

# USER'S MANUAL FOR LIFE CARE PLAN ECONOMIST

## Introduction

The Life Care Plan Economist is a Microsoft® Excel spreadsheet template designed to reduce the costs of a life care plan to present value terms. Life care plans produced by physicians and vocational experts project the various categories of costs that will be incurred in caring for an individual who has disabilities of varying degrees and the special circumstances that must be addressed. These categories include future surgical interventions, medications, personal assistance, assisted living arrangements, home and vehicular modifications, etc. Life Care Plan Economist uses current market rates of interest, current projections of inflation, and historical "real", or inflation-adjusted data to project future costs and discounts them to a present value.

The Life Care Plan Economist is operated by Visual Basic macros. When opening the spreadsheet, the user will be asked whether or not to enable the macros. Click "Enable Macros" to activate the automated features of the spreadsheet.

Upon opening for the first time, the user will be asked to input key data in order to activate the Life Care Plan Economist. The initial input for activation is the individual's name, date of birth, date of injury and a single-use password that can be obtained from EcoFin, Inc., at its web site, EcoFinInc.com for a nominal fee. Note that a functional password can **only** be entered by using the initial Login Form. The Login Form will only appear when the Name space on the DataInput worksheet (cell D3) is blank. If, for any reason, you need to reenter a password, you will need to delete the Name on the DataInput worksheet, save the file, and then reopen it and enable the macros.

Instructions for using the Life Care Plan Economist follow, as well as the factual basis upon which the calculations are performed and the economic rationale behind the computations. In addition, there are two tutorial videos posted on the website that illustrate in a step-by-step fashion how to use the spreadsheet, including the combination of multiple workbooks by subset that can be linked together (the Advanced Tutorial). The Advanced Tutorial is particularly useful for illustrating the building of graphs from combined workbooks. If multiple workbooks containing different categories are anticipated to be used, it is easiest to create a template (with a name such as JohnDoeTemplate) that contains the basic data about the individual and can then be used repeatedly for multiple workbooks containing each of the different categories of items.

The Life Care Plan Economist was developed using the Excel 2003 version with modifications made to ensure its compatibility with Excel 2007. Thus, it is both forward and backward compatible with various versions of Excel. The Instructions contained in this manual are primarily based upon the 2003 version, while the video tutorials are produced in Excel 2007. Since the Life Care Plan Economist is managed with macros, the differences only become apparent when combining multiple spreadsheets to generate stacked representations of the multiple categories in color graphics.

## Menu

The menu worksheet contains the automated buttons that will perform various functions for inputting data, updating the results, viewing and printing the results, as well as resetting the

input data. These aspects will be discussed subsequently. Normally, the first course of action is to input data on the DataInput worksheet.

## Data Input

When the spreadsheet is first brought up and the Login Form is completed, the user will be positioned in the DataInput worksheet to enter the additional basic data that is needed about the individual as well as the various component information regarding the life care plan. Clicking on the Data Inputs button on the Menu page, subsequent to the initial input and updating of the various spreadsheets, will unhide the categories that remain unused and allow additional data to be included in the analysis.

## Gender

The first item that should be entered is the gender (male/female) of the individual. This is necessary for purposes of calculating the remaining statistical life expectancy.

## Race

Enter the race of the individual. Currently, the life tables are delineated by whites and blacks only. The current default for Hispanics (who can be either black or white) and Others is the average for all men or women based on the individual's gender. Whenever updated or expanded life tables become available, these defaults will reflect the updated tables.

## Life Expectancy Tables

The Worklife Expectancy calculation defaults to the life expectancy contained in the most recent life tables based upon the vital statistics provided by the National Vital Statistics System of the Centers for Disease Control (*United States Life Tables, 2004*, Volume 56 No. 9, available at [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr56/nvsr56\\_09.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr56/nvsr56_09.pdf)). The default calculation is updated as new tables become available.

The user cannot override the life expectancy table. To do so would be contradictory to the requirement that the projections of costs occur with "reasonable certainty".

## Reference Date

The reference date is defaulted to the current date of the computer system. This can be reset for any date that is desired. For example, it may be desirable to set it as of the date of trial in order to determine the present value as of the date of trial of future life care plan expenses, whereas past expenses will be a matter of record at that time.

## T-Note Rate (Discount Rate)

The T-Note Rate is the rate of interest used to discount the projected costs of the life care plan to a present value.

*Note: The selection of the interest rate to use for discounting purposes will generally have a large impact on the calculation of the present value. As a general rule-of-thumb, a 1% change in the discount rate will have an impact of just under 1/2 the total number of years as a percentage of present value. For example, if the total time horizon is thirty years, increasing the discount rate by 1% will decrease the present value by approximately 15% if all costs are incurred equally throughout the life expectancy.*

### *Use of a Medium-Term Rate of Interest:*

Some economists will attempt to match the interest rate with the projected cash flow using "stripped" government securities. The problem with this is that it assumes that the economist is able to predict future inflation with certainty. In reality, "stripped" securities contain a premium related to the uncertainty of future interest/inflation rates; thus, the longer the time to maturity of such a security, the higher the rate of interest (as compensation for the uncertainty) and the lower the present value. This approach essentially places all of the risk of inflation estimates (and investment returns) on the plaintiff.

The opposite extreme of using "stripped" securities' rates of interest is to employ the rate of interest on a treasury bill, in particular, a three-month t-bill. Since the three-month treasury bill will generally adjust in step with changes in inflation, there is really no risk associated with mis-estimating future rates of inflation. Also, the lower rate of interest that short-term treasury securities carry will result in a higher present value of future costs. This approach removes any of the risk of inflation estimates from the plaintiff. A limitation to the use of a three-month t-bill, however, is the fact that the government, through the tools of the Federal Reserve Board, can influence short-term rates via open-market operations of managing the money supply or through its discount rate, both of which impact very short-term interest rates. The Fed, on the other hand, has virtually no control over long-term interest rates which tend to be driven more by expectations of future inflation. This was clearly apparent during the "stagflation" period of the 1970s when the Fed was trying to stimulate the economy through money supply expansion that would lower short-term interest rates, but long-term rates rose as a result of higher inflationary expectations. It has also been apparent during the financial crisis that began in 2008.

One could also argue that it is in the best interests of defendants to use a short-term rate since they do not want to *overpay* the amount of damages should inflation ultimately be lower than originally estimated. From this perspective, it is in the best interests of both the plaintiff and defendant to prefer to use the rate of interest available on securities such as the three-month t-bill to discount future costs. Generally, however, this is not preferred by defendants since it results in a *higher* present value of future costs and the risk of uncertainty over future inflation and interest rates is borne by the defendant.

As a consequence, it seems that a "fair" risk-sharing compromise is something between the two extremes. Hence, it is suggested that no more than a seven-year time horizon be used for interest (investment) rate utilization. This allows for increases (decreases) in realized returns on invested award receipts to cover future costs as inflation increases (decreases) from the projected rates utilized at the time of the analysis.

Current rates of interest of differing maturities are posted weekly on the EcoFinInc.com website.

### Tax Rate

Generally, taxes can be ignored from the calculations of a present value for a life care plan. This is due to the fact that the rate of interest on government securities is so low that the earnings from investment, which are taxable, are dwarfed by the actual annual expenditures for a life care plan. Tax rules allow medical expenses to be deducted to the extent that they exceed 7½% of adjusted gross income and would more than offset any investment income. Thus, any tax liabilities that might result would most likely occur in a situation where the individual has substantial income from other sources while the annual costs of the life care plan

are quite modest. Nonetheless, the ability exists to include an estimate of the tax impact on investment income in the model.

The default setting for the tax rate is zero. Should a tax rate be included, one should consider the many factors that impact the tax status of the individual, including personal exemptions, standard deductions, estimates of earnings capacities and other sources of income. If the user chooses this route, it will be necessary to make an explicit assumption regarding inflation rather than a “below market” or “real” discount rate since taxes impact the rate of return on investments, but not inflation.

### General Inflation Rate

The projected future inflation rate is generally determined in one of two ways. One methodology is to utilize estimates of future inflation by looking at what “experts” project long-term future inflation to be. The two most well-known sources of these projections are the *Livingston Survey* (<http://www.philadelphiafed.org/research-and-data/real-time-center/livingston-survey/>) and the *Survey of Professional Forecasters*, both by the Federal Reserve Board of Philadelphia, (<http://www.philadelphiafed.org/research-and-data/real-time-center/survey-of-professional-forecasters/index.cfm>).

The second method is to look at the difference between the Non-Indexed T-Note Rate and the Inflation-Indexed T-Note Rate (officially, Treasury Inflation Indexed Securities, but more commonly referred to as Treasury Inflation Protected Securities, or “TIPS”). A general approximation is that if non-indexed government securities yield a 4% (or nominal) rate of interest and inflation-indexed securities yield a 1½% rate of interest, then the expected rate of inflation would be

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Expected inflation} &= \text{Non-indexed Yield Minus Inflation-Indexed Yield} \\ &= 4\% - 1\frac{1}{2}\% \\ &= 2\frac{1}{2}\%\end{aligned}$$

The true relationship (known as the Fisher equation) is

$$1 + \text{nominal rate} = (1 + \text{real rate}) * (1 + \text{inflation})$$

Thus, the implied inflation rate can be defined as

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Inflation rate} &= (1 + \text{nominal rate}) / (1 + \text{real rate}) - 1 \\ &= 1.04 / 1.015 - 1 \\ &= 1.02463 - 1 \\ &= .02463 \text{ or } 2.463\%\end{aligned}$$

Some economists prefer to use a “real” discount rate, or what is often referred to as a “below-market” discount rate. This methodology employs an inflation rate of zero percent (0.0%) and discounts at the historical inflation-adjusted rate of return on treasury securities. The correct

calculation is determined by the preceding formula in which the historic nominal rate of interest and historic inflation rate are utilized to determine the “real” rate of interest which would then be input as the T-note Rate (Discount Rate) at the same time that the General Inflation Rate is set to zero. As previously mentioned, this approach is incorrect if taxes are involved.

Estimates of inflation for both methodologies will be posted weekly on the EcoFinInc.com website.

### **Timing of Costs and Present Value Calculations**

The projected costs are based upon the component beginning dates and durations and allocated on a calendar year basis. Thus, if a component cost begins on the individual's birthdate which is December 1, one-twelfth of the annual cost is allocated to the year in which the cost begins and the remaining eleven-twelfths is reflected in the following year. The following year's cost will also reflect an increase consistent with the projected inflation in the category's cost. The exception to this is when the Initial One-Time Cost selection is set to “Yes” as described below.

In calculating the present value, the T-Note Rate (Discount Rate) is used as the discount rate. All cash flows are assumed to occur in the middle of the year. This means that if the Reference Date is **after** July 1, the costs during the remainder of the year of the reference date are not discounted. Costs in subsequent years are discounted to the referenced date. For example, if the reference date is March 31, 2009, the costs for the remainder of 2009 are discounted for three months, or a quarter of a year, while costs for 2010 are discounted for fifteen months, costs for 2011 are discounted for twenty-seven months, etc. If the reference date is September 30, 2009, however, the costs for the remainder of 2009 are not discounted at all, while costs for 2010 are discounted for nine months, costs for 2011 are discounted for twenty-one months, etc.

### **Component Cost Categories**

The Life Care Plan Economist allows for a total of thirty (30) different categories of component costs to be calculated. Six inputs are required for each component.

1. Component Category
2. Cost Category (the default is General Inflation)
3. Beginning Age
4. Duration
5. Current Cost
6. Frequency per Year
7. Initial One-Time Cost (the default is a cost continuous in time)

#### **Component Category**

The name of the category is input here. This is the identifier of the costs provided in the Summary and Detail output pages.

#### **Cost Category**

The specific cost category in which the component falls should be selected. This will determine rate of increase that will be applied *in addition to* normal inflation in the projections of future costs for the category. The component rates of inflation are based upon historical rates of increase *relative to* the historical overall rate of inflation in the economy as a whole. The rate

of increase for each cost component is calculated from the average annual values of the Historical Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPI-U) by commodity and service group as reported by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics and adjusted for the corresponding rate of inflation for the economy as a whole. The earliest Base Year of 1970 is a somewhat arbitrary choice that is designed to capture a variety of different economic circumstances and, therefore, average out the various short-term fluctuations that can occur in the relationship between general inflation and that of specific categories. More recent Base Years reflect when the Bureau of Labor Statistics first began tracking the individual category.

The following table delineates the specific component rates of inflation that are added to the current estimate of overall inflation for projection purposes based upon 2008 year-end calculations:

<u>CPI-U</u>	<u>Component Inflation</u>	<u>Base Year</u>
Medical Care Commodities	0.36%	1970
Prescription Drugs & Medical Supplies	0.96%	1970
Nonprescription Drugs & Medical Supplies	-1.00%	1987
Internal & Respiratory Over-the-Counter	-0.57%	1970
Nonprescription Medical Equipment & Supplies	-0.69%	1978
Medical Care Services	2.03%	1970
Professional Services	1.10%	1970
Physicians' Services	1.29%	1970
Dental Services	1.46%	1970
Eyeglasses and Eye Care	-0.57%	1987
Services of Other Medical Professionals	0.27%	1987
Hospital and Related Services	3.65%	1978
Hospital Services	3.41%	1997
Inpatient Hospital Services	3.13%	1997
Outpatient Hospital Services	4.12%	1987
Nursing Home & Adult Daycare	1.71%	1997

The component inflation rates are updated each year when the data for the previous year has been published. Two additional categories, Invalid & Elderly Care and Health Insurance, began to be tracked in 2006. These categories will be added when a longer period of historical experience has been documented.

#### Beginning Age

This should be the age (in years) at which the particular procedure/treatment/item is first needed by the individual.

#### Duration

The duration is the length of time (in years) that the procedure/treatment/item will be needed.

#### Current Cost

The current cost of the component should be determined and input in this cell. Future costs are projected based upon overall inflation projections and the specific rate of "real" increase for the cost category selected.

## Frequency

The frequency of the procedure/treatment/item must be determined on a *per year* basis. This can vary significantly and often requires that a formula be used in entering the frequency (in lieu of using a calculator). For example, if a pain pill is expected to be taken three times a day on a daily basis, one would enter the following formula:

$$=3*365$$

The resulting figure that will display in the cell is 1,095 times per year.

Alternatively, some procedures (hip replacement) or items (wheelchair replacement) occur infrequently or with a low probability and should be entered as a fraction. Replacement of a wheelchair every seven years would be entered as

$$=1/7$$

The resulting figure that will display is 0.14 times per year. (The actual figure contains more decimal places that do not appear in the display.) With fractions, the equals sign (“=”) is not necessary in Excel.

## Initial One-Time Cost

If the component item is an expense that will be incurred only once and in the first year, such as a one-time surgical procedure, then this button should be set to "Yes". In this instance, the cost will be recognized during the first year rather than spread out over the following 12 months. Note that for *future* years, setting this parameter to "Yes" will have no effect on spreading out the cost over a twelve-month period since the projection is not immediate and assumed to occur within the relevant twelve-month period. This is intended to account for the unlikelihood that the exact timing of a future one-time procedure is known with precision.

It should also be noted that setting the Initial One-Time Cost button to "Yes" will result in the full cost being recognized during the current year even if the Reference Date is *after* the individual's birthdate for that year. That is, the implicit assumption of setting the Initial One-Time Cost to "Yes" is that the procedure will not have occurred prior to the Reference Date. Also, only a single Current Cost will be calculated, independent of the frequency. For example, if a series of six monthly visits of follow-up by a doctor will be required at a cost of \$100 per visit, the total cost of \$600 should be input as Current Cost since the frequency will be ignored.

After all of the data inputs and component cost items have been entered, the user can return to the menu by either clicking the button at the top of the DataInput page or clicking on the Menu tab at the bottom of the spreadsheet on the far left.

## Data Input

The Data Inputs button will reveal all of the categories on the DataInput worksheet, both hidden (unused) and those that were previously filled out, allowing modification of existing cost components or adding new ones.

## Update Results

The button entitled Update Results updates all of the tables and graphs for any changes made on the Data Input page. Updating occurs whenever one of the Print or View buttons is

used as well. The Update Results button allows the user to bypass the automated macros in viewing and printing the results.

### **Reset Components**

The Reset Components button will automatically erase **all** of the Component Cost Categories and reset it to its original state. This will NOT change any of the data inputs regarding the individual or interest rates. Also, the Component Cost defaults are NOT reset to general inflation and the Initial One-Time Cost parameters are NOT reset to "No". Thus, inputting new categories requires that the proper component Cost Category is selected for each cost component. In most cases, it is easier to simply reopen the basic program and start over with all of the inputs.

### **Print Inputs**

The Print Inputs button will format and print the Data Input page. The spreadsheet then returns to the Menu.

### **Print Summary**

The Print Summary button formats and prints the Summary page which lists the total present value of each cost category as well as the sum of all of the categories. The spreadsheet then returns to the Menu.

### **Print Totals**

The Print Totals button formats and prints the Totals page which summarizes the total cost of all of the categories for each year, as well as the present value of the total costs for each year and a running cumulative total present value. The spreadsheet then returns to the Menu.

### **Print Detail**

The Print Detail button formats and prints the year-by-year projected costs and present values for each cost component category. The detail page can require a number of pages depending upon the age of the individual as well as the number and duration of the cost components. The spreadsheet then returns to the Menu.

### **View Summary**

The View Summary button formats the exhibits and graphs and moves to the Summary page to allow the user to view the results. To return to the Menu, click on the Return to Menu button at the top of the page.

### **View Totals**

The View Totals button formats the exhibits and graphs and moves to the Totals page to allow the user to view the results. To return to the Menu, click on the Return to Menu button at the top of the page.

### **View Detail**

The View Detail button formats the exhibits and graphs and moves to the Detail page to allow the user to view the results. To return to the Menu from the Detail page, click on the far left tab entitled Menu at the bottom of the spreadsheet.

## **View Graphs**

The View Graphs button formats the exhibits and graphs and moves to the Annual Costs graph to allow the user to view the total projected annual costs for each year in graphic form. Clicking on the tab entitled PVAnnualCosts (immediately adjacent at the bottom of the spreadsheet) moves the user to a graphical depiction of the total annual costs for each year in present value terms, while the CumulativePV tab at the far right on the bottom of the spreadsheet reveals the graph that depicts the cumulative present value of the total costs. To return to the Menu from the Detail page, click on the far left tab entitled Menu at the bottom of the spreadsheet.

## **Changing the Titles**

In many instances, the number of procedures/treatments/items that comprise a total life care plan exceeds the maximum of 30 components that the Life Care Plan Economist is designed to accommodate. Alternatively, many life care plans categorize the components into subsets. In these circumstances, it is often desirable to input subsets of related components in separate worksheets. For example, the user may want to put Physician Services, Medications and Equipment & Supplies on three separate copies of the life care plan template. In this case, it is also desirable to rename the titles on the output. To change the default titles from Life Care Plan to another parameter, simply click on the InputData tab and fill in the title that is desired in the Cost Category Title (cell D14). Clicking on the Update button on the Menu page will incorporate the new title in all of the exhibits and graphs.

## **Combining Graphs**

When numerous spreadsheets are required to accommodate all of the subsets of categories and component costs, a single set of graphs may be preferred to separate graphs for each subset. This can be accomplished by opening all of the spreadsheets simultaneously. You will want to have these spreadsheets open on the Graphs worksheet (the last tab on the bottom right-hand side). The original (unfilled) template for the individual can then be opened and used as a consolidating workbook (JohnDoeTemplate). In order for the graphs to appear properly, the consolidating workbook will need to be “seeded” to accurately capture the output of the categorized subset workbooks. The default title in cell D14 on the DataInput page should already read as “Life Care Plan”. Next, the Beginning at Age cell for Category 1 (cell C19) must be set for the *earliest* age of any component on the other workbooks, while the Duration (Years) cell for Category 1 (cell D19) must be set for the *longest* period of time. Finally, the Current Cost cell (cell E19) should be set for \$0.01 and the Frequency Per Year cell (F19) should be set for 1/10 (or less).

After seeding the cells in row 19 of the DataInput worksheet, click on the Update Results button on the Menu to build the graphs. Next, click on the tab entitled Graphs. This worksheet allows for a maximum of ten (10) individual workbooks to be linked to the consolidating workbook for graphics purposes. Two methods of generating combined graphs can be performed.

## **Single Representation**

The columns entitled Subset 1 are already set to generate a graph from the use of data that is input into this worksheet. Place the cursor in the first year's column entitled Annual Costs (cell B3). Enter the equals sign (“=” without the quotations) and then click on the first workbook whose results you want to add to the graphs. Now click on that workbook's cell B3. Enter the plus sign (“+” without the quotations) and click on the next workbook's cell B3 that you want to

combine. Repeat until all of the workbooks have been included. Now press "Enter". After pressing "Enter", you will need to press the F2 button to return to the edit mode (or edit it in the Equation dialogue box at the top of Excel). At this point, you must remove the dollar signs ("\$\$") that appear in the terms that create the links to the other spreadsheets. Once all of the dollar signs are removed from the equation, press "Enter". Next, you must copy the cell downward over the remaining years. To do this, click on cell B3. Press Control-C simultaneously (alternatively, you can use the mouse to Edit-Copy). Now click on cell B4. Holding the shift key down, you can press the "end" key on your computer and then the cursor-down arrow. This will highlight all of the following years in column. When all of the following years are highlighted, press "Enter" and the connections will be complete. Alternatively, you can drag the lower right-hand corner of cell B3 all the way to the bottom.

Finally, you will need to copy column B from cell B3 to B99 to column C in order for present values to be consolidated as well. Highlight cells B3 through B99 (with the mouse or by clicking on cell B3 then holding the shift key down and pressing the "end" key followed by the cursor-down arrow). Copy (Control-C) the highlighted cells. Click on cell C3 and press enter. Note that the Cumulative Present Value column (column D) does NOT need to be connected to the other spreadsheets since it is calculated from column C on the consolidating workbook.

#### Stacked Representation by Category Subset (Maximum of 10 Subsets)

The following description describes the procedure for creating a single graph that incorporates multiple spreadsheets using Excel 2003. See the Advanced Tutorial for consolidation using Excel 2007. The methodology is almost identical except for the location of the formatting options, etc. The Advanced Tutorial video is strongly recommended for viewing as it also illustrates some short-cuts for creating the graphs.

The multiple workbooks of subsets can be represented as stacked area graphs but require more effort on the part of the user of the program. The procedure mirrors that in the preceding section for a Single Representation except that each separate subset is entered under a Subset heading on the Graphs worksheet of the consolidating workbook. For example, if there are three subsets that you want to combine, you would link the workbook of the first subset to columns B and C under the Subset 1 title on the Graphs tab of the consolidating workbook, followed by linking the workbook of the second subset to columns F and G under the Subset 2 title in the consolidating workbook, and finally by linking the third subset workbook to columns J and K in the consolidating workbook.

Once all of the subset workbooks are consolidated, it is necessary to add additional series to the graphs themselves. The first subset will already be integrated into the graph, but you will need to change the name of the series on the graph. To do this, click on the AnnualCosts tab to access the graph of Annual Costs of Life Care Plan. Now click on Chart in the menu bar at the top of Excel followed by Source Data in the drop-down that appears. Then click on Series in the box that appears. Change the name by highlighting all of the characters in the Name box (it should initially read as =Macrocalc!\$b\$xx where xx is a number). Now type in ="Name of First Subset". You will need to include the quotations around the name of the first subset that you are using.

To add the second subset, click on the Add button. Now click on the empty Name box and type in ="Name of Second Subset" (don't forget the quotation marks). Next, click on the icon to the right of the Values box. This will hide the big Source Data box and leave you with a small Source Data – Values box. Click on the Graphs tab at the right-hand side bottom of the

spreadsheet and highlight the cells beginning with F3 through the last figure in the column. Now click on small icon at the right of the Source Data – Values box. This will move you back to the larger Source Data box. You will now see that the Values: box contains the following: =Graphs!\$F\$6:\$F\$xx where xx is the number of the last row that highlighted. The number of the last row (xx) needs to correspond to the last year that the graph includes. This may be discernible from viewing the bottom of the graph itself, or it may require that you look at the various numbers on the Graphs tab of the consolidating worksheet in order to find the last row that contains a figure in it.

Repeat the Add procedure until the remaining subsets have been added. Then click the Okay button. If you want to change the automatic colors of the different subsets, you will need to click on each subset in the chart and then click on the Format option in the menu bar at the top of Excel followed by Selected Data Series. A box will open from which you can choose a color under the Patterns tab at the top of the box. In addition, you can change the Fill Effects by clicking on the button beneath the array of colors. On the new box that appears, the tab entitled Patterns will present a choice of styles of Gradient patterns (the default) to choose from. The built-in first series that has a default color of blue uses the pattern of horizontal shading of dark to light from the bottom to the top. Once you have formatted the pattern of the series, you can click Okay to go back to the Format Data Series box. The tab entitled Series Order allows you to rearrange the subsets from top to bottom if you so desire. When you are finished, click Okay.

This formatting should be done for each Subset that you have combined into the graph. Sometimes, a subset will be very difficult to click on directly for formatting purposes due to the fact that the dollar amount is very small in comparison to the other subsets. By clicking on any of the series in the graph, you can use the cursor buttons to move to others. At the top of Excel in what is normally called the Equation dialogue box for a spreadsheet, you will see which series is currently highlighted. If the Equation box is blank, you are not in a series but, instead, are on an axis, title, or some other aspect of the graph itself.

### **Saving the File**

It is highly recommended that each file be save with its own name, such as John Doe (or John Doe1 if you will have multiple files for the individual). Failure to change the name will result in over-writing the basic template file. A new template can always be downloaded from [www.EcoFinInc.com](http://www.EcoFinInc.com) if needed.

### **Questions and Suggestions**

While the Life Care Plan Economist was developed to accommodate as many users' needs as possible, there will undoubtedly be some that were not anticipated. Any feedback you may have, both positive and negative, as well as any questions or suggestions for enhancements, are sincerely welcomed and may be sent to us through our website at [www.EcoFinInc.com](http://www.EcoFinInc.com).