

# WellNow

*A resource for your health and wellness*

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- **Important details on Brethren Medical Plan wellness screening — deadlines and procedures on p. 4**
- **Sobering statistics on long-term disabilities and insight into their causes**
- **Understanding the intricacies and complexities of long-term disability insurance**



# It could happen — thinking seriously about disability

## Stats to give you pause:

- According to the Council for Disability Awareness, just over one in four of today's 20-year-olds can expect to be out of work for at least a year because of a disabling condition.
- Thirty percent of Americans ages 35-65 will suffer a disability lasting at least 90 days during their working life.
- It is estimated that one in seven employees can expect to be disabled for five years or more.
- At least 51 million working adults in the U.S. are without disability insurance.
- Only 48 percent of American adults have enough savings to cover three months of living expenses in the event they lose their income.
- Almost half of American adults say they could not pay an unexpected \$400 expense without having to take out a loan or sell something.
- Most Americans don't have enough savings to last 34.6 months, which is the duration of the average long-term disability claim.
- Unexpected illnesses and injuries cause 350,000 bankruptcies as well as nearly 50 percent of all mortgage foreclosures each year.

**These are sobering statistics. They certainly make you think seriously about the advantage of being covered by long-term disability insurance.**

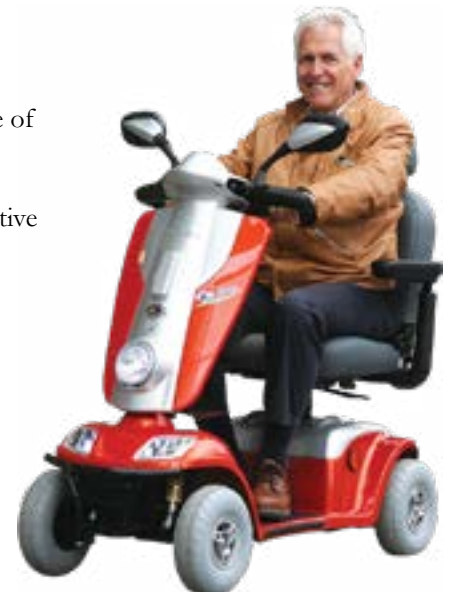


## FIRST, WHAT IS A DISABILITY?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “A disability is any condition of the body or mind that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities and interact with the world around them. There are many types of disabilities, affecting a person’s vision, movement, thinking, remembering, learning, communicating, hearing, mental health, or social relationships.” A short-term disability is a condition that lasts for three months and sometimes up to six months, after which you can resume your normal activity. A long-term disability is a condition that can last from six months to the rest of your life.

## The causes of long-term disability — Illness is more likely to cause long-term disability than injury. Here are the most frequent causes:

- Cancer has been the leading cause of long-term disability for many years. It is also one of the costliest diseases in the U.S.
- Back disorders come next on the list — problems with the nerves and spine, degenerative discs, rheumatoid arthritis, and osteoarthritis.
- Injuries of many kinds are obvious and frequent causes of long-term disability:
  - » Falling (both tripping and falling from a significant height)
  - » Overexertion (lifting, pulling, etc.) or engaging in very strenuous actions
  - » Being struck by an object
  - » Roadway incidents
  - » Being caught in or compressed by a machine or object
  - » Engaging in repetitive activity (i.e., typing or working on an assembly line)



- Cardiovascular problems are a principal cause and can result in significant expense.
- Joint disorders and musculoskeletal issues frequently cause long-term disability.

Though the statistics are sobering and the possibilities for injury and illness are real, most of us are fortunate enough never to have an injury or illness disable us. But it could happen, and if it does, it can have catastrophic effect. While workers' compensation generally covers work-related illnesses or injuries, disability insurance primarily covers injuries and illnesses that occur outside of work. Give long-term disability insurance careful consideration as part of your financial plan. If your employer offers this coverage, consider signing up for it during your next open enrollment period.

**If you have questions about Long-Term Disability insurance, please contact Jeremiah Thompson at [jthompson@cobbt.org](mailto:jthompson@cobbt.org) or 800-746-1505 ext. 3368.**

## Attempting the impossible — making insurance clear

Insurance documents are often confusing to read. Let's see if we can rectify that. Here's an attempt to clarify the details of Long-term Disability insurance from Brethren Insurance Services.

### **What does it do?**

LTD offers protection against income loss for a disability lasting longer than three months.

### **What does it pay?**

Each month the policy will pay you an amount that is 66-2/3 percent of your regular monthly income, up to a maximum of \$5,000 per month. The figure used to calculate your income does not include commissions, bonuses, or overtime pay, but if you are a pastor, it includes your housing allowance.

### **Is a physical exam necessary for LTD insurance?**

If you sign up for this insurance during the annual Open Enrollment period (or other qualifying life event as defined by the IRS), you do not need to get a physical exam.

### **What is a disability?**

A disability can be a bodily injury from an accident or the result of a sickness. In each case the LTD policy must be in force when the injury or sickness happens. It must be a "total disability," which means your injury or sickness prevents you from performing the duties of your regular occupation.

### **When does it start?**

There is an elimination period of 90 days before the income replacement payments begin. Typically, people cover this with

short-term disability insurance or with savings. LTD is for when these run out.

### **How long will disability payments last?**

- If you are less than 60 years old when you become disabled, the policy from BIS will cover you until you turn 65 and can begin to collect Social Security.
- If you are older than 60 but less than 69 when you become disabled, the policy will cover you either for five years or until age 70, whichever is the shorter time.
- If you are 69 or older, it will cover you for 12 months.

**The policy will replace your income for up to 24 months after the elimination period. Once the monthly benefit has been paid for 24 months, the benefits may continue if you are still disabled and cannot perform the duties of any occupation for which your education, training, or experience will reasonably allow.**

### **How do you qualify?**

**To get your monthly payments started, you must:**

- Submit satisfactory proof of your total disability.
- Show evidence that you are under the regular care of a physician.
- Complete the elimination period.

**What do I need to know about the claims process?**

- Be sure to fill out the claims application thoroughly, answering every question and providing all medical records before you submit it. The most common reason for delayed benefits is submitting an incomplete application.
- Depending on your condition, the insurance carrier may require a second medical opinion.
- You may be required to apply for disability benefits through the Social Security Administration.
- If you receive benefits from the Social Security Administration, those funds must first be used to repay any disability insurance payments you have received.

**What if you have a pre-existing condition?**

The definition of pre-existing in this context is any sickness or Injury for which you received medical attention during the three months immediately before the date when the LTD policy began. With a pre-existing condition, you have to wait to receive a disability benefit for a full year and a day after the date of the injury or illness that caused the pre-existing condition.

**Worksite modifications**

The policy will pay up to \$2,000 for changes to your worksite



that will allow you to go back to work — such things as making parking more accessible, removing barriers and hazards, providing special furniture, or or installing special equipment.

**Limitation to the monthly benefits**

- Receiving disability benefits from other sources will reduce your monthly payments.
- The policy will pay monthly benefits for only 24 months for disabilities caused by chronic fatigue syndrome and by environmental, allergic, and reactive illness.
  - Monthly benefits for musculoskeletal and connective tissue disorders of your neck and back will be paid only for up to 24 months.
  - Monthly benefits for mental or nervous disorders will be paid only for 24 months unless you are in the hospital at the end of the 24 months.

**Extended disability benefits**

If you are disabled for a very long time, the policy will continue to pay “extended disability” benefits. This will amount to 85% of your regular monthly benefit up to a maximum of \$5,000 and will be payable for sixty months.

**Do you still have questions?**

We hope we made long-term disability insurance clear. But if you have additional questions, please direct them to Jeremiah Thompson, Insurance director, at [jthompson@cobbt.org](mailto:jthompson@cobbt.org)

**Important information for Wellness screening**

For members participating in Brethren Medical Plan through Brethren Insurance Services, it’s time for you and your staff to get started with the **2022 WellNow! Rewards** program. Included below are some important dates and helpful links to assist in the completion of the program.

**Important Dates**

- Launch date:** ..... Jan. 1
- Registration ends:**..... Jan. 28
- Return kit by:** ..... Feb. 14
- Consultation complete by:**..... Feb. 28
- Reasonable Alternative completion (if needed):** .....April 30

**Important Links**

- [WellNow! Rewards explanatory video](#)
- [Home Kit Ordering](#)
- [Sharecare Registration](#)

**Questions? You can reach Jeremiah Thompson, Insurance Director, at [jthompson@cobbt.org](mailto:jthompson@cobbt.org).**