

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2022 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2022-C048
Title: Integrity of Religious Exemptions in Medical Coverage
Proposer: Rhode Island
Topic: Health Care

Directly Related: (Attached)

2012-A137 Refer a Resolution on Infertility Treatment Insurance (Referred)
1994-A057 Adopt Church Principles on Access to Health Care

Indirectly Related: (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

None

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2018, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#) or call 800-525-9329.

C048 - Integrity of Religious Exemptions in Medical Coverage

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Rhode Island

Requests New Interim Body: No

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

HiA: HD

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: 16 - Churchwide Leadership

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the 80th General Convention direct the Episcopal Church Medical Trust to ensure that all medical plans offered to participating dioceses are fully compliant with medical coverages mandated by the respective state laws; and be it further

Resolved, that the Medical Trust shall publicly disclose any and all claims to religious exemption from any medical coverages; and be it further

Resolved, that such disclosure shall cite the relevant Act(s) of General Convention that substantiate such claims to religious exemption from any medical coverages; and be it further

Resolved, that the Medical Trust shall not claim any religious exemption without relevant Act(s) of General Convention to substantiate said claim.

Explanation

Many U.S. states across the Episcopal Church have enacted laws to mandate insurers cover a range of medical treatments, with exceptions for religious objection. A religious group may claim exemption from a mandate that contradicts or opposes the group's core beliefs and practices. Simply being religious does not entitle a group to a religious exemption. Misuse of religious exemption provisions jeopardizes their integrity and perhaps their longevity and renders participants in the Medical Trust's health plans complicit in that

misuse. In the absence of genuine, documented religious objection, insurance coverages offered by the Medical Trust should conform to state laws.

One example of the issues giving rise to the Resolution concerns treatment for infertility. From its inception in 2009 through the end of 2014, the Episcopal Church Medical Trust's Denominational Health Plan did not include coverage for the treatment of infertility. The Medical Trust claimed religious exemption. This claim was made despite the absence of any official objection to infertility treatment made by General Convention. In fact, the General Convention meeting in 1982 explicitly approved of in vitro fertilization, a now common form of infertility treatment. The Medical Trust made a false claim to religious objection and benefited from exercising the religious exemption from covering infertility treatment.



Resolution Number: 2012-A137
Title: Refer a Resolution on Infertility Treatment Insurance
Legislative Action Taken: Referred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention urge health insurance providers used by churches, dioceses and other church-related agencies to provide insurance options that provide coverage for infertility treatment; and be it further,

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention reaffirm resolution 2000-C042 ("Urge Executive Council and Dioceses to Support Maternity/Paternity Leave for Clergy").

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012* (New York: General Convention, 2012), p. 488.



Resolution Number: 1994-A057
Title: Adopt Church Principles on Access to Health Care
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That this 71st General Convention of the Episcopal Church adopt the following four principles as the position of the Episcopal Church regarding health care:

That universal access to quality, cost effective, health care services be considered necessary for everyone in the population.

That "quality health care" be defined so as to include programs in preventive medicine, where wellness is the first priority.

That "quality health care" include interdisciplinary and interprofessional components to insure the care of the whole person--physiological, spiritual, psychological, social.

That "quality health care" include the balanced distribution of resources so that no region of the country is underserved.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 1994* (New York: General Convention, 1995), p. 288.