

Do I Even Need a Financial Consultant?

Most financial advisors study the stock market on a daily basis. Their primary job is to make an educated guess on where the market is headed – up or down. Because of this daily research, they become an expert in stock market fluctuations. This financial advice is a risky business.

However, the biggest risk you face to your retirement nest egg is the cost of care – in your own home, an assisted living community and/or nursing facility. Because of this risk, (depending on your age) you should have a very conservative approach to investing your financial future. Your financial advisor should be focused on asset protection. They should be trying to stretch your income and assets to provide you with a high-quality living environment – no matter where you might need care, no matter how long you might live.

You should be working with a financial consultant with experience in the following areas.

- 1) **Medicare:** Medicare will help to cover doctor, hospital and skilled nursing care. If you are over age 65, the person guiding you through your financial life must have a thorough understanding of Medicare, Medicare supplement, prescription plans, deductibles and co-pays. As we age, doctors and hospitals become more and more an integral part of our life.
- 2) **Medicaid:** Harsh truth- If we live long enough, we may run out of money to pay for our healthcare. You should be well informed on the Medicaid spend-down process, transfer of assets, Medicaid supportive living and nursing facilities. Remember, everyone is guaranteed long term care coverage in the State of Illinois. You just have to be broke to get it.
- 3) **VA Benefits** – Your financial advisor should understand the qualifications and application process for VA benefits – medications, compensation and aid and attendance. These benefits can add up to \$2500 tax-free a month to your income. The aid and attendance benefit has the ability to stretch out your income and assets, for many years. Remember- a poorly documented claim may result in a VA denial of claim. A knowledgeable consultant can help you submit the proper documentation the first time. It is against VA regulations to charge a veteran/spouse for helping with an application.
- 4) **Long Term Care Insurance** - Your financial person must be able to understand a long term care insurance contract. The contract will state the initial qualifications for claim, the type of communities that the policy will cover and how long the policy will pay the covered expense. This is crucial information for long term care planning.

Summary: Over the age of 65, our health care will take a larger portion of our time and money. Do you want a financial plan that focuses on the stock market? Or do you want a financial plan that will encompass your life- the good, the bad and the ugly. Does your current financial plan give you peace-of-mind? Why not?

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