

Dear Friends,

Over the last several months, a subcommittee of Diocesan Council has been working on developing a resolution to be presented at this year's Diocesan Convention. The issue at hand is regarding health care coverage, but its implications reach beyond that. In this time when much effort has been focused on making health care accessible to all, your General Convention of 2009 took a position on this issue that is fundamental to our shared communion, both in philosophy and in practice. They passed Resolution A177, better known as the Denominational Health Plan (DHP).

The Denominational Health Plan requires that all full time (1,500 hours or more annually) employees working under the authority of the Church must be provided with health care coverage through the Episcopal Church Medical Trust. In addition to this requirement, there must be parity between lay and clergy employees in provision of that coverage on a parish level. The dioceses of the Episcopal Church have been asked to create a policy that brings all churches in compliance with these requirements by January 1, 2013.

Enclosed you will find a resolution that will bring the Diocese of Missouri in compliance with Resolution A177. Although the potential impact of changing the way health coverage is offered and paid for will not be a significant change or financial burden for the Offices of the Bishop or the majority of our congregations, adherence to the spirit of this resolution will take a commitment to social justice and our Baptismal covenant.

So that you may consider this proposed resolution in light of the current situation, we are including some talking points that may assist you in your considerations:

- § Resolution A177 requires the establishment of a Denominational Health Plan and that the plan provides comparable coverage to what is currently being offered.
- § Resolution A177 requires that the Episcopal Church Medical Trust be used for benefits. All parishes and missions in the diocese are now using the Medical Trust for clergy and lay healthcare coverage, except for one that is using a non-Medical Trust plan for its lay employees.
- § A survey was conducted to obtain information regarding healthcare coverage for employees in the Diocese of Missouri. 42 of 47 surveys were returned.

- § The surveys that were returned reported 254 employees. Of those employees, 81 are currently classified as full time, working 1,500 hours or more. 35 members of that full time group are clergy.
- § Survey data indicated that all lay employees working 1,500 hours or more currently were covered under a medical insurance plan, either through the diocese or another source.
- § Based on current survey data, if the proposed resolution is adopted, five or fewer of our congregations will need to update their policies on healthcare access and compensation, revising benefits for a potential 13 employees.
- § A premium surcharge or incentive option is included in the policy. It is our hope that this option will prevent entire families from transferring to Medical Trust coverage if they have an opportunity to be covered elsewhere.
- § In the Diocese of Missouri, all clergy are currently offered medical coverage for themselves and their families with 100% of the premium paid. The exception is the Offices of the Bishop, where both clergy and lay employees pay a small portion of their premiums.
- § Under the Denominational Health Plan, individuals will continue to have the option to “opt out” of the diocesan health plan if they can prove coverage through another source.
- § The Medical Trust will continue to work with the Diocese of Missouri to select health plan offerings that are appropriate for all individuals in the diocese.

You are strongly encouraged to review this information and discuss it with your vestry and convention delegates.

In addition to the resolution, in this mailing you will find a DHP Frequently Asked Questions guide as well as a spiritual reflection resource to help provide a context for your conversations.

Additional information on the DHP can be found at [www.cpg.org/dhp](http://www.cpg.org/dhp).  
Questions and comments can be directed to [dhp@diocesemo.org](mailto:dhp@diocesemo.org).