

United Methodist Association of Health and Welfare Ministries (UMA)

Background

UMA is a membership organization made up of Health and Welfare Ministries, such as hospitals, community service organizations, agencies that serve persons with disabilities, retirement communities and of course, agencies serving children, youth and families. UMA is mentioned in Paragraphs 633 and 1327 of the *Book Of Discipline*. UMA is also mentioned in Paragraph 3207 *Quality in United Methodist Health Care* of *The Book of Resolutions*.

UMA helps health and welfare organizations remain connected to the Wesleyan values of the Church. Mutual accountability is a historic Wesleyan value. In the class meetings members asked each other, “How is it with your soul?” Here, they challenged others to grow in their relationship with God. This is one of the functions of UMA and one of the benefits of membership.

Another benefit of membership is access to group purchasing. This has saved tens of thousands of dollars for UMA members. Stewardship is a historic Wesleyan value. For many of our members the savings they achieve exceed the dues they pay.

Access to information on best practices and innovative new forms of ministry is another benefit of UMA membership. This is a technical function that neither Annual Conferences nor General Agencies are equipped or resourced to carry out.

Many of us recently received Dr. Lovett Weems new book, *Focus*. Dr. Weems pointed out that our forbearers, with much more limited resources than we possess, founded numerous colleges and universities. They also founded the numerous hospitals, homes for the aged and orphanages that have grown into the health and welfare organizations of today. Dr. David Greenhaw, president of Eden Theological Seminary, has pointed out the founding of these organizations coincided with the time of greatest growth of the Church. Interestingly the parts of the world where our Church is growing are the areas in which we are founding schools, universities and health and welfare ministries.

How Does UMA support Four Primary Areas of Ministry Focus?

1. Developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world.

The UMA Annual Convention helps leaders of Health and Welfare Ministries develop as both as spiritual leaders and as leaders dedicated to service excellence. Our EAGLE accreditation program also promotes service excellence, quality improvement and leadership development.

Paragraph 633 of the Discipline provides for Annual Conference Boards of Global Ministries to work with UMA in leadership development.

Paragraph 1327 of the Discipline provides for the General Board of Global Ministries to work with UMA in leadership development.

2. Making Disciples of Jesus Christ

All UMA members feel a calling to provide holistic care for those they serve. Most residential programs have paid chaplains, and others utilize volunteers to lead worship, spiritual fellowship and learning opportunities.

3. Engaging in Ministry with the Poor

The overwhelming majority of children served by UMA childcare organizations come from poverty environments and depend on government assistance. Some estimates show that as many as 90 percent of elders in skilled nursing facilities are dependent upon Medicaid for their financial security. Nationally, many of our Older Adult Ministries provide subsidized housing to low-income elderly. Your health and welfare ministries live out the call to be in Ministry with the Poor.

4. Combating the Diseases of Poverty

Children, Youth and Family Ministries such as Northcott Neighborhood House, Harbor House and United Methodist Children's Services in Wisconsin, and their counterparts around the nation are on the frontlines in these areas.

How Does UMA fit into the Wesleyan tradition of the United Methodist Church?

“There was scarcely any form of social advance and improvement in which he (Wesley) was not interested—establishing societies and institutions, workshops, credit unions, children’s homes and schools, homes for the aged, nurses training, and hospitals. He believed that a satisfying spiritual experience could not survive apart from enthusiasm for service to mankind.” (Parkinson, *History of the Board of Hospitals and Homes*)

UMA’s Issues For General Conference

There has been a growing distance between the Church and its Health and Welfare Ministries due to a variety of concerns. UMA seeks to heal this breach.

Increasing financial, legal and regulatory pressures have been a part of some organizations’ pulling away. This tendency has been described as “institutional drift” or “secularization.” At the same time, fear of liability has caused some Annual Conferences to pull away. Ironically, by failing to fulfill their responsibilities in paragraph 633 some Annual Conferences may have actually increased their exposure to liability.

As a result of conversations between UMA, GBGM, and GCFA, **Petition Number: 20340-FA-¶2500 (page 676 of the ADCA)** was developed and submitted.

The purpose is:

- To strengthen and set standards for relationship statements between Health and Welfare organizations and Annual Conferences.
- To strengthen the legal protection of Annual Conferences.
- Nurture closer relationships between Annual Conferences and related Health and Welfare Ministries.
- To allow Annual Conferences with effective structures to retain those structures.

It is important to be clear about what this petition does **not** do.

- It does not impose any requirements on ministries operated by the Women’s Division.
- While it could impact ministries in Central Conferences, those conferences have the freedom to make other administrative arrangements.
- It does not impose any requirements on ministries operated by local churches.

We hope you will support this petition. In addition we hope you will support continuing the language in ¶633 and ¶1327 related to joint efforts in leadership development.

¶2500.

Petition Number: 20340-FA-¶2500; Kumar, A. Moses Rathan - Nashville, TN, USA for General Council on Finance and Administration.

Health and Welfare Ministries Relationship Statements

Delete ¶¶ 633.4b(27) and 1327.3a(4) and insert a new ¶ 2517, as follows:

2517. Responsibilities of Annual Conference Trustees related to Health and Welfare institutions.

1. The annual conference shall designate a body which shall be responsible for establishing and maintaining the annual conference's relationship statements with related health and welfare organizations. If the annual conference does not designate a body for this purpose, the responsibility shall rest with the annual conference board of trustees. A related health and welfare organization is any organization that:

a) Provides health or welfare services;

b) Is located within the bounds of the annual conference; and

c) Either

(1) Seeks, or already has, a relationship or connection with an annual conference, regardless of whether the relationship or connection is formal or informal, official or unofficial, or does or does not involve any financial or legal commitments; or

(2) Markets, publicizes, or promotes itself as having a connection to the annual conference or to the denomination or uses the official United Methodist insignia or the term "United Methodist" in any way.

2. The body designated by the annual conference shall consult with the conference chancellor and the conference Health and Welfare Committee (or equivalent structure) in the development of relationship statements.

3. The body designated by the annual conference shall provide the General Council on Finance and Administration with current copies of all of the conference's relationship statements.

4. If the annual conference has a relationship with a related health and welfare organization, the legal and financial relationships between the annual conference and the health and welfare organization must be memorialized in a clearly stated document describing such relationships. This relationship statement shall:

- a) Not purport to name as a party “The United Methodist Church” and/or any general agency of “The United Methodist Church;”
- b) Require the health and welfare organization to acquire approval from the General Council on Finance and Administration if the health and welfare organization wishes to use the official United Methodist insignia or the term “United Methodist” in its name, mission statement, publications, or promotional or marketing material;
- c) Acknowledge that the annual conference shall not be legally responsible for the debts, contracts or obligations, or for any other financial commitments of any character or description created, undertaken, or assumed by the health and welfare institution, absent the express consent of the annual conference;
- d) Require the body designated by the annual conference and the health and welfare institution to review the relationship statement at least every four years; and e) Comply with any further requirements adopted by the General Council on Finance and Administration, in consultation with the United Methodist Association of Health and Welfare Ministries.

5. The body designated by the annual conference may encourage or require the health and welfare organization to:

- a) Hold membership in the United Methodist Association of Health and Welfare Ministries;
- b) Pursue accreditation in one of the industry recognized, national accreditation bodies appropriate to faith-based organizations; or
- c) Utilize the programmatic standards, self-study, and peer review appropriate to Church-related institutions and programs available to them through organizations that will promote excellence in Christian ministry and mission and enhance the quality of services offered.

6. If the body designated by the annual conference terminates, decides not to renew, or is unable, after reasonable efforts, to agree to, a relationship statement with a health and welfare organization, it shall report such termination, non-renewal, or inability to agree at the next session of the annual conference. This report shall then be published in the annual conference journal.