

Currently, SmartLife staff travel around Central PA to educate individuals about the program. The goal is to keep their members well and independent in their homes. They want to help people put a plan in place for the future. Some people have been in their homes for 50 years. It's what they know. It's where their family has created lasting memories. They want to remain in that home, and SmartLife wants to help make that possible.

The initial investment for a 70-year-old individual ranges from \$23,000-\$53,000 with an ongoing monthly payment around \$600. This seems like a lot of money until we start comparing costs side-by-side with private pay rates for care. Let's say that Home Care costs about \$25 per hour today. Then let's assume that we'll only pay that for 28 hours a week. Okay, not terrible; we're looking at over \$36,000 per year. Insurance doesn't cover Home Care, but we've been saving up to protect ourselves in the event of something like that.

Personal Care might look a little more like \$195 per day, coming to over \$71,000 per year. Nope, not running yet. Though if need for these services extends longer than a year, that initial deposit to SmartLife VIA Willow Valley does start to look more attractive. What if we get into the territory of Skilled Nursing Care, in the average range of \$395 per day? That comes out to over \$144,000 per year.

ACCORDING TO LONGTERMCARE.GOV,THE AVERAGE DURATION OF LONG-TERM CARE NEEDS FOR WOMEN IS 3.7 YEARS AND 2.2 YEARS FOR MEN, AND 20% OF PEOPLE WILL NEED OVER FIVE YEARS OF CARE.

How much does our current long-term care insurance plan cover again? And for how long?

Often SmartLife hears individuals say, "We have enough money in the bank. We can self-insure." One must ask, is this really how you want to spend your money? With SmartLife, they can provide you with the care you may need and protect you from the rising cost of that care. Simply put, SmartLife is asset protection.

NATIONALLY FROM 2004 TO 2018 THE COST FOR FACILITY BASED AND IN HOME CARE HAS RISEN ON AVERAGE 3% PER YEAR. WITH THE CURRENT TREND AND INCREASE OF RATES, SOME CARE COSTS ARE OUTPACING THE U.S. INFLATION RATE OF 2.1% BY ALMOST DOUBLE.
(Genworth Cost of Care Survey 2018)

At the end of the day, members are truly protecting themselves and their assets with SmartLife.

Members know what their costs are going to be. \$600 a month is a much better price than paying \$12,000 per month for skilled nursing care. Would you rather pay \$600 or \$12,000? That's an easy answer for most people.

We study the colorful charts and graphs and tuck money away each paycheck to save up toward the unknowns of retirement. We cover potential risks with insurance for our cars, our day-to-day health, our homes, and even the costs that burden our loved ones when we pass away. We work hard, try to make good investment decisions, and save what we can so that in our future, when free of work, we can enjoy the fruits of our labors. We can enjoy time with our loved ones. We get to enjoy the rest of our days. A complete plan ought to include a good hard look at the burdens which could be placed on our loved ones (and our bank accounts) by the rising costs of age-related needs.

Until science catches up with science fiction, aging is a certainty that we're handed at birth. Age-related difficulties, and the needs surrounding them, are the question mark to which SmartLife VIA Willow Valley has offered up an answer.

The goal of this program is to keep people independent and well in their homes, and that's the focus. Along the way, they are protecting assets, and helping to coordinate care, so it does take that burden off the children. They can just be children. They can be a support to their family and not have to be a caregiver...giving you and them peace of mind and the ability to relax and enjoy life.



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PORTIONS OF ARTICLE ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN FINE LIVING LANCASTER
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DOES ANYONE REMEMBER THEIR FIRST INTRODUCTION TO 401K PLANS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF PREPARING FOR RETIREMENT YEARS? Blinking at the colorful charts and their associated numbers, it's a safe bet that most of us didn't give it much thought beyond a vague image of a future free of work. Cruise ships and barbecuing in the back yard may have come to mind, along with a fuzzy image of possible future children all grown up and visiting with their little ones. It was a long way away and too much could happen in between to merit giving it a lot of thought.

Alright, let's fast forward a little bit. Age sixty is here, or on the horizon, and retirement is a far more tangible idea. Maybe it has happened already, or maybe it's just a handful of years away. Either way, the money we've been pulling out of paychecks is resting nicely in our retirement accounts and hopefully we have a few other pots cooking just for good measure. We've probably set up various forms of

insurance to look after us in the event of illness, damage to our home, an accident on the road, or a little extra to provide for our loved ones should we pass unexpectedly. We've worked hard, and thankfully we can smile while strolling into our future, knowing we've covered every possibility. Except that all of our plans were based on an assumption that we'll continue along with the same health and vigor we enjoyed in our youth. Okay, there's a vague notion in there that we might need care when we're at an advanced age, but that's the worst case scenario that something like long-term care insurance is for. No problem. We'll get some of that too.

Nobody says to themselves, "When I'm 65, I'm going to have a stroke that will make it difficult for me to look after myself the way I do now." Why would we? When we think of strokes, falls, or other events associated with age, we think just that. Age. Old age. Decidedly not 60's or 70's. Statistics are not on our side in this line of thinking.

“AFTER AGE 65, AN AMERICAN HAS MORE THAN A 70% CHANCE OF NEEDING HELP WITH THE ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING SUCH AS DRESSING, GROOMING, TRANSFERRING, AND USING THE BATHROOM” (American Society on Aging)

The need may not be catastrophic, or even permanent. It can, however, mean that we need to rely on help from others.

The vast majority of individuals don’t believe they will need help and they certainly don’t think they will need it at age 65. However, **70% OF PEOPLE AGE 65 AND OVER WILL NEED SOME FORM OF ASSISTANCE WITH EVERYDAY LIVING.** That’s not 75, it’s 65. 65 is young, but that’s when people start needing care. Unfortunately, most of us want to believe that nothing will ever happen to us.

For more than 35 years, Willow Valley has provided seniors with a forward-thinking community that embraces health and an independent lifestyle. Offering Lifecare services, fitness and aquatic centers, travel adventures around the world, bowling and day spa features make community living sound very desirable, and maybe the best parts of summer camp. Who wouldn’t want to move in?

STATISTICS SHOW THAT 87% OF PEOPLE WHO ARE AGE-AND INCOME-QUALIFIED TO MOVE TO A SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY DON’T WANT TO.

Those choosing to stay in their homes, though, often find themselves on a more difficult path when a need arises. Family



and friends are called upon to advocate, assist, and even adopt caretaker roles, often without the training required to navigate the complexity of senior healthcare. Must it be one or the other? That is exactly the question which inspired the research and decision to start SmartLife VIA Willow Valley.

Willow Valley Communities is the only 100% Lifecare senior living provider in Lancaster County. Lifecare is essentially guaranteed care for life, no matter what level of care you need. If you’re residing at Willow Valley in your independent living apartment and you need to be in personal care or you need to be in skilled nursing care, it’s all covered for you without an increase to your monthly fee. Your price does not change just because you need care.

CCaH (Continuing Care at Home), or Life Plan at Home, programs are not a new concept. Currently there are 31 at Home programs across the United States. With the SmartLife program, Willow Valley is offering seniors in Lancaster County another option. Simply put, they are allowing seniors age 60 and older to remain in their homes while offering them the support they need to ease the burden on family and friends.

What sets SmartLife VIA Willow Valley apart from a lot of the long-term care insurance policies is the Lifecare Coordinator. The Lifecare Coordinator is every SmartLife member’s advocate. They are the healthcare navigators giving support and guidance through the long-term care maze. They are available to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and will make sure you’re living well and independently in your home.

Imagine that, instead of scouring the phone book or internet for the 1-800-line to get the help you need, you have one phone number to call with a Lifecare Coordinator who knows you and your situation. The same contact can easily set up a ride to a medically necessary outpatient procedure, coordinate meals during short-term illness, bring in home care aides or homemakers and companion services, or even coordinate and arrange for personal care or skilled nursing care at Willow Valley Communities if staying at home ever becomes unsafe. Imagine knowing in advance and being able to plan for what that portion of your life, with all of its question marks, will cost.

What a plan like this doesn’t need, Willow Valley has decided, is to impose waiting periods before coverage kicks in or put limits on the length of coverage or amount of money that can be paid out. It shouldn’t require a person’s assets to be below a certain level in order to qualify for assistance, or insist that at least two Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) be affected before services begin. ADLs include things like walking, eating, dressing, and bathing. Not being able to do any one of those for any period of time, without help, can impact your quality of living.

While Lifecare Coordinators are a vital piece, what really sets this plan apart is adding community and healthy activities to help encourage proactive health and socialization for a better quality of life. Just because someone wants to remain in their home doesn’t mean they should be isolated. A good sense of community is a smart part of any health plan. Any ideas?

Absolutely! One of the other fantastic benefits of SmartLife is you have access to Willow Valley Communities amenities and events at the Cultural Center and Clubhouse. You can take in a show at the 500 seat theater, go bowling, or even join a club or tennis or pickleball league. How about dinner at the Local Table,

a fine dining, farm-to-table restaurant located on the Willow Valley campus? All of these amenities are exclusive to Willow Valley residents and SmartLife members.

That’s a big wish list for one plan, but they managed it. Lancaster County residents are eligible to apply for SmartLife, a plan regulated by the Pennsylvania Department of Insurance, where members benefit from the continuum of care while staying in their home. Members pay a one-time membership fee that’s based upon age at time of enrollment, with eligibility starting at age 60 and no maximum age. You have to be living independently, complete the application process, and you need to maintain medical insurance coverage. Predictable monthly payments will carry the plan forward, and members are covered from their first day of membership to the end of their lives. No waiting period and no time-out or maximum amount that the plan will pay out. If you have a need, it’s covered. Oh, and the Membership fees and monthly fees are fully tax deductible.

Why isn’t this a standard consideration in retirement planning? First, SmartLife VIA Willow Valley only opened their doors 5 years ago, and are not yet well understood. Second, a lot of people hear “Lifecare” and tune out, thinking that one plan is equal to the next or assume that their existing long-term care insurance policy and government programs will see to all of their needs. Perhaps they will. On the other hand, what happens if they don’t?

