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2 **AFFIRMING HEALTH CARE COVERAGE FOR UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST AUTHORIZED**  
3 **MINISTERS AND THEIR FAMILIES**  
4 **A Resolution of Witness**

5  
6 **Submitted by the Pacific Northwest Conference**

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8 **SUMMARY**  
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10 This resolution is based on the belief that clergy and their families need to be provided health, dental  
11 and vision coverage when they begin a new ministry.

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13 The Eighteenth General Synod enacted a pronouncement and resolution proclaiming Health Care For All  
14 as a priority and declared that an equitable accessible system of universal health care in the United  
15 States is consistent with the moral and justice imperatives of the Christian Gospel. The United Church of  
16 Christ's campaign, "Health Care for All" is still a priority! The Church continues to speak prophetically  
17 that health care is not only a basic human right but a human need that includes everyone. As people of  
18 faith we believe that it is a moral imperative to transform health care so that it is: inclusive, accessible,  
19 affordable and accountable.

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21 **BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE**  
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23 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the  
24 yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry  
25 and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter – when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to  
26 turn away from your own flesh and blood?" Isaiah 58: 6-7

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28 "You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of  
29 Egypt," Exodus 23:9, this is the, "Sitz im Leben," situation in life, of a pastor and family beginning a  
30 ministry in a new setting. Listen to me, my people, and give heed to me, my nation; for a teaching will go out  
31 from me, and my justice for a light to the peoples," Isaiah 51:9, such is the promised blessing for God's people.

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33 Paul's theology rooted in 2 Corinthians 8:13+14 underlines the importance establishing healthy  
34 relationships with clergy and family in a new setting, "I do not mean that there should be relief for others  
35 and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need,  
36 so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance."

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38 Ethically, we are all responsible for the wellbeing, health and care of God's people. The Health Care Justice  
39 Program of the Justice and Witness Ministries of our denomination have stated "Our Church speaks  
40 prophetically that health care is a basic right and that our health care system must provide comprehensive,  
41 quality, affordable, accessible and available health care for all.

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43 **RESOLUTION**  
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45 WHEREAS, General Synod adopted the resolution, "Access to Health, Dental, and Disability Insurance for  
46 United Church of Christ Clergy and Lay Employees and Their Families," 99-GS-50.

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48 WHEREAS, the Twenty-first General Synod adopted the resolution, "Reclaiming the Church's Ministry of  
49 Health and Healing," 97-GS-46

50  
51 WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has adopted a *Mission Statement on Health and Human*  
52 *Service* which states: "The mission of the United Church of Christ arises out of faith in God who calls the

53 worlds into being, creates humankind in the divine image, and intends for us the blessing of wholeness  
54 and harmony with God, with creation, with other persons, and within ourselves. In health and human  
55 service, that mission must serve God's intent for humankind made fully manifest in Jesus Christ, conquered sin  
56 and death and reconciled humanity, nature, and God.

57  
58 In the life of Jesus and in his ministries of teaching and healing, we learn the way of discipleship.

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60 We rejoice in the power of God to make all things new and in the gift of the Holy Spirit through which  
61 the Church is empowered to continue Jesus' ministries of compassion, justice, and transformation,  
62 serving the well-being and wholeness of all God's people.

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64 The mission of the United Church of Christ in health and human service is rooted in the ministry of Jesus  
65 Christ and empowered by God's spirit."

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67 WHEREAS, this mission statement calls us to seek justice, "thus informed by scripture, tradition, and  
68 human experience, our faith compels us to seek new ways to enable the liberation of the oppressed and  
69 reconciliation of the alienated through new acts of love and justice. When we do so, we must answer  
70 the questions: What are the dimensions of that mission? Who is involved in that mission?"

71  
72 WHEREAS, the process the United Church of Christ uses for pastors and churches rarely provides  
73 opportunities for pastors and their families to move from one church to the next without a break between  
74 positions, and many of our clergy cannot afford the cost of providing their own insurance through COBRA for  
75 the months between ending one position and beginning another.

76  
77 WHEREAS, the understanding of a minister being "Self-employed" may work well for IRS purposes, in  
78 actuality ministers are employed by the church or a related organization or agency.

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80 WHEREAS, the nature of interim ministry does not provide for coordination of placements by churches,  
81 conferences, national settings and related organizations agencies, and thus does not provide  
82 smooth seamless transitions from one position to the next.

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84 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-eighth General Synod of the United Church of Christ  
85 | reaffirms that offering adequate and equitable health, dental, and vision coverage for United Church of Christ  
86 Authorized Ministers and their families through the Pension Boards is an important justice issue, and is part of  
87 our covenant together as members of the United Church of Christ.

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89 THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-eighth General Synod of the United Church of  
90 Christ encourages the Executive Council to create a Task Force including representation from the Executive  
91 Council, Conferences, The Pension Boards, Covenanted Ministries, and Affiliated and Associated Ministries to  
92 enter into conversation and address issues of providing continuity of coverage for Authorized Ministers of the  
93 United Church of Christ and their families as they move among churches and other settings of the United  
94 Church of Christ. WE ASK THAT THIS BODY REPORT BACK TO THE TWENTY-NINTH GENERAL  
95 | SYNOD.

96  
97 THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that leaders in the National setting, Conferences, Associations,  
98 | and Local Churches  
99 settings shall seek to encourage the Pension Boards serving the United Church of Christ to offer to make  
100 medical coverage available to all clergy and their family members when they are called to, or begin a  
101 new position within the life of our church. AND TO educate and encourage enrollment in the United Church of  
102 Christ health, dental, and vision plans for the purposes of keeping health care costs affordable, and to assist  
103 churches in exploring options for funding their employees' United Church of Christ health, dental, and vision  
104 plans.

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**FUNDING**

Funding for the implementation of this resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

The Executive Council, Local Church Ministries, the Conferences, Associations of the United Church of Christ, and The Pension Boards are requested to implement this resolution.