



News & Notes

Summer 2015

FCMM Partners with GuideStone for Group Health Insurance Access

Jerry Rich, Vice President - Client Services

EFCAs churches, as well as other churches and ministries who are clients of FCMM, now have access to the group health insurance programs of GuideStone Financial Resources (the church benefits board that serving Southern Baptist and select evangelical ministries). The GuideStone health plans are self-insured but are administered by Highmark (the Blue Cross medical network) and Express Scripts pharmacy network.

In conjunction with the denomination partnership, GuideStone has developed insurance solutions that provide group plans to any size group, starting with two eligible employees. As with any group health plan, there are qualifications and procedures for underwriting, including completion of health questionnaires by all eligible employees.

The group plans include both standard Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) and High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP). HDHPs are eligible for use with a Health Savings Account (HSA).

Small Group of 2-4 Participants

A church employer obtaining group health insurance for 2 to 4 participants will choose one health plan from the 11 offered by GuideStone. All eligible employees must be covered unless having a waiver for other group coverage such as through a spouse.

Mid-Size Group of 5+ Participants

A mid-size group requires participation of 75% of eligible employees with a minimum of 5. The employer may choose to offer two plans for employees to elect.

Group of 10+ Participants

A group of 10 or more allows additional choices of offered plans for employees to elect.

A chart covering the group guidelines and plan options may be downloaded from FCMM's website.

Personal Plans

While GuideStone has also offered Personal Plans for church staff members, access to those plans is currently frozen with limited exceptions. Eligibility is limited to those applying within 60 days of new employment or with a qualifying event (as defined by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, or HIPAA), such as marriage, addition of a family member, or loss of other coverage. The application process is simple since there is no medical underwriting required.

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Healthcare Reimbursement Relief Ended on June 30

The transition relief for small employers who reimburse or directly pay health care costs (termed "Employer Payment Plan" or EPP) has ended. Churches paying premiums by EPP were extended "transition relief" until June 30, 2015, from excise tax penalties of up to \$100 per employee, per day, per violation. That relief has now expired.

Under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), only group health insurance provided by the employer may now be treated as a nontaxable benefit. Earlier this year, the IRS also announced that one-employee organizations (generally interpreted as having only one full-time, benefits-eligible employee) are not subject to the penalty and premiums paid by the employer are not taxable.

For more information, see the News & Perspectives section of the FCMM website, or review information provided by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, www.ecfa.org.

All GuideStone Plans Qualify as Group Health Plans

Both the Group Plans and the Personal Plans are deemed group health plans. That means that GuideStone does not issue individual medical insurance policies; rather, it provides group health coverage through the plans it makes available. This made possible because of GuideStone's unique structure as a church benefits board.

How to Get Started

Contact GuideStone at 214-720-1190 or insurancesolutions@guidestone.org to inquire and request a proposal by identifying the church's EFCA/FCMM connection. (EFCA churches in the Texas-Oklahoma District are covered by a prior association plan and should contact the district office for information.) Visit www.guidestone.org for general health plan information.

After GuideStone receives necessary information, including completion of health questionnaires, the church will be provided with a quote for premiums. Prior to this, the church may request a "standard quote" but such a pre-underwriting amount will be subject to significant adjustment and should not be used for budgeting purposes.

While market conditions and individual circumstances vary widely, FCMM is confident that GuideStone will offer good value to most ministries. Please contact us if you have feedback, concerns or accolades.

FAQ's

How do I figure out Social Security claiming?

There are numerous factors affect the benefits you can receive if you participate in Social Security, including earnings history, spouse age and work history, and start date of benefits. In addition, the use of "file and suspend" to start taking a spousal benefit is increasingly practiced. FCMM urges any Social Security participant to look for and attend a workshop.

If you come to the 2016 EFCA Theology Conference, January 20-22 in Des Moines, Iowa, you can join us as FCMM will host a pre-conference luncheon with an adviser speaking about Social Security. He will also conduct a workshop on Medicare.

FCMM offers one of the best free tools for modeling your Social Security strategy at our website. Click on "Learn More" at the top of the page, then select "Social Security Benefits Evaluator." T. Rowe Price has given permission for FCMM to link to their acclaimed analyzer which will give you a report based on your priorities.

How is my annual Housing Allowance designation determined?

When you annuitize your funds (i.e. start taking monthly income), you complete a form that indicates your request regarding housing allowance. 9 out of 10 of participants request that 100% of the monthly income be designated as housing allowance, but your circumstances may lead you to a lesser figure which you may indicate. In each following year, FCMM will mail a reminder that you can submit a different figure. FCMM's default for eligible participants is 100%. You only need to reply if you prefer a different amount.

How often are my Retirement Plan account values updated?

While each Retirement Plan participant is mailed a quarterly statement reflecting the total of contributions and earnings/losses for the period for each Option, there is far more detail available when you access your account online.

FCMM-managed funds (Options C, D, E, and H) operate as collective funds. Your proportionate share in the collective funds is determined monthly. The previous month's values and transactions are updated by the end of the current month.

Mutual fund (Options F-American, G-Vanguard, and J-Timothy) market values are updated daily, along with details of any transactions.

[Login to your FCMM account by using the "Account Access" link at the top of our website home page.](#)

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Did you know?

FCMM Benefits & Retirement offers:

- Retirement Plan
- Long Term Disability Insurance Plan
- Payroll Service
- Group Health Insurance (GuideStone)
- Resource for human resources practices

For more information, please visit:

<http://fcmmbenefits.org/products-services>