

# Newsday

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## Boomer's Insurance for Alzheimer's Care

BY PETER KING

The specter of Alzheimer's is growing more menacing.

In the wake of a new report that predicted that the number of people with the disease could triple over the next 40 years, all boomers and seniors must face the stark reality of preparing for the financial and emotional consequences if Alzheimer's strikes them or a loved one.

The report, from researchers at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, noted that the explosion in Alzheimer's cases would further burden already overstrained social safety nets, so it is unlikely that families will get much help from government programs to ease their enormous financial burden for caregiving. Making things worse, survey after survey shows many people wrongfully believe Medicare will cover most of the costs associated with Alzheimer's.

"Medicare provides very limited coverage for that type of care," says Kimberly Lankford, a columnist at Kiplinger's Personal Finance magazine who has written extensively about Alzheimer's financial toll. Lankford says long-term-care insurance is one of the best ways to cover the costs of Alzheimer's care.

But are boomers too old to take out a policy? "The 50s and early 60s is the sweet spot for long-term-care insurance," Lankford says, because policy prices are still fairly reasonable. "Also, at that point, you're less likely to have gotten some of the medical conditions that could cause your rates to rise."

Even if you're 65 or older, it's a good idea to explore long-term-care coverage, Lankford says. Because premiums will be high for a comprehensive policy at that age, you might look for a cheaper, less wide-ranging policy that provides at least limited coverage, making the financial burden a bit lighter.

Kiplinger's has a free special report on financial planning for Alzheimer's at [bit.ly/alzheimer-plan](http://bit.ly/alzheimer-plan). Two good places to begin your search for a long-term-care policy are the U.S. government's [longtermcare.gov](http://longtermcare.gov) and the New York Partnership for Long-Term Care ([nyspltc.org](http://nyspltc.org)).

Long Islanders already handling the enormous task of caring for a loved one will find advice and support at the Alzheimer's disease Education Conference March 7 at the Melville Marriott. The all-day conference features several presentations on coping with the financial and emotional impact of Alzheimer's. Admission is \$45.

Free on-site respite care will be available, says Mary Ann Malack-Ragona, executive director of the Alzheimer's disease Resource Center, the conference's sponsor. "If they have someone they can't leave at home, we can care for that person at the hotel that day," she says.

For more information, call 631-820-8068 or go to [adrcinc.org](http://adrcinc.org).

