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SB 21 Stories

1. At-Home/Prevention/Private Pay – Paul Larson

Paul Larson lives in Oakridge, Oregon. He is 82 years old and retired from the logging industry 24 years ago with a healthy amount of retirement savings. He has lived in the single-family home he and his late wife, Patty, built for the last 48 years. “This is MY place.” He says. “I built it myself, raised my family here, and the only way they’re gonna get me outta here is cold and dead.”

Over the past few years, Mr. Larson has had to slow down. He gets tired more easily, and he can’t do all of the chores around his house that he used to do without trouble. He has fallen a few times on the stairs to his front porch and almost fallen getting out of the bathtub. “I’m still just fine, and I can take care of myself. I’m just clumsy.” He claims.

His daughters, who live in Portland, think otherwise, however. “I can tell Dad is getting weaker,” says his older daughter, Sue. Heck, he’s 82 years old! He wants us to think he’s fine, but I know he needs help. He let it slip that he’s fallen a couple of times, and I can see how he winces when he has to get up from his couch. I think he should come and live closer to us in an assisted living place, but he won’t even consider it.”

His younger daughter, Sarah, adds, “If he won’t do that, then Sue and I have decided we’re going to pay for someone to be with him 24/7. Yes, it’s expensive, but if he falls and no one is there, he could lie there for hours, even days. He has money, and if his money runs out, we’ll pay. There is a home health agency near him, and they can set up a whole schedule so he’s never alone. He’s just going to have to adjust to having help if he wants to stay in that house!”

Mr. Larson thought he had plenty of money when he retired, but his wife’s hospital bills were costly, and he had to use some of his retirement savings to pay them. “I want to leave some money for my kids and grandkids.” He says. “And I sure as heck don’t need anyone coming here and checking up on me or sitting around staring at me while I go about my business!”

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2. At Risk; Minimal assets – Doug Jimanez

Doug Jimanez is 59 years old and lists Lostine as his place of residence. For most of the year, Doug is homeless and travels around Oregon hitch-hiking and sleeping/living outdoors. During the winter months, Doug moves from shelter to shelter trying to obtain a bed for the night. Doug was diagnosed HIV positive when he was 45 years old and until recently, didn't feel as though this diagnosis was impacting his health to the point it interfered with his chosen lifestyle. His physical condition has begun deteriorating, partly due to his ongoing lifestyle, medication management issues and his beginning to feel the effects of aging.

Doug loves to travel and feels his life on the road is true freedom and independence. He wants to maintain his lifestyle and does not want to "die in a nursing home" but recognizes he may need to make some changes to address his health issues. Doug wants to be in an independent living situation where he maintains control of any major decisions about his life. He has a sister who lives in Oregon but has not had any contact with her for several years. Doug receives SSI, OHP and SNAP benefits and has no tangible assets.

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3. Family Caregiver – Ho Lai-Ying

Ho Lai-Ying is a 72 year-old widowed Cantonese woman who lives with her daughter and 12 year-old grandson in Roseburg, Oregon. She moved to her only daughter's home three years ago, when her husband of 51 years passed away due to a sudden stroke. Mrs. Ho and her spouse moved here from China 30 years ago becoming citizens within two years of arriving in the United States. Mrs. Ho does not speak any English and spends most of her days alone at her daughter's home while her daughter works. Mrs. Ho used to occupy herself reading the Cantonese newspaper and watching the Chinese television station while her daughter was at work. She also enjoyed working in the backyard garden when the weather was not too rainy.

Over the past two years, however, Mrs. Ho has become more and more forgetful. A couple of months ago, Mrs. Ho left the house, got lost, and the police had to be called. Sometimes, she forgets where she is and calls her daughter at work crying and upset. As a result, Mrs. Ho's daughter has had to take more and more time off of work to be with her mother during the day. Last week, Mrs. Ho woke her daughter up in the middle of the night in a worried state and told her daughter they needed to go right away and meet her late husband at the airport. It took her daughter almost two hours to calm her mother down and get her back to bed.

At this point, Mrs. Ho's daughter feels unable to continue to care for her mother and still keep her job as an accountant. "I can't continue to miss work. I've already used up all of my vacation and sick time, and my company won't let me work from home." She says. "But my mother can't be home alone safely anymore. I'm worried she'll wander off and get lost or hurt. And we can't keep living like this – always worrying about her."

Mrs. Ho never wanted to be a burden on her family, but without them, she would feel lost. She wishes she could make some friends here, but she does not know if or how she could find others who speak her language. She does not realize that she has memory loss, but she does recognize that the world seems to be making less and less sense.

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Mrs. Ho has no money except for a few hundred dollars a month she receives from her husband's pension. Her daughter also has limited resources and uses her entire paycheck to cover her mortgage payment and living expenses for herself and her son.

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4. Widow in Assisted Living – Mary Wilson

Mary Wilson is a 72 year old widow who lives in an assisted living facility in Eugene. She has been living there for over a year. The cost to her is \$4,000 a month.

Prior to this, Mary moved into a small manufactured home in Florence with her husband when they retired, but he passed away five years ago. After that, Mary's mobility began to decline and she struggled to keep the house clean. Her sister, who lives in Eugene, was getting very concerned about the state of her house with clutter, mold, and unsanitary conditions in all the rooms.

Mary smokes a pack a day, but on one trip to visit her sister in Eugene, she was struggling with her breathing. Her sister rushed her to the hospital where Mary was admitted for several days to recover and increase her oxygen levels. Mary's sister convinced her to move into an assisted living facility in Eugene – a woman from her sister's church lived there, and thought she could get any of her needs met there.

Mary is getting concerned about her situation after a year in assisted living. She still has \$80,000 in savings but is concerned that she will spend it all in assisted living. Her sister assures her that she will be able to get Medicaid once she spends all of her savings. While Mary takes that to heart, she misses her friends and living in her own home in Florence. An avid reader, she was active in three book clubs there. She doesn't feel connected to most of the residents in her facility.

Mary can move with the aid of a walker and can clothe, bathe, feed herself and go to the bathroom alone. She still prefers to do her own laundry, even though staff could help her with it. Mary has recently been diagnosed with Depression and is working with her Physician on a treatment plan. She wants to continue to be very self-reliant but she also doesn't want to put her health at risk and fears that she will do so if she moves back home. She doesn't know what to do.

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5. High needs; Recent debilitating physical health incident – Amy Simpson

Amy is 60 years old and lives in Mosier. She served 10 years as a weapons expert in the Army during Operation Desert Storm. Amy was dishonorably discharged from the military, prosecuted and convicted on a manslaughter charge with time served stemming from a shooting incident that happened during non-duty hours. She was diagnosed post-military service with PTSD and is registered as a felon with ongoing probationary reporting responsibilities. Amy self-identifies as a Lesbian with a history of being unable to sustain a long term relationship with a significant other. She enjoys meeting new people but experiences severe anxiety in social situations so she tends towards isolation.

Amy owns her home in Mosier but has been unable to keep up with maintenance requirements. She was an only child and her parents passed on several years ago. Amy lists \$5000.00 in savings and her home as tangible assets. The home is currently valued at \$100,000.00 with an outstanding mortgage balance of \$78,000.00 due to an equity loan Amy took out to pay for auto repairs. Amy lives next door to a young couple that checks in on her occasionally. She works freelance as a house cleaner and occasionally does house and pet sitting to supplement her income.

In March of this year, Amy experienced a severe stroke and wasn't discovered for several hours post-incident by her neighbors. Amy received treatment at the hospital and was discharged into a skilled nursing facility. She is ready to transition to a lower level of care and wants to live at home but the NF won't discharge her into an environment they consider unsafe with no supports in place. Amy will require ongoing treatment and rehabilitation to continue making progress that will allow her to return to some level of independent living.

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6. Younger adult with physical disability – Matthew Johnson

Matthew Johnson is 24 years old with quadriplegia from an accident four years ago when he was the victim of an uninsured driver running a stop sign and hitting his bicycle. He lives in Bend, where he moved after graduating from high school in John Day because he wanted to live independently from his parents, make a living, eventually go to college when he saved enough money, and start a family after college.

He gets Medicaid-covered services in his apartment and although he is on great terms with his family, he wants to live his life independently. His mother and brother both work full time jobs in John Day and cannot visit very often. Matthew often feels isolated – his friends from work do not visit often or have moved away, and he feels trapped in his apartment all day with very limited access to transportation.

Because of his accident and quadriplegia, Matthew does not think it is realistic to get a job, go to college, or start a family as he had originally planned but still dreams of these as life goals. Although he is trying to keep to his goal of living on his own, and wants to stay in Bend, he is isolated from his community and is beginning to show symptoms of depression.