

Empowering Families to Finish Well:

Newman LTC Has a New Leader, But The Same Mission

When Tim Dona took over as President at Newman Long Term Care in January, he also took on the challenge of leading one of the country's most respected insurance brands into its third decade. Founder Deb Newman, who retired in March, had been the face of long-term care insurance for almost 30 years.

Dona hit the ground running. The mission, he said, has not changed. If anything, it has been accelerating. NewmanLTC has already surpassed its 10-year goal of helping 50,000 families plan for long term care, and is on track to have one of its best years yet.

Fueling that growth is more advisors partnering with Newman's LTCI specialists as well as a strong interest in the Thrivent LTCI product that the Newman team is able to offer.

"Long term care insurance is an essential part of any good retirement and estate plan," said Dona, "but rarely gets the attention it should. A recent study showed that 90 percent of people want their advisors to discuss LTC planning, but only 14 percent do." There are several reasons why advisors are hesitant, he explained. "Some are not comfortable broaching the subject with clients. Many don't have the time to stay on top of ever-changing products and underwriting. Or they have experienced frustration with the LTCI underwriting process, and felt the sting of declines."

A better option, Dona says, is for NewmanLTC to become an agency's LTCI back office. "We have 20 employees, including highly knowledgeable specialists, who know this business inside out," he emphasized. "Equally important, it is the only product we sell."

Director of Marketing Craig Roers points out why that focus matters. "Our time studies show that a specialist saves an agent an average of 8.3 hours on a typical case. Another study showed that a specialist is five times more likely to get someone coverage than a generalist. By using us," Roers said, "an agent not only insures more clients, but gains the equivalent of an entire day for other pursuits."

He further points out that because of NewmanLTC's underwriting expertise, its specialists can often secure coverage that would be difficult for less experienced agents to obtain. "Our team knows the extra underwriting questions to ask," Roers explained. "If an applicant has hypertension, for example, we know what else about that condition is important to an underwriter."

There is also a customer-experience reason to use a specialist, Dona said. "No one wants to tell a valued client they have been declined. That is something our team can do tactfully, helping an agent maintain the relationship."



President Tim Dona

'Our studies show that using a specialist like Newman LTC saves an agent an average of 8.3 hours on a typical case and that a specialist is five times more likely to get someone coverage than a generalist. An agent not only insures more clients, but gains the equivalent of an entire day for other pursuits.'

Dona believes NewmanLTC offers the broadest portfolio of LTCI solutions in the country. While offering all the other traditional and linked benefit brokerage solutions, NewmanLTC is also the exclusive distribution point for Thrivent's Long Term Care product outside of the Thrivent field force.

"Thrivent offers more robust benefits than many carriers, while being backed by the strength and stability of the world's largest fraternal," said Dona. "With Genworth pulling out of BGA distribution in March, brokers and BGAs are very interested in adding this product to their platform. At the National ILTCI Conference in Chicago, they had producers lined up at their booth to learn about offering this solution."

Dona emphasized that Newman Long Term Care intends to continue its path as a pioneer. "The options for agents have been reduced significantly since Deb started the business in 1990. There are only about four traditional carriers now offering products to independent agents. But there are more options such as hybrid policies providing innovative approaches — whether linked to life policies or annuities. No matter the solution, consumers seem to be gravitating to the strength and stability offered by mutuals and fraternal."

Dona realizes that he has stepped into some rather large shoes, but he has the experience to fill them. He came to NewmanLTC from U.S. Bank where he served as Senior Vice President for Insurance. An Illinois native, with a MBA from Purdue, he previously worked for McKinsey & Company, Target and as a Senior VP for Crump Life (one of the largest life distributors in the country).

Dona and Roers still keep in touch with founder Deb Newman, but note that she is enjoying her retirement, knowing that she put a team in place to take the company well into the future. Agents wishing more information about working with NewmanLTC can call 612-454-4400. ■