O. Box 372936, Satellite Beach, FL 32937.

## Odyssey

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“They’re going to see crazy costumes, excited students, excited children, excited parents,” said Ms. Gerding. “They’re going to see weird set designs, layout, contraptions, all kinds of things, vehicles, balsa wood structures that can hold hundreds of pounds, hopefully. Those kinds of things that they’ll see, it’s pretty crazy. It’s fun.”

Teams that do especially well with

3rd-12th grade students can earn bids to further competition, Ms. Gerding said. Teams that are comprised of students in Kindergarten through 2nd grade do not receive scores, she added.

This year’s state competition will be held at the Orange County Convention Center, Ms. Gerding said.

Some teams stick together through years, even through multiple schools, as Ms. Howell noted as was true in her case, working with a team at both Challenger 7 Elementary and Space Coast Jr./Sr. High School.

“My teams, I usually follow through them graduating so I had a team when they were in first grade and they graduated about two years ago so just that experience of seeing them grow into the adults and go off and do jobs that incorporate the skills that they were taught,” said Ms. Howell, citing examples of two of her students, one of whom became an engineer and another a drama major. “...Even the parents, we created a bond, too.”

She also noted that college students are eligible to participate in the program but

there are currently none in Brevard.

Organizers are still welcoming those interested in being judges at the event to sign up. Those interested in registering or more information on judging should contact tournament director Sue Klaasen at [spacecoastdirector@gmail.com](mailto:spacecoastdirector@gmail.com).

“People are invited to come to the campus to just see what it’s all about,” added Ms. Gerding.

Those interested in more information about the program should visit [spacecoastodyssey.org](http://spacecoastodyssey.org).

## ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

Over the next few weeks Housing for Homeless will challenge you to think seriously about America’s biggest and most visible social challenge – HOMELESSNESS.

**Week 1: The size and the complexity of the challenge presented to us by homelessness**

### Q: CAN THIS COUNTRY EVER ERADICATE HOMELESSNESS?

A: Probably not, because homelessness is the most visible symptom of poverty, and the United States has one of the highest proportions of its population living in poverty in the developed world at 17%. Factors creating such high levels of poverty are so many and so fundamental (i.e. lack of universal health care, the most expensive health care in the world, lack of subsidized childcare, a regressive tax system, etc.) that the changes in our society necessary to address all of them would not be supported by a large segment of the American population.

### Q: SO, DO WE HAVE TO LEARN TO LIVE WITH TENT CITIES AND PANHANDLERS?

A: Absolutely not. There are many actions we can take to reduce homelessness. Even if we can never

eradicate it, we can reduce it to a level that is more socially acceptable. Watch for this space each week and learn!



Housing for Homeless has partnered with the Brevard community and homeless service providers for over 30 years to serve homeless, low-income, and at-risk veterans, individuals, and families with children. A registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, we rely on the community for support to continue meeting critical needs.

Your tax-deductible donation can be made through our website at <https://housingforhomeless.org/donate/>.

Questions can be directed to Miriam Moore at [Miriam@housingforhomeless.org](mailto:Miriam@housingforhomeless.org) or (321) 639-0166