

## CALENDAR

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15: 6:00 pm** / Racial Diversity Committee meeting, at the PSC office, 25 West 43rd St., 5th floor. Contact Sabrine Hammad, shamad@psccmail.org, 212-354-1252.

**THURSDAY, MARCH 16: 6:00 pm** / Health and Safety Watchdogs meeting, at the PSC office, 25 West 43rd St., 5th floor.

**MONDAY, MARCH 20: 9:00 am–3:00 pm** / Women's Committee hosts a workshop on "Women and the Iraq War." For info, write to nchase391@aol.com.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 25: 9:30 am** / International Committee meeting. Contact Renate Bridenthal, RBriden1@juno.com for location.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 25: 10:00 am** / CLT general meeting and leadership workshop. Lunch provided. CUNY Grad Center, Rm 4102. RSVP to shellym@brooklyn.cuny.edu.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 25: 7:00 pm** / Celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Save Hostos Movement, a student and community struggle to save Hostos Community College from being closed. \$7 suggested donation. At Hostos Community College, Grand Concourse at 145th Street.

**MONDAY, MARCH 27 – FRIDAY, MARCH 31** Teach CUNY Again: PSC members will discuss years of underfunding of public education, the events during and after Hurricane Katrina, and political realities connecting them. See [www.psc-cuny.org](http://www.psc-cuny.org) for details.

**THURSDAY, MARCH 30: 6:30 pm** / CCNY Center for Worker Education shows *Brownsville: Black and White* at 99 Hudson St., 6th floor. Screening followed by panel discussion with Clarence Taylor and Paul Becker.

**MONDAY, APRIL 3 6:00 pm** / HEO-CLT Grant Committee will review applications. For info, call Linda Slifkin at 212-354-1252.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 7: 12 pm – 5:30 pm** / Surviving and Thriving at CUNY: A professional development workshop for junior faculty. At 25 West 43rd St., 19th floor. Party to follow. Contact Jeremy Borenstein, jborstein@psccmail.org, 212-354-1252.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 7: 4:00 pm** / "First Friday" part-timer meeting. At the PSC office, 25 West 43rd St., 5th floor. Contact Marcia Newfield, mnewfield@psccmail.org.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 7: 6:00 pm** / Labor Goes to the Movies shows *Burn!* At CCNY Center for Worker Education, 99 Hudson St., 6th floor. For more information, contact Dania Rajendra, drajendra@psccmail.org. No RSVPs.

**MONDAY, APRIL 10: 6:00 pm** / Women's Committee meeting, at the PSC office, 25 West 43rd St., 5th floor.

**MONDAY, APRIL 10: 6:00 pm** / Solidarity Committee meeting, at the PSC office, 25 West 43rd St., 5th floor. Contact Jim Perlstein, jperlstein@bassmeadow.com.

# Plan for long-term care

By PETER HOGNESS  
& DANIA RAJENDRA

## In case of severe impairment or incapacitation

If you've got aging parents, or if you know someone who's been unable to care for themselves after a serious accident or illness, you may find yourself wondering whether you should have long-term-care insurance.

There are 3,500 people who have long-term-care insurance through the PSC/CUNY Welfare Fund. But this is just one of the many policies available, and the coverage they provide can be very different. How do you decide whether this is something you need – and if so, how should you choose a plan?

### FIRST, WHAT IS LONG-TERM CARE?

Long-term care is not care that is delivered in a doctor's office or hospital. It's not short-term rehabilitation. It's the help an individual might need for an extended period of time to live his or her normal life after becoming severely impaired.

Long-term care can be provided at home, or in a nursing home, assisted living facility or an adult day care center. Long-term care is defined as assistance with the activities of daily living – such as bathing, eating, toilet or dressing – in the event of chronic disease or cognitive impairment.

### WHAT IS LONG-TERM-CARE INSURANCE?

Long-term care is expensive, and getting more so. According to the federal government, the annual average cost of a semi-private room in a US nursing home is more than \$60,000 – and going up by about 5% a year. If that trend continues, in 2032 that average annual cost will be \$190,000. Long-term-care insurance can help you to meet these costs.

Typically, neither health insurance nor disability insurance covers long-term care. Many people assume they don't need it because they are too young – although more than 40% of those who need some kind of long-term care are younger than 65. Others expect that if they need such help, family members will be their caregivers. But providing long-term care can be more effort than a full-



Jud Guitteau

time job, and often turns out to be too much for any family member, no matter how willing they are.

A common – and mistaken – assumption is that Medicare will

## YOUR BENEFITS

cover any long-term-care needs. Medicare does cover some long-term care, but with severe limitations. For example, its nursing home coverage is only available if you have first been hospitalized and then need skilled-nursing care, and it requires a *daily* co-pay of more than \$100 after the first 20 days. And it only lasts for 100 days per incident.

Medicaid, the health insurance program for the poor, does cover long-term care coverage, but participants must "spend down" all their assets – i.e., become poor – to qualify.

### HOW SHOULD I DECIDE IF I NEED IT?

First, be clear about why you would want long-term-care insurance. If your main concern is care in old age, you may not want to buy coverage when you are younger.

While you can lock in a lower premium rate by buying younger, that low-rate policy may not cover forms of care that are developed in the future. (Assisted-living facilities, for example, did not exist when many current policies were sold.) *Consumer Reports* suggests that most people consider buying coverage around age 65 but before age 70 (after which costs and your odds of flunking the qualifying physical both increase).

### REALISTIC IDEA OF COSTS

On the other hand, if you develop a chronic disease (like diabetes) or are hurt in a severe accident, having purchased long-term-care insurance at a younger age could make a huge difference in your quality of life.

Second, be sure to get a realistic understanding of the costs of long-term care. Insurance will do you little good if it is not enough to pay for the care that you need. You can call care facilities or home-care agencies that you might want to use, and check their costs against the coverage provided by policies you're considering.

Third, understand the costs of long-term-care insurance. Make sure you could afford to continue paying the premium if you are living on a lower income in retirement. Some policies offer ways to recoup some of your past payments if you are unable to pay the premiums later – but of course, policies with such provisions will cost more.

Consider the possibility of a premium increase. Once you buy coverage, you will not be hit with an individual increase on your policy alone, but insurers can ask regulators for permission to raise rates on all their long-term-care coverage at once if costs exceed the premiums.

Finally, evaluate what kind of coverage you could afford. Long-term-care insurance policies can vary widely in the percent of costs or type of services that are covered. And like other kinds of insurance, coverage that has fewer restrictions

will be more expensive. If you have limited assets, using Medicaid may be a better option than buying a restricted policy on your own.

### WHAT TO LOOK FOR

If you decide to buy long-term-care insurance, check the provider's financial health. Some are shaky, which puts you at risk of losing your coverage just when you need it.

Look carefully at what is covered – whether it includes assisted-living facilities, the types of services or number of hours per day that are covered for home care, etc.

What does it take to qualify for benefits? *Consumer Reports* recommends looking for a policy that goes into effect when you are unable to do two "activities of daily living" on your own, one of which should be bathing. Some policies are more restrictive.

See whether a policy has "inflation protection," and whether it is enough to ensure that your benefits keep pace with the fast-rising cost of long-term care. While this could sharply increase the premium you must pay, without it your policy may not provide the care you need.

And always compare premiums.

One place to start is by looking at the policy available through the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund. Since 1988, the Fund has sponsored long-term care coverage through the John Hancock Life Insurance Company. More than 3,500 members are currently enrolled – but only you can decide if it would be the best choice for you.

### INFORMATION RESOURCES

For more information on deciding about long-term-care insurance, check the following:

[www.consumerreports.org/cro/personal-finance/longterm-care-insurance-1103/overview.htm](http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/personal-finance/longterm-care-insurance-1103/overview.htm)

[www.aarp.org/research/longterm-care/](http://www.aarp.org/research/longterm-care/)

[www.ltcfeds.com/lte\\_basics/overview.html](http://www.ltcfeds.com/lte_basics/overview.html)

## Research experience needed

Which projects will get PSC/CUNY research grants? You decide!

The University Faculty Senate will nominate a pool of candidates from among CUNY's full-time faculty to lead award panels in these disciplines: Anthropology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Education, Health and Human Services, Health Sciences, Psychology, and Sociology. (Panels in other disciplines will be named in 2007 and 2008.)

In exchange for this service, you will receive intellectual excitement, collegiality, and an in-service allotment account of \$6,000 to fund your own research during your three-

year term. (The allotment can be used for any purpose covered in the current PSC-CUNY Award Guidelines except summer salary.) Chancellor Goldstein appoints the final University Committee on Research Awards (UCRA) candidates in late June and the three-year appointments begin in early September.

Please send your CV to Kathryn Richardson, UFS Research Committee, 535 East 80th Street, Room 110, NY, NY 10021 or to Stasia.Pasela@mail.cuny.edu. For more information visit [www.soc.qc.edu/ufs](http://www.soc.qc.edu/ufs) and [www.rfcuny.org/PSCCUNY](http://www.rfcuny.org/PSCCUNY), or call Stasia Pasela at 212-794-5538.