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March 22, 2010
For immediate release

Samaritan members exempt from individual mandate

PEORIA, IL—Members of Samaritan Ministries International will be able to continue sharing medical needs as they have done for the past 15 years, thanks to an exemption to the individual mandate in the health care bill approved by the U.S. House on Sunday, James Lansberry said Monday.

Lansberry, vice president of Samaritan Ministries International, said the exemption for members of health care sharing ministries is intact in the bill now on the president's desk.

"Members do not need to change anything they're doing," said Lansberry, who is also president of the Alliance of Health Care Sharing Ministries.

He said that the reconciliation bill passed by the House and now before the Senate "also has nothing in it that we can find that affects anything related to individual mandate exemptions."

Most importantly, Lansberry said, "Nothing has changed with respect to God's sovereignty."

Neither, he added, has anything changed "with our ability to continue to operate."

Samaritan Ministries is concerned, however, about the eventual impact of the health care bill on the United States over the long term.

"This is certainly a very dangerous thing for the health care industry and for Americans in general," Lansberry said.

On the up side, though, "There are some things economically in there that may actually increase favorability toward cash patients. I think that's going to be a positive effect for our members."

Lansberry also stressed that once government subsidies for health insurance plans kick in and start funding abortion, Christian health care sharing ministries "will be the only pro-life option left for Christians."

The Samaritan VP also encouraged members to pray in the coming days and months for God's will to be done in the health care sector.

Samaritan Ministries is a health care needs-sharing organization founded in 1994. It includes more than 14,400 member households in all 50 states and around the world. 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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