The Community Living Assistance Services and Support (CLASS) Program, was created to provide assistance for individuals who need long-term care (LTC) services and have difficulty with activities of daily living. CLASS is the first federal and consumer funded LTC program in the United States.

CLASS is a voluntary, government-run LTC insurance program that offers participants a single benefit plan with a daily cash benefit of $50, indexed to inflation. Beneficiaries can use the money to purchase non-medical services to use at home or at their chosen residence. There is no limit on how long a person can receive benefits through CLASS. Currently, nursing home costs can average $75,000 per year while home care can average $20 an hour. These prices will increase in the coming years. Long term care services are utilized by elderly individuals and widely needed by people with disabilities. Most of the provisions in the CLASS Act aim to lessen the impact of outrageous long term care costs on people.

Wherever information is acquired inadvertently. For example, a casual reference overheard at a water cooler that an employee’s mother has breast cancer and that the employee herself has been tested for a gene related to that, will not be a violation. Similarly, employers who employ multiple family members will have a little more flexibility obtaining information from one family member without bringing an offense against another family member (remember that one employee’s manifestation of disease or disorder could be the family medical history of the brother or sister or father, mother, uncle and so on who also works for the employer).

The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) prohibits employers and other entities from requesting, requiring or purchasing genetic information of employees or the employee’s family members. Although GINA has been in effect for over a year, the EEOC has issued regulations about its application. The biggest clarification by the EEOC is what constitutes acquisition of genetic information.

For the EEOC requests for genetic information include "conducting an Internet search in a way that is likely to result in obtaining genetic information, as well as 'actively listening' to third-party conversations or making requests for information about an individual's current health status in a way that is likely to result genetic information." There are circumstances when an employer may legitimately come into possession of genetic information without violating GINA’s prohibition on requesting, requiring or purchasing genetic information. However confidentiality and prohibitions on use remain. These circumstances include:

- Where information is acquired inadvertently. For example, a casual reference overheard at a water cooler that an employee’s mother has breast cancer and that the employee...
Golden Living Launches Consulting Pharmacy Services
Company by Jeanelle R. Lust

Golden Living announced last month that it has established a new in-house consulting pharmacy company. The Company, Golden Clinical Rx Services, will focus on improving medication safety and patient outcomes. It is designed to have certified geriatric pharmacists (CGPs) as part of the interdisciplinary clinic team that care for Golden Living Center patients and will use new technology to improve patient outcomes. Managing medications is a complex process, especially for patients of skilled nursing facilities, many of whom have chronic conditions and are prescribed multiple drugs. Pharmacists will work closely with clinicians to monitor residents’ medications and conditions and make recommendations to improve medication regimens.

In today’s changing healthcare environment, it’s even more important for healthcare providers to innovate and always act with patients’ best interests in mind,” said James A. Avery, Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer for Golden Living. “Golden Living’s approach to pharmacy services is unique in the long-term care industry, and we believe that it will greatly benefit our patients.”

Walking May Stall Decline of Cognitive Function
by Laura K. Essay

According to a recent study, walking five miles per week may stall the decline of cognitive function among those who experience mild forms of dementia.

To assess the impact the physical exercise might have on Alzheimer’s progression, Cyrus Raja, MD, PhD, and colleagues analyzed the relationship between walking and brain structure in 426 adults. Among the participants, 299 were cognitively healthy and 127 were diagnosed as cognitively impaired.

For the study, participants were asked how many city blocks they walked in an average week. Follow-up questionnaires confirmed that the number of blocks remained steady over time. Participants also underwent MRI exams so researchers could measure changes in brain volume, and took the Mini-Mental State Exam, a test of cognitive skills, at various times throughout the study.

The study indicated that walking protects the brain structure in people with Alzheimer’s and mild cognitive impairment (MCI), specifically in areas of the brain’s key memory and learning centers. Raja stated that those who walked five miles per week also had a slower decline in memory loss over five years. In those diagnosed with MCI, the exercise reduced brain atrophy and cognitive decline by more than 50%.

The study also revealed that walking six miles per week is associated with a 50% reduction in Alzheimer’s risk in cognitively normal adults.