



Castleton
Home Care

A PRACTICAL FAMILY GUIDE

How to Pay for Senior Care

7 Common Ways Families Cover In-Home Care, Assisted Living, and Nursing Homes

For adult children and spouses figuring out how to afford help for someone they love — in plain English, step by step.



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

When you first see the price of in-home care, assisted living, or a nursing home, it can feel like a punch in the gut. Most of us are never taught what care really costs — and we assume “insurance” or “the government” will handle more of it than they actually do. It's completely normal to feel overwhelmed, scared, or even guilty when you start adding up the numbers.

You're not alone if you're thinking, “How do other families even pay for this?” This guide walks you through **seven of the most common ways families pull the money together** — step by step, in plain English. By the end, you'll have a clearer picture of what's possible, which options might fit your situation, and where to go next.

WHO THIS GUIDE IS FOR

- **Adult children** trying to keep a parent safely at home, or starting to look at assisted living or memory care communities.
- **Spouses** caring for a partner whose needs are increasing, and realizing you may not be able to do everything alone much longer.
- **Families** that have just received a quote from a facility or home care agency and are wondering, “How on earth do people pay for this?”

This is an educational resource — not financial, tax, or legal advice. Programs and rules vary by state. Always consult a qualified professional for decisions about your specific situation.

UNDERSTANDING COSTS

Senior Care Costs at a Glance

Before you decide how to pay for care, it helps to understand what you're paying for. Rather than focusing on exact dollar amounts, it's most useful to understand **who typically pays first** for each type of care.

In-Home Non-Medical Care

Assisted Living & Memory Care

Skilled Nursing / Nursing Homes

Caregivers come to the home to help with bathing, dressing, meals, safe mobility, and companionship. Billed hourly.	Communities where your loved one has their own apartment, meals, activities, and help with daily tasks. Billed monthly.	24/7 nursing care and medical oversight — the highest level of support. Priced daily or monthly.
Typically pays first: Private pay, LTC insurance, Medicaid (sometimes)	Typically pays first: Private pay, LTC insurance, sometimes VA or Medicaid	Typically pays first: Private pay, Medicaid, LTC insurance

Who Typically Pays First — by Care Type

Care Type	Common Setting	Who Typically Pays First
Short-term rehab and home health	Rehab facility, home	Medicare or private health insurance
Ongoing in-home support	Home	Private pay, LTC insurance, Medicaid (sometimes)
Assisted living / memory care	Assisted living community	Private pay, LTC insurance, sometimes VA or Medicaid
Long-term nursing home care	Nursing facility	Private pay, Medicaid, LTC insurance

01

MOST COMMON STARTING POINT

Private Pay from Income & Savings

For many families, the first way they pay for care is the simplest: they write a check. **Private pay** means using your loved one's current income — Social Security, pensions, annuities, investment income — plus savings or retirement accounts to pay for care directly.

Private pay is most common in the early stages of needing help at home, and often becomes the **bridge** that covers care now while families explore Medicaid, veterans benefits, or home equity.

Pros

- Flexibility — not bound by program rules
- Wider choice of agencies and communities
- No complex eligibility applications

Cons

- Savings can go fast over months or years
- Easy to underestimate duration of care
- Can strain family finances unevenly

Tip: Run the Numbers

Add up monthly income, subtract monthly care cost, divide savings by the monthly shortfall. That's roughly how many months your savings might last. If numbers are tight, consult a financial planner and/or elder law attorney first.



02

HEALTH INSURANCE

Medicare: What It Will & Won't Pay For

Medicare is health insurance, not long-term care insurance. It covers hospital stays, doctor visits, and short-term rehab — but is not designed to pay for years of daily help at home or in a facility.

[YES] Medicare CAN Help With	[NO] Medicare WON'T Pay For
Short-term skilled nursing & rehab after a qualifying hospital stay	Ongoing custodial care at home (bathing, dressing, meals, supervision)
Home health visits (nurses, therapists) that are medically necessary	Standard assisted living or long-term nursing home room and board



The takeaway: Think *"Medicare + something else"* — not Medicare alone. The rest of this guide covers those options.

03

SAFETY-NET PROGRAM

Medicaid for Long-Term Care

Medicaid is the safety-net program for people with limited income and assets, and it plays a **major role in paying for long-term care**. While Medicare focuses on short-term medical treatment, Medicaid often helps with ongoing nursing home or home support costs.

Two Big Ways Families Use Medicaid

- **Nursing Home Care:** For people meeting financial and medical criteria, Medicaid can pay for long-term nursing home care.
- **Home & Community-Based Services (HCBS / Waivers):** Many states offer waiver programs — in-home aides, adult day health, caregiver respite. Services and waitlists vary by state.

**MYTH**

"You have to be completely broke before you can even think about Medicaid."

REALITY

You do not have to wait until every last dollar is gone. Planning earlier usually gives you more options — especially with a spouse at home or assets to protect. An elder law attorney can help you plan strategically.

04

PRIVATE INSURANCE

Long-Term Care Insurance

Long-term care insurance is a policy someone usually buys years before they need care. When certain conditions are met, it can pay a set daily or monthly amount toward in-home care, assisted living, memory care, or nursing home care.

What to Look For in a Policy

- ▣ **Settings covered:** Non-medical in-home care? Assisted living? Memory care?
- ▣ **Benefit amount & period:** How much per day or month, and for how long (2, 3, or 5 years)?
- ▣ **Elimination period:** How many days of out-of-pocket before coverage begins?

**Tip: Go on a Policy Hunt**

Before assuming your loved one doesn't have coverage, look through old files, safe deposit boxes, and insurance binders. Many families discover a forgotten policy.

05

FOR VETERANS & SURVIVING SPOUSES

Veterans Benefits – VA Aid & Attendance

If your loved one is a veteran or the surviving spouse of a veteran, there may be VA benefits that help pay for care – **and many eligible families never realize it.** The most important is **Aid and Attendance**, an extra monthly amount added to a qualifying veteran's or survivor's VA pension when they need help with daily activities.

Aid & Attendance can help offset the cost of:

- In-home care services
- Assisted living or memory care communities
- Nursing home care (alongside other payment sources)

▣ Getting Help the Right Way

VA-accredited VSO representatives help with claims **for free.** By law, no one can charge a fee to help with an initial VA benefits claim. Be cautious of companies that promise guaranteed approval or charge large upfront fees.



06

HOME EQUITY

Using a Home to Fund Care

For many families, the house is the largest asset they have. Deciding whether — and how — to use it to pay for care is emotional as well as financial. It can be a powerful tool, but deserves careful thought and good professional advice.

A Reverse Mortgage / Home-Equity Product

Homeowners 62+ can convert part of their home's value into cash while continuing to live there.

B Renting Out the Home

Rental income can offset monthly care costs while preserving the property as an asset.

C Selling the Home

A lump sum can fund care for several years, though it may affect Medicaid eligibility.



Always speak with a **financial planner** and an **elder law attorney** before tapping home equity, renting, or selling — these decisions have long-term financial and legal consequences.

07

BLENDED APPROACH

Family Contributions & "Patchwork" Solutions

Many families use more than one source to cover care — blending a parent's income and savings with help from adult children, limited Medicaid or VA benefits, and community support. A **"patchwork" approach can help stretch what's available.**

- One sibling pays for a caregiver a few afternoons a week; another provides hands-on care on weekends.
- Medicare covers a short period of home health after a hospital stay; the family hires private caregivers for evenings.
- A parent's income covers part of an assisted living fee; family and a local faith community cover the rest.

Tip: Put It in Writing

Have honest conversations about who can contribute financially and who can provide hands-on help. Even a simple shared document helps avoid misunderstandings and hard feelings.



NEXT STEPS

Pulling It Together: How to Build a Personalized Plan

Once you understand the main ways to pay for care, the next step is turning all of this information into a plan that fits *your* family — not someone else's.

1 Clarify Your Loved One's Care Needs

- **In-home vs. facility:** Is the goal to stay at home with support, or is assisted living or a nursing home more realistic?
- **How much help:** How many hours per day or week, and with which tasks?
- **Expected duration:** Short-term (weeks/months after an illness) or an ongoing need that could last years?

2 Inventory Your Resources

- Monthly income: Social Security, pensions, annuities, rental income
- Savings and retirement accounts
- Long-term care insurance or life insurance with LTC riders
- Home equity (if using the home is on the table)
- Potential benefits: Medicaid, VA Aid & Attendance, or other programs

3 Match Care Settings to Likely Payment Sources

- **In-home care:** Private pay + LTC insurance + possibly a Medicaid waiver or VA benefit
- **Assisted living / memory care:** Income, savings, LTC insurance — possibly Medicaid or VA later
- **Nursing home (long-term):** Private pay — then Medicaid once your loved one qualifies

4
Talk to the Right Professionals

- **Elder law attorney** — Medicaid planning, protecting a spouse at home, legal documents
- **Financial planner** — income, investments, and how long different options might last
- **Benefits counselor (SHIP or VA-accredited)** — Medicare, Medicaid, veterans benefits
- **A reputable home care agency** — realistic pricing and coordinating services

Plans Change Over Time

Most families don't create a "forever" plan on day one. They start with in-home support, see how their loved one does, and reassess every 3-6 months. Give yourself permission to adjust as needs, health, and finances change.

FOR YOUR AREA

Resources in North Metro Atlanta

If you're caring for a loved one in North Metro Atlanta, these local resources often become part of the picture alongside private pay, Medicare, and insurance.

Georgia Medicaid	Atlanta Regional Commission — Empowerline
Georgia's Medicaid program offers long-term services and supports for eligible older adults, including nursing home care and home- and community-based services. Rules, waitlists, and programs can change — check current information and talk with a professional.	Connects families with the Area Agency on Aging, caregiver support, benefits counseling, and community programs that can help stretch your care budget and support you as a caregiver.



How Castleton Home Care Can Help

Castleton Home Care serves families across North Metro Atlanta.

We can help you:

- Compare care scenarios and realistic costs
- Understand how payment sources fit together
- Coordinate non-medical home care with other services

Reach out for a free, no-obligation care planning conversation.

📄 castletonhomecare.com

📞 770-810-5974

✉ office@castletonhomecare.com



Your Next Steps This Week

You do not have to have all seven options figured out today. Think of this guide as a menu. Your job this week is simply to choose **one or two next steps** that feel doable:

→ *"I'm going to find Mom's insurance policies and any old long-term care paperwork."*

→ *"I'll call to schedule a benefits review or talk with an elder law attorney."*

→ *"I'll get a quote from a home care agency so we know what in-home help would actually cost."*

When you're ready, use this guide as a workbook — highlight the options that apply to your family, jot down questions to ask professionals, and update your plan as things change. And if you'd like help applying these ideas to your specific situation in North Metro Atlanta, **Castleton Home Care is here to walk through it with you, one step at a time.**

This guide is for educational purposes only and does not constitute financial, tax, or legal advice. Programs, eligibility rules, and benefits vary by state. Consult qualified professionals for advice specific to your situation.

© 2025 Castleton Home Care, LLC | All rights reserved.