

Glimpse of Kingdom Evident Through Surprising Health Care Alternative

Nearly everyone is weighing in on the current health care debate being waged in America—families around dinner tables, coworkers at water coolers, pundits on talk shows and even the faithful in churches.

But what do physicians think of America's health care problems?

Many from the medical community are among the more than 69,000 member households (228,000-plus individuals) of Samaritan Ministries International (), one of the leading health care sharing ministries in America. They were disillusioned with the high prices and low personal touch of the health care system and were looking for a better way.

Samaritan Ministries member Dr. Devin Penny of Wichita, Kansas, and his wife are both physicians and have become increasingly disappointed with the current health care system, mostly because of their experience with the cost of third-party payment.

"We try to manage the best we can, but the overhead for coders, collections and other parties with ever increasing requirements is frustrating," Penny told Samaritan Ministries. "With Samaritan, I was extremely satisfied even before submitting the need, simply because of the ability to get fair prices for cash payment—from the clinic to the for-profit hospital.

"Receiving all the checks and wonderful cards representing prayers felt a little like seeing the kingdom come—just a glimpse," he continued. "The family of God voluntarily giving

to our need was such a reminder of God's provision. There is an interesting mix of feelings of undeserved blessing and 'this is the way it should be.'"

Every month, Samaritan members like the Pennys give generously to other members with qualified medical needs. Members pray and send checks and notes of encouragement directly to other members.

In this way, Samaritan members currently share approximately \$25 million each month in medical needs, while giving a monthly share of only \$495 for a family of any size. Individuals give \$220 and couples give \$440.

Minda, a retired nurse from Florida, is another from the medical community touting the benefits of health care sharing through Samaritan.

"My husband (M.D. retired) and I (R.N. retired) highly recommend it!" she wrote. "Samaritan Ministries has been a blessing on so many fronts—you become a member of a loving Christian community/family that will take care of you, your monthly (shares) are a *fraction* of the big insurance premiums, and you send directly to a family in need." {eoa}