

# Costs of long term care

My last column provided an introduction to the long term care (LTC) system and its inherent challenges, the chief being supply versus demand. While the number of seniors in the U.S. who need LTC is sky rocketing, the industry is reducing its care capability. This may be driven by many factors, but arguably an unsatisfactory profit margin is one cause. I could flood you with statistics showing why we need more care facilities, not less, but my main intent is to encourage our medical community and those who care for the elderly to become better advocates for those who really have no voice.

Let's look first at the personnel structure of the care system, which ensures success or failure in many cases. Here I am talking about the staffing problem that I believe every LTC facility faces. Every facility has an Administrator. Can you imagine a



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**HELPING SENIORS OF BREVARD**

facility whose Administrator never visits a patient or a Care Manager that has to be asked by a patient to outline a care plan! Realize also that every staff requirement is filled to the bare minimum including the nurses. Their main occupational task is the distribution of medications.

Finally we arrive at the heart and soul of the problem – the LTC aide. These men and women do the bulk of patient care. They clean the patient, get them ready for the day, change bed linens, dress the patient,

and meet many other tasks that we call Activities of Daily Living. This is a hard, demanding job that every facility has to fill in order for the facility to exist.

The aides, laundry, and cooking staff are the lowest paid of the support staff. Can you imagine doing the work described for aides for about \$10 an hour, a wage lower than the fast food industry worker. The only way to pay them more is to ask management to take less profit or to increase client fees. With good assisted living facilities charging \$5,000 or more a month, and nursing homes costing an average of \$10,000 a month, how will these costs be met?

I understand these dynamics for a business, and LTC is a much needed business in a country with a rapidly increasing aging population and a family system that has gotten away from caring for elders in the home. What many do not

think about when discussing this problem is that with living longer we also encounter service needs that are difficult for family to provide due to a number of reasons that could easily be another column. Suffice to say that in many cases the younger family members will not be primary caregivers, so the care then becomes what the patient can pay, subsisted by government funding, but that too is limited.

While I do not have the answer, I do know that a way must be found to pay for this element of care since it is fast becoming a problem that families can not meet. Perhaps the Governor could convene a Task Force to address this significant issue, for Florida is a front runner in our aging nation.

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.

## Calendar

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Help us celebrate 25 years of amazing wildlife and of course the birds! For expo hours and to learn more about all our events, please visit <https://scbwf.org>.

Saturday, Feb. 5

**3rd Annual Cocoa Village Brewer's Bash:** On Saturday, Feb 5 from 1:00 - 5:00 p.m., at Riverfront Park in Cocoa Village will be over 50 breweries will be with samples of their

best brews! Alter Ego will be on stage as well as food trucks. Pet friendly! Soda, water, wine CASH bar! Tickets are \$50 for this awesome event. Your ticket gets you unlimited samples from the attending breweries! Available for purchase through Eventbrite and at Dirty Oar Beer Company & Village Idiot Pub. All proceeds benefit Historic Cocoa Village Main Street (a 501(c)3 non profit organization) and the local community.

**Mini Book Sale:** The Friends of the Melbourne Public Library, 540 E. Fee Street Melbourne FL's next mini books sale is February 5th from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (weather permitting) outside the library and from 9 to

5 at the used bookstore in the library. Hard covers are buy 1 for a \$1, get 1 free or \$5.00 a bag, with paperback .50 each. For more information contact Peggy Ann Marion at 321-768-2197.

**Sign Language Classes:** Basic Sign Language Classes by Rock the Silence instructors Donna Hall and Lisa Ottalagano will be taught Saturdays from Feb. 5-March 12. Classes are beginners courses with six one hour sessions. This class will bring you through the basics from A,B,C's, family, friends and other common signs. You will learn Deaf and Hard of Hearing awareness and be able to put sentences together.

Classes will be taught from 10-11 a.m. Franklin T. DeGroot Public Library, located at 6475 Minton Road in Palm Bay. Cost: \$30 per person (cash or checks payable to: Rock the Silence) Payment is due in full before February 5. Limited Seating! Contact: 321-446-1802 - PO Box 101085, Palm Bay, FL 32910.

**Project Vet Relief Event:** Show your support for relief for our area Veterans by stopping by American Legion Post #394 at 396 Cogan Drive SE, Palm Bay, FL, Feb. 5 from 9 a.m-3 p.m. 100% of the proceeds will be donated

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**The American Legion Riders**  
**Chapter 163**  
present their

**4th Annual Car Show**

**Sunday, February 13, 2022**

1795 N. Harbor City Blvd., Eau Gallie, FL 32935  
321-259-7239

Car, Truck and Bike Show

**Open House ~ Everyone Welcome**

**Lunch 10 to 3 pm** - Cheese Steak \$7, Burgers \$7, Fries \$1  
**Car and Bike Show \$10.00 Registration 9 to 11 am**  
**Show 11 to 2 pm**

**Trophies, 50/50 and Chinese Auction**  
**Spectator Judged with 8 categories**  
**Music by DJ Pappa John**

Proceeds to Benefit

Family Promise of Brevard and Project VetRelief

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Viera Location: 7960 N Wickham, Suite 103

Merritt Island 321-453-3360

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