A Faith-Based Way to Pay for Your Healthcare

If you ever go to a car dealership, you may be initially overwhelmed by the sheer volume of cars for sale. However, as you begin to browse through the lot of sedans, trucks and SUVs, you start to eliminate some vehicles that don’t fit the specific criteria that you are searching for in your new car. If you’re a new parent, you’re going to be looking for something with good gas mileage and safety features. A Lamborghini may be desirable, but it doesn’t meet your needs and may also be financially unobtainable. In a situation like this, a safety-conscious and fuel-efficient vehicle may be a better fit both functionally and financially. In brief, there is no “one size fits all” when it comes to automobiles.

The same can be said when it comes to paying for health care. Factors like age, family size, occupation, medical history and income change from person to person, and methods of paying for health care should reflect individual values. Someone whose health care is paid for by his employer may already have exactly what he needs. However, for someone whose employer doesn’t pay for their health care or only pays for limited services or a certain percentage of medical costs, another solution may be necessary.

That solution comes in the form of health-care sharing ministries. Health-care sharing ministries have been around since the 1980s, but they have experienced major growth since the institution of the Affordable Care Act’s individual mandate. Health-care sharing members were granted a religious exemption from the mandate, thanks to the fact that health-care sharing was operating effectively for decades before the bill was signed into law. This cost-effective method of paying for health care has allowed many Americans to escape ACA penalties and simultaneously live out their values of individual freedom and fiscal responsibility.

Are health-care sharing ministries the right choice for you to pay for your health care? Let’s take a deeper look at the specifics, and you can decide for yourself.

First, it’s important to know that participation in health-care sharing ministries is precipitated by agreeing to a shared belief statement. The extent and exclusivity of these statements vary by organization. Liberty HealthShare’s shared belief statement is among the most inclusive in the field of health-care sharing ministries. The Liberty HealthShare statement of shared beliefs states that members “believe every individual has a fundamental religious right to worship the God of the Bible in his or her own way.” This is not the case with many health-care sharing ministries, some of which accept only specific denominations of Christianity and even require members to have a pastor or minister sign off on weekly church attendance.

Second, when considering participation in a health-care sharing ministry, it is also important to keep in mind that certain expenses may not be eligible for sharing. These ineligible expenses could include costs related to abortions, contraceptives, sex changes, alcohol, drugs, cosmetic surgeries, and other items that may not align with the moral and ethical values of the entire health-care sharing community. By requiring that all shared expenses be for medically necessary procedures, health-care sharing ministries are able to steward the shared funds to care for members’ needs. One of the most detailed examples of eligible versus ineligible expenses can be found on the Liberty HealthShare website.

If you are a married couple, with or without kids, health-care sharing might be a good fit for you. Generally, health-care sharing ministries offer different price points for singles, couples and families, and the cost per person tends to decrease significantly in sharing plans for couples and families. For example, for a single person under the age of 30 years old, the monthly share amount at Liberty HealthShare starts at $199 per month. When a couple under 30 years old enrolls with Liberty HealthShare, that monthly share amount starts at $299 per month (amounting to just under $150 per person). The monthly share amount for a family, which can include any number of children, starts at only $429 per month. That’s just slightly over $100 per person each month for a family of four. If your family is made up of two or twelve, now may be the time for you to join a health-care sharing ministry.

Health-care sharing ministries exist for those who believe in taking charge of their healthcare costs with a community of like-minded members. The benefits of a healthshare approach abound, but in the end, each person must decide the best fit for himself and his loved ones. We recommend that you sit down and take a look at your lifestyle before making any decision related to your health care. If you would like to learn more about how health-care sharing ministries work, Liberty HealthShare offers a comprehensive FAQ page on its website.