

The New York Times

OPINION

LETTERS

When the Elderly Can't Afford the High Cost of Long-Term Care

Readers suggest a variety of solutions in response to The Times's "Dying Broke" series.

Dec. 16, 2023, 7:00 a.m. ET

To the Editor:

Re "[Assisted-Living Fees Pile Up, as Do the Profits](#)" (front page, Nov. 23):

The recent series of articles examining the impact of our nation's rapidly aging population sheds much needed light on a significant and unavoidable societal issue.

Many Americans do have sufficient savings and home equity to pay for long-term care at home or in assisted living. But many have underestimated the consequences of longer life spans and have either been unable to adequately save or have not prepared for the costs associated with the myriad physical and cognitive care needs that are common at advanced ages.

Our society does not have an adequate answer in place to help those whose savings are insufficient or who do not qualify for [Medicaid funds toward assisted living](#) (which are limited and not an option in all states).

Your reporting goes a long way in calling attention to the difficulty of finding solutions to address the cost of long-term care for our aging population. These challenges can be met with some hard work in Congress, the states, and federal and state agencies to create more options for our seniors. Policymakers need to think broadly for ways to incentivize saving for retirement, reactivate the market for long-term care insurance, expand Medicare benefits and much more.

The senior living industry has devoted considerable resources to exploring solutions to the issues raised and stands ready to continue working diligently to find innovative ways to provide for the needs of the aging American population.

David Schless

Washington

The writer is president and C.E.O. of the American Seniors Housing Association.