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## We need long-term solutions for long-term care

The median cost of living in a semi-private room in a nursing home for one year is **\$93,000**. Hiring a home health aide for 40 hours a week costs **\$55,000**. Assisted living costs **\$52,000**.

Nearly 70% of adults 65 years and over will need long-term care. That means assistance with activities of daily living like getting dressed, preparing and eating meals, bathing, and more. Nursing homes, adult day services, assisted living, home health aides, and informal caregivers can provide this help. Yet one-quarter of adults fail to believe they will need extended care and so don't plan for it.

When long-term care is needed, many older adults and their families are hit with the realization that Medicare does not cover it. Anything beyond rehabilitation or 100 days of nursing home care is the older adult's responsibility. A long-term care system exists only for the impoverished (Medicaid) and the wealthy (self-pay). There is no robust system for the middle-income people who make up half of the U.S. population, and there are threats to the sustainability of Medicaid, which currently covers 62% of all nursing home residents.

Government funding is the most obvious solution to building a long-term care system and reshaping and supporting planning for long-term care, but efforts in this area have failed. For example, Maine proposed a universal home care initiative in 2018 to provide no-cost home care, but it was voted down due to fears that taxing those who made more than \$128,000 a year (especially physicians) would cause people to relocate to other states. In 2011, the federal Community Living Assistance Services and Supports Act proposed to provide up to \$50 a day in cash benefits to help families pay for in-home assistance or nursing home care, but it was plagued with unreasonable premiums and uncertain sustainability.

*This is an excerpt of an opinion piece by Jasmine Travers and published at Statnews.com. You can find the full text at: <http://bit.ly/2YcLf1p>*

## **Wealthy donors received vaccines through nursing home**

The invitation to affluent Floridians arrived in writing and by telephone. MorseLife Health System, a high-end nursing home and assisted-living facility in West Palm Beach, FL, has made scarce coronavirus vaccines — provided through a federal program intended for residents and staff of long-term-care facilities — available not just to its residents but to board members and those who made generous donations to the facility, including members of the Palm Beach Country Club, according to multiple people who were offered access, some of whom accepted it.

The MorseLife episode highlights how the country's patchwork approach to immunization against the coronavirus — leaving decisions about eligibility to state and local authorities as well as to individual providers — is creating opportunities for facilities to provide access to well-connected people while thousands of others wait in line. In Florida, some elderly residents have camped out overnight in hopes of receiving a shot. The invention of vaccines against a virus identified only 10 months ago is an extraordinary scientific achievement. They are the fastest vaccines ever developed, by a margin of years.

*This is an excerpt of an article published in the Washington Post. You can find the full text at: <http://wapo.st/3qRzo5i>*

## **Coronavirus, COVID-19, and You**

The Claude Pepper Center is committed to providing as much accurate and useful information about the pandemic as long as it remains a threat to the health of Americans. We will be posting information daily and modifying previous posts as more recent information becomes available. Click to find out about how COVID-19 is affecting long term care, the economy, public health policy, vulnerable populations, as well as information about the vaccines and their availability, and much more: <https://fla.st/3cwB0Ks>