

# Holston Cares

A call to action for Holston Conference

July 3, 2005

## Someone in your community needs your help

This year the governor and legislature of Tennessee, and many other states, faced a monstrous problem in how to bring the budget into balance and still protect the health care of all our citizens. With the anti-tax sentiment build-up over the past few years as background, it seemed that the only course open to them was to cut benefits and/or persons from the rolls of TennCare. It may have been expedient to make these changes, but the result was the threat for thousands of individuals and families of losing their health care base. The rapid rise of health care costs makes that prospect even more dismaying for many. How to have enough income to afford both the maintenance of daily family life and health and protection against catastrophic illness is a dilemma faced by many responsible persons, including fortunate ones like us.

The Church of Jesus Christ needs to be involved in solving that dilemma in *at least* two ways:

- (1) The “crust of bread and cup of cold water” is still a necessary path to the fulfillment of the expectation of Jesus for virtuous Christian behavior. Regardless of the decision of the state, the Christian is bound by the Gospel to offer help and comfort to those who suffer, whatever the cause. Churches, as bodies of Christians, can focus the efforts and resources of members toward the alleviation of distress, especially when related to health care. Many United

### BEFORE JULY 6TH ...

**Church members are encouraged to assist TennCare recipients in completing necessary forms and returning those forms in person to a local DHS office.**

**Detailed instructions are available online.**

www.holston.org for more information

Methodist medical professionals give unselfishly of their skills and resources to meet the needs of those who cannot pay their medical bills. Church members can do no less. Even without monetary or professional skills, we can help. (Training is available. Visit <http://tenncarecrisis.holston.org> for details.)

- (2) Because the task is far greater than the church alone can accomplish, we also need to give time and energy to discovering ways to reorder the priorities of our political and social life. We appreciate the concern of many that we do not have enough national and state financial resources to meet every need, but we often seem to meet the commercial and power needs of our people before we address their physical, psychological, and spiritual ones. Some of us should

### How to afford protection against catastrophic illness

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be searching for answers to questions about national and personal values that underlie our public policies and performance. Some of us should become advocates for a better way to manage our resources and maximize their use while we are seeking the best answers. (Write your legislators. Encourage discussion.)

All of us should be in prayer, always, for our people to seek final insight and present inspiration. “Feed my sheep,” Jesus said in his final days. Surely that has both physical and spiritual meanings. We can be a part of both.

*Commentary by Rev. Bill Carter, an author and retired Holston minister.*

Information is available from the Family Assistance Services Center, toll-free: 1-866-311-4287. Help is also available in Spanish: 1-866-311-4290. Hours are 6 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Offices will be closed on July 4th.

Look up the local Department of Human Services (DHS) office and take the enrollee there to deliver the completed forms by July 6th.

*This publication is a joint effort of the Holston Conference Outreach/Advocacy Team and the Holston Conference Office of Communications. Serving the United Methodist Church.*

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