



April 21, 2020

Wespath Conference Relief Efforts in Response to COVID-19 Crisis

We bring you greetings in the name of the Risen Christ. We hope you were able to find ways to celebrate the joys and blessing of Easter in your homes and with others, even if done virtually.

As we continue to deal with ramifications of the COVID-19 global pandemic, we understand your annual conferences and local churches are experiencing financial strains; and many churches are facing attendance challenges and reduced giving. The postponement of General Conference 2020 only adds uncertainty.

To support your annual conferences and help create capacity to assist local churches, we are announcing two relief efforts:

- We are declaring a 90-day premium holiday for the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) *for annual conferences* as approved by our Board of Directors.
- In addition, for all plan sponsors sponsoring HealthFlex, we are providing a deferral of two months premium.

These actions will provide short-term, needed relief to annual conferences, while not jeopardizing the financial soundness of CPP or HealthFlex.

CPP Premium Holiday

As allowed by the plan, Wespath's Board voted to reduce CPP premiums to "zero" – a premium holiday – for May, June and July of 2020. While CPP premiums alone do not fully pay for claims, the historical experience of the plan means it is sufficiently funded to afford the temporarily reduced premiums.

Although you will see the premium amount for May, June and July on your monthly bills, we will apply a premium credit for that amount prior to billing your conference. This is the same process we have followed in other premium holiday situations and allows you to see the premium amount being credited. Please keep in mind that CPP premiums are collected at the end of each month and April amounts will be collected next week as expected.

Deferral of HealthFlex Premiums

To extend relief to our HealthFlex plan sponsors, we will defer premium payments for the months of May and June. Normal May payments will be deferred by 90 days until August, and June payments will be deferred until September. Under this deferral, July payments will be collected as usual, while May and August will be collected together, as will June and September. *To be eligible for the deferral program, plan sponsors must be fully current on HealthFlex premiums as of April 30.*



We understand the significant costs associated with providing health benefits to clergy and staff. We are exploring possibilities of other types of financial relief, but it is premature to commit to additional actions at this time. We must understand the claims impact of the pandemic and assess the market impact on plan funding before taking further action. First and foremost, we owe you the safety and security of a strong and reliable group health coverage program that cares for and protects our participants.

Next Steps

No action is needed on your part at this time, unless you are not fully current with your HealthFlex premiums. We will host two additional CBO calls organized by jurisdiction on April 22 and 24. We will be available to answer any questions at that time. Dial-in instructions have been shared separately for these calls:

- Wednesday April 22nd at 3:00 CDT: North Central, South Central and Western Jurisdictions
- Friday April 24th at 10:00 CDT: Northeastern and Southeastern Jurisdictions

The CPP premium holiday and HealthFlex premium deferral create opportunities for annual conferences to redirect these monies elsewhere. While the decision on how best to deploy the relief resides with you, we hope this relief provides you flexibility to extend some forms of relief to your local churches where possible.

We welcome your questions and feedback. We are holding you and those we serve together in our prayers. We wish you health and renewal during this Easter season.

Grace and peace,

Bishop Robert Schnase
Board Chair

Barbara A. Boigegrain
General Secretary