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Health care freedom efforts in states applauded

James Lansberry of Samaritan Ministries International on Thursday, Feb. 4, 2010, applauded the efforts in more than three dozen states to guarantee freedom of choice in health care for their residents.

Health care reform legislation at the federal level includes an individual mandate that would require all U.S. citizens to buy health insurance or face fines.

The Freedom of Choice in Health Care Act, which would release residents of a state from such a mandate, has already been filed or prefiled in 30 states. A question on whether to guarantee freedom of choice will be on Arizona's ballot this fall, and lawmakers in five more states have announced their intentions to file the legislation. A citizen-led initiative has also been announced in Colorado.

Virginia's state Senate has passed the legislation and its House is expected to take up the matter today.

"It's encouraging to see state legislatures pushing back against a one-size-fits-all approach to health reform," said Lansberry, who is vice president of SMI and president of the Alliance of Health Care Sharing Ministries. "When a patient is freed up to choose providers, to choose the design of his own health care methods, at that point there is better health care and better cost.

"We applaud the legislators standing up for freedom rather than a centrally controlled choice."

The states in which the Freedom of Choice in Health Care Act, promoted by the American Legislative Exchange Commission, has been introduced to release residents from an individual mandate are Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

States in which legislators are considering introducing the act are Kansas, Montana, North Carolina, Rhode Island, and Utah.

Samaritan Ministries is a health care needs-sharing organization founded in 1994. It includes than 14,100 member households in all 50 states. For more information about SMI or to contact James Lansberry, call 1-888-726-4276, send e-mail to jlansberry@smchcn.net or info@healthcaresharing.org, or view www.samaritanministries.org.

You can follow Samaritan on Twitter at [samaritanmin](https://twitter.com/samaritanmin). On Facebook, search for Samaritan Ministries.

Information about the Alliance of Health Care Sharing Ministries can be found at www.healthcaresharing.org.

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