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### Smart Strategies for Elder-Care

Lisa Scherzer. *Wall Street Journal*. (Eastern edition). New York, N.Y.: Feb 17, 2009. pg. B.12

#### Abstract (Summary)

According to a 2005 Pew Research Center report, 13% of baby boomers (about 9.75 million) are in such a situation.

#### Full Text (416 words)

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The so-called sandwich generation -- those caring for their children and their aging parents -- are being squeezed more than ever.

The retirement savings their parents were depending on are being decimated, while health-care and other costs associated with caring for them skyrocket. Add to that steep college tuition bills, and the strain on the family budget can be overwhelming. According to a 2005 Pew Research Center report, 13% of baby boomers (about 9.75 million) are in such a situation. To help you better manage the costs of caring for an elderly loved one, follow these tips.

1. Negotiate. It never hurts to ask. Try negotiating on price with an assisted-living or skilled nursing facility, especially if it isn't filled to capacity. "It's worth having that conversation, particularly if your parent is already there and they'd have to move out," says Donna Schempp, program director for Family Caregiver Alliance a nonprofit.
2. Offer to share a room. Some assisted-living facilities set aside a certain number of shared rooms for lower-income seniors who can't afford the full fee, says Ms. Schempp.
3. Hire a geriatric-care manager. Geriatric-care managers can do everything from assessing your parents' long-term care needs and finding them a place to live to helping you navigate the health-care system. They also can save you time and money -- making their fees, which range from \$80 to \$200 an hour, more palatable. Search the National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers' site to find a manager in your area.
4. Consider adult day care. If you work during the day and your parent can't be left home alone, enrollment in adult day care is a more affordable option than private, in-home care. Fees for adult day-care services vary, but the national average rate is \$64 a day, compared with an hourly rate of \$20 (or \$160 for an eight-hour day) for home health aides, according to a 2008 MetLife study. Contact your state's department of aging to get recommended adult day-care centers, or search the National Adult Day Services Association for centers by state.
5. Hire a part-time caretaker. For seniors who don't require close or full-time supervision, hiring someone to check in and spend time with your elderly parent may be all you need. It could be a neighbor or someone from the local church. Or, if your mom or dad lives near a university, hire a student to. College students can help with grocery shopping, cleaning and meal preparation.

Credit: By Lisa Scherzer

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