

It Is Important to Understand:

Universal Health Fellowship, Inc., is a health care sharing ministry (“HCSM”) that provides the Universal HealthShare Programs (“UHF Sharing Programs”) for its members. It is important to understand that UHF Sharing Programs are NOT INSURANCE and that there are significant differences between HCSM programs and traditional health insurance plans. These differences are explained in detail within the *Program Sharing Guidelines*.

NOTICE REGARDING FEDERAL AND STATE INDIVIDUAL HEALTH COVERAGE MANDATES

The Affordable Care Act (“ACA”) required most individuals to have qualifying health insurance coverage (an “Individual Mandate”) or make a shared responsibility payment (“Tax Penalty”) when filing their federal income tax return unless they qualified for one of the available exemptions from the Individual Mandate (an “Exemption”). The ACA provided an Exemption for members of a “Health Care Sharing Ministry” (“HCSM”) as defined in the statute. Originally, sharing plans would be reviewed by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (“CMS”) for purposes of determining if they met the definition of an HCSM for purposes of the provision of certificates of Exemption to members of the sharing program (“Certification”). However, the tax bill signed by President Donald Trump on Dec. 22, 2017, effectively repealed the ACA’s Tax Penalty, and CMS subsequently stopped conducting Certification reviews and approving member Exemptions for HCSM’s because the elimination of the Tax Penalty eliminated the need for an Exemption, which made the review unnecessary.

However, although the ACA Tax Penalty has been eliminated, a number of states (including, as of January 2020, California, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Vermont, as well as the District of Columbia) have adopted their own Individual Mandate laws, some of which impose a state Tax Penalty on certain residents who do not either have the requisite health insurance coverage or qualify for an Exemption from the state Individual Mandate. In most such states, there is an Exemption for persons who are members of a sharing program that meets the state’s definition of an HCSM. Many such states define an HCSM, in whole or in part, by referring to the ACA’s definition.

It is each individual’s responsibility to determine: (1) if their state of residence has an Individual Mandate; (2) if they are or could be subject to a state Tax Penalty; and (3) whether or not they will qualify for an Exemption. As noted above, certain state Individual Mandates refer to the ACA definition or federal Certification of HCSM’s, but CMS no longer reviews or provides Certification for HCSM’s. Please understand that neither Universal Health Fellowship, Inc. nor any of its affiliates or representatives can guarantee or represent or warrant that participation in any Universal HealthShare Program will satisfy the requirements under the laws and regulations of any particular state for purposes of obtaining an Exemption from a state Individual Mandate or avoiding any Tax Penalty that might be imposed in the absence of an HCSM Exemption.

Health sharing programs are not available in all states. To read the most up-to-date notices from states that have issued legal notices related to sharing programs, click here:

<https://www.universalhealthfellowship.org/state-notices/>

To read the most up-to-date notices from states that have adopted their own Individual Mandate, or “individual shared responsibility” regulations and tax penalties, click here:

<https://www.universalhealthfellowship.org/Mandate-Notice/>