

# Elder Support Policy Paper

Due in class on April 21, 2003

This paper provides you an opportunity (1) to familiarize yourself with the basic health care and cash benefits available to most people over the age of 65 in the United States and (2) to consider the adequacy of these benefits for a person central to your life.

1. Select an older person whom you may have some responsibility to care for in his or her old age. This person may be one (or both) of your parents, a spouse, partner, sibling, aunt, uncle, or grandparent. You may have to make a number of assumptions about this person's health and financial situation to complete this assignment. [For reasons of privacy, you may wish to use an alias instead of the person's real name.]

2. Calculate the person's expected monthly Social Security benefits after retirement. If you have the person's Social Security statement, which is sent out each year, use that. Otherwise, use the Quick Calculator found at the Social Security website (<http://www.ssa.gov/retire2/calculators.htm>). To use the Quick Calculator, you will need to estimate the person's current earnings if you don't know what they are. The benefits the person will receive will also depend on the age at which he or she begins to draw benefits (e.g., 62, 65, 70, etc.), so make an educated guess as to when this will be. If the person has already retired, use his or her actual monthly Social Security benefits.

3. Select a Medicare Plan and assess the cost of monthly Medicare premiums (<http://www.medicare.gov/Choices/Overview.asp>).

4. Estimate the monthly costs of

a. housing

b. utilities

c. food

d. prescription drugs

e. other necessities

5. Estimate (or use actual) monthly pension benefits from job.

6. Total costs. Total benefits.

Total:

Cost

Income

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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In 2-3 double-spaced pages, describe the financial situation this person will face during his or her retirement years. How much money will the person will need from additional sources (e.g., savings, gifts) to live comfortably? Discuss how the person's care needs will affect your life if you become primarily responsible for this person. Attach your calculation of expenses and income.