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Fight for health care freedom isn't over yet

PEORIA, IL—The passage of a health care bill by the U.S. House on Saturday without exemption language for members of health care sharing ministries was only an early stage in the process, said James Lansberry, vice president of Samaritan Ministries, on Monday.

Lansberry said it was unfortunate that an exemption was not included in the House bill. But he reassured the approximately 100,000 members of health care sharing ministries such as Samaritan and Medishare that many battles are yet to be fought for the freedom of Christians to share each other's financial burdens (Galatians 6:2).

"This is not even close to being over," Lansberry said. "The bill as passed by the House would not take effect for four years, and there are several legislative and judicial avenues at our disposal, even in the unlikely event that the Senate immediately passes the bill as is."

The Alliance of Health Care Sharing Ministries, of which Lansberry is also president, has been striving for several months to get language into the reform legislation that would exempt members of such ministries from being subject to an individual mandate to buy health insurance.

That language has been inserted into the legislation coming out of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee. God willing, the exemption language will survive conference committee work that will reconcile the House and Senate bills.

Lansberry urged members of sharing ministries to contact their U.S. representatives and senators at their district offices over the long Veterans Day weekend and urge them to vote against a final version of health care reform unless it includes exemption language.

He also reminded them that "the King of Kings still reigns over all the affairs of men."

Samaritan Ministries is a health care needs-sharing organization founded in 1994. It includes than 13,700 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.

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