

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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PART FOUR IN A SERIES ABOUT THE MYTHS OF HEALTH CARE
SHARING MINISTRIES

***The Alliance of Health Care Sharing Ministries Dispels
the Most Common Myths About Health Care Sharing
Ministries***

WASHINGTON D.C. — Many myths surround Health Care Sharing Ministries, so much so that *The Alliance of Health Care Sharing Ministries* (*The Alliance*, ahcsm.org) has compiled a list of myths and realities.

Recently, *The Alliance* addressed eight myths of Health Care Sharing:

- 1) ***Medical providers won't treat me and my family if I don't have health insurance.*** (Not true; members have received billions of dollars in services from health care providers around the country, with the expenses shared by other members.)
- 2) ***Health Care Sharing Ministries are like health insurance.*** (No, they are not. Members share directly with other members rather than transferring risk to a central third party.)
- 3) ***A "big need" would "break" a Health Care Sharing Ministry.*** (Members have been sharing needs since 1981, handling many "big needs" over the years, from open heart surgery to long-term journeys through cancer treatment.)
- 4) ***Not enough people will send money to a member with a need, so the need will go unmet.*** (Health Care Sharing Ministry members have an organized process of assigning the appropriate number of members and their contributions for each need.)
- 5) ***Members of Health Care Sharing Ministries contribute to the rising cost of health care because their uninsured members don't have access to insurance discounts.*** (Health Care Sharing Ministry members share billions of dollars per year in health care expenses among millions of individuals in all 50 states. Members often pay negotiated or cash prices significantly lower than billed charges.)
- 6) ***Health Care Sharing Ministries are not regulated.*** (Yes, they are. They are regulated as charities in their home states under each state's charity laws and each attorney general, and at the federal level as 501(c)3 charities under the Internal Revenue Service. Health Care Sharing Ministries are not subject to state health insurance laws because they are not health insurance).
- 7) ***Health insurance = health care.*** (No, that's a common misconception. Health insurance and health care are not synonymous. Health care is obtaining a service from a medical provider. Health insurance is contracting

with a third party to assume partial liability for payments for those services, in exchange for monthly premiums. Getting access to health care is made difficult even with health insurance if the out-of-pocket costs are too high or the network is too narrow, as is the case with many insurance plans.)

8) *People won't send money to people they don't know.* (Yes, they do. Health Care Sharing Ministries members send millions each month to people they usually don't know. Christians who live according to the instructions of the Scriptures understand their responsibility to help those in need and trust that they will be treated the same in their time of need.)

Continuing with this series, *The Alliance* addresses below three more myths and concerns: *Health Care Sharing Ministries turn away people with pre-existing conditions; health care sharing is a pyramid scheme (or Ponzi scheme, etc.); and Health Care Sharing Ministry membership is too expensive for the average family.*

Health Care Sharing Ministries have enabled hundreds of thousands of faith-centered people to honor God through their health care and come together as a community to share each other's medical expenses.

Every month, members contribute a set amount that is shared between the other members to pay their medical bills. Each ministry does this differently—some have an online sharing technology system to approve the sharing of funds, while others facilitate the sending of individual checks from members to the member in need. When members go to the doctor, hospital, or incur a medical cost, they submit the bill to their community through their ministry. Expenses that meet the ministry's guidelines are shared by the community and payment is made to the family in need, or directly to the doctor.

“Health Care Sharing Ministries are unique because they enable Christians to find solutions to high health care costs, aid with expenses, and encourage fellow members through prayers and notes,” said Katy Talento, executive director of The Alliance. “These ministries educate and raise awareness about their approach, including correcting inaccuracies and misunderstandings. The health care landscape is changing rapidly, and The Alliance is helping to bust these myths and give people a true picture of Health Care Sharing.”

Here are three more myths about Health Care Sharing Ministries and realities:

MYTH #9: Health Care Sharing Ministries turn away people with pre-existing conditions.

REALITY: Health Care Sharing Ministries enroll new members with pre-existing conditions every day and share medical bills for any health needs that begin after enrollment. Most ministries do have a waiting period before medical bills arising from a pre-existing condition are eligible for sharing. In that case, Health Care Sharing Ministry members are able to submit needs related to pre-existing conditions as a “special need,” for which ministries have raised extra donations to support outside of the normal sharing process.

MYTH #10: Health Care Sharing is a pyramid scheme (or Ponzi scheme, etc.).

REALITY: Here's how the Securities Exchange Commission defines a “Ponzi scheme:” “an investment fraud that involves the payment of purported returns to existing investors from funds contributed by new investors.” And here's the SEC's definition of a “pyramid scheme:” “In the classic ‘pyramid’ scheme, participants attempt to make money solely by recruiting new participants into the program. The hallmark of these schemes is the

promise of sky-high returns in a short period of time for doing nothing other than handing over your money and getting others to do the same.”

Members of Health Care Sharing Ministries send their money directly to each other or to a special account that is set aside solely for sharing member medical needs and can't be used for any other purpose. The only member contribution that is available to the ministry for overhead and administration is the amount that the ministry discloses specifically in advance to members as being used for that purpose, and not a penny more. Health Care Sharing is not a “Ponzi scheme” because there is no promise to “investors” of “returns.” Health Care Sharing Ministries report monthly to members exactly where their contributions go, and they make their annual financial audits and IRS form 990 available to the public.

MYTH #11: Health Care Sharing is too expensive for the average family.

REALITY: The facts reveal that it is health insurance that is too expensive for the average family. The average monthly premium for an unsubsidized family of four purchasing insurance in the individual market is \$1,437/month or \$17,244 per year.

By contrast, Health Care Sharing Ministry members typically contribute monthly, for a family of four, as low as \$221 for the youngest age category, choosing the program with the most minimal sharing features, and as high as \$1,259 per month for a family in the oldest age category and the most robust program features. The mid-point for this range is \$740, a monthly contribution level that is more typical for the age categories and program selection for most families. This is a more affordable solution for the faith communities attracted to Health Care Sharing Ministries.

Founded in 2007 and headquartered in Washington, D.C., *The Alliance of Health Care Sharing Ministries* was established as a 501(c)(6) trade organization to represent the common interests of Health Care Sharing Ministries which are facilitating the sharing of health care needs (financial, emotional, and spiritual) by individuals and families, and their participants. *The Alliance* engages with federal and state regulators and policy makers, members of the media, and the Christian community to provide accurate and timely information about Health Care Sharing Ministries.

Learn more about *The Alliance of Health Care Sharing Ministries* visit www.ahcsm.org or follow the ministry on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

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