

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201



January 9, 2014

RE: Christian Healthcare Ministries – Review of Materials Submitted

Dear Rev. Russell,

This letter conveys the results of our review of the materials submitted in connection with your request for consideration as a health care sharing ministry for the purposes of subpart G of 45 CFR part 155, which governs the granting of certificates of exemption from the shared responsibility payment under section 5000A of the Internal Revenue Code (the Code) by an Affordable Insurance Exchange (also known as a Health Insurance Marketplace).

Section 5000A of the Code, as added by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Affordable Care Act), establishes an exemption from the shared responsibility payment for members of a health care sharing ministry. Section 1311(d)(4)(H) of the Affordable Care Act specifies that one of the minimum functions of an Exchange is to grant certificates of exemption from the shared responsibility payment under section 5000A of the Code in certain categories. Section 1411(a)(4) of the Affordable Care Act specifies that the Secretary of Health and Human Services (Secretary) shall establish a program for determining whether to grant a certification of exemption from the shared responsibility payment for certain categories of exemptions listed in section 5000A of the Code, including the exemption for members of a health care sharing ministry. The Secretary established this program in part through the process described in 45 CFR 155.615(c)(2)¹, which provides that to be considered a health care sharing ministry for the purposes of certificates of exemption provided by an Exchange, an organization must submit information to HHS that substantiates the organization's compliance with the standards specified in section 5000A(d)(2)(B)(ii) of the Code.

Section 5000A(d)(2)(B)(ii)(I) – (V) specifies that, “the term ‘health care sharing ministry’ means an organization—

- (I) which is described in section 501(c)(3) and is exempt from taxation under section 501(a),
- (II) where members of which share a common set of ethical or religious beliefs and share medical expenses among members in accordance to these beliefs without regard to the state in which a member resides or is employed,
- (III) members of which retain membership even after they develop a medical condition,

¹ 78 FR 39494, 39527 (July 1, 2013).

(IV) which (or a predecessor of which) has been in existence at all times since December 31, 1999 and medical expenses of its members have been shared continuously and without interruption since at least December 31, 1999, and

(V) which conducts an annual audit which is performed by an independent certified public accounting firm in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and which is made available to the public upon request.”


Having completed the review of the materials you submitted dated September 10, 2013, and December 18, 2013, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has determined that Christian Healthcare Ministries has submitted sufficient information to substantiate its compliance with the standards specified in section 5000A(d)(2)(B)(ii) of the Code and will be considered a health care sharing ministry for the purposes of subpart G of 45 CFR part 155.

This determination is limited to Christian Healthcare Ministries’s compliance with standards relevant to an organization being considered a health care sharing ministry for the purposes of subpart G of 45 CFR part 155. As such, this determination does not supersede other relevant state or federal laws that govern the conduct of Christian Healthcare Ministries. Furthermore, this determination does not reflect any decision by the Internal Revenue Service regarding Christian Healthcare Ministries’s status as a health care sharing ministry or compliance with the Internal Revenue Code. Christian Healthcare Ministries should not inform its members or the general public that this determination provides any such rights or status other than those rights which flow from an organization being considered a health care sharing ministry for the purposes of subpart G of 45 CFR part 155, which relate strictly to an individual’s eligibility under 45 CFR 155.605(d) to obtain from a Health Insurance Marketplace a certificate of exemption from the individual shared responsibility payment under section 5000A of the Internal Revenue Code.

Please note that if any change in your status or operation affects any of the information you have submitted to CMS for the purpose of requesting consideration as a health care sharing ministry pursuant to 45 CFR 155.615(c)(2), you must notify CMS within 30 days of such change. If your organization no longer meets the standards specified in section 5000A(d)(2)(B)(ii) of the Code, CMS may revoke this decision regarding the status of Christian Healthcare Ministries as a health care sharing ministry for the purposes of subpart G of 45 CFR part 155.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Ben Walker at benjamin.walker@cms.hhs.gov. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Gary Cohen

Director, Center for Consumer Information & Insurance Oversight