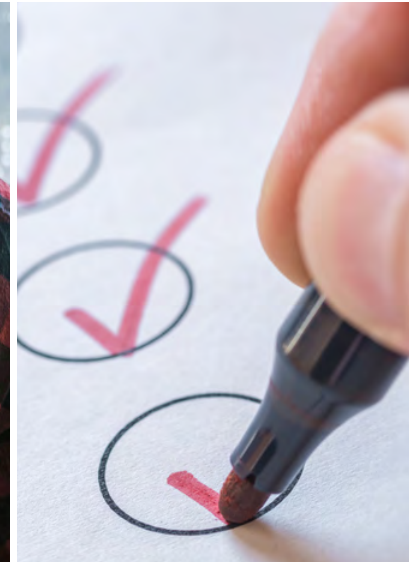


DECISION GUIDE

2024 Annual Enrollment



**To Help You Select Your Organization's
2024 ELCA-Primary Health Benefit Option**

Your Organization Has an Important Decision to Make

Our Resources Can Help

Selecting an ELCA-Primary health benefit option is an important financial decision your organization needs to make ahead of the Annual Enrollment deadline, which is Oct. 13 this year. This Decision Guide can help your group thoughtfully and efficiently reflect on the value of a church plan, know what's changing for next year, and stay on track to make a selection by the deadline.

Use this Decision Guide along with your Custom Comparison Report on EmployerLink. The report shows your organization a customized view of 2024 estimated contribution costs as well as member out-of-pocket costs for next year across all four health benefit options. For your convenience, the report comes in two versions — a printable PDF and a spreadsheet designed to help organizations with multiple employees model benefit cost scenarios. I strongly suggest that you share this Decision Guide and your Custom Comparison Report with your group before you meet to select a 2024 health benefit option.

At Portico, we strive to be an extension of your organization, delivering innovative, effective benefits and cost stability so you can remain focused on ministry. Please reach out to our award-winning Customer Care Center with any questions at **800.352.2876**.

Peace,



Stacy A. Kruse
Chief Operating and Financial Officer, Portico Benefit Services

SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA

**Important decisions
deserve thoughtful
discussion.**



1. Light a candle as a reminder of God's presence.
2. Review the many reasons why a church plan makes sense. (p. 3 – 4)
3. Note changes, options, and requirements for 2024. (p. 5 - 6)
4. Acknowledge the deadline. (p. 7)
5. Compare estimated costs across all options. (Custom Comparison Report)
6. Factor in your budget considerations, preferences of those you sponsor, etc.
7. Select your 2024 health benefit option on EmployerLink.



WHY A CHURCH PLAN MAKES SENSE FOR YOUR MINISTRY

Administering benefits can be a significant drain of time and attention for your organization. As a nonprofit ELCA ministry, Portico delivers a total benefits package and a full range of time-saving and cost-saving administrative services. We handle the benefits so you can focus on ministry.

WE DESIGN THE BENEFITS	WE STEWARD THEM WISELY	WE MANAGE THE DETAILS
<p>Our innovative, holistic approach to benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centers on evolving industry trends and best practices Helps strengthen members for service financially, emotionally, and physically Delivers benefit consistency to support the ELCA's nationwide call process 	<p>Our nonprofit status, large group size, and decades of experience allow us to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer a history of stable health plan rates* Provide best-in-class health benefits, wellness programs, and retirement services that are not often available to small employers Ensure plan design compliance with the latest federal regulations <p><small>*As of January 1, 2024 Portico Benefit Services five year average baseline rate increase was 3.2%.</small></p>	<p>Using agile, forward-looking management skills, we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage multiple benefit vendor contracts Maintain an efficient online annual enrollment process Enable you and those you sponsor to transact on secure, convenient cloud-based portals Deliver award-winning customer service year after year



WHY A CHURCH PLAN MAKES SENSE FOR THOSE YOU SPONSOR

Leading ministry has always been difficult. In a world exhausted by change, ministry now demands even greater levels of creativity, patience, stamina, and resilience.

Portico’s innovative benefits and resources help protect against financial risk associated with injury, disease, disability, retirement, and death. Our benefits and resources strengthen members for service by supporting their holistic well-being; financially, emotionally, and physically.

HEALTH	RETIREMENT
<p>The ELCA Health Plan includes medical, mental health, prescription drug, dental, text-based primary care, and voluntary vision care services, coupled with tax-advantaged health spending and saving accounts under its ELCA-Primary benefits. Coverage for sponsored members age 65+ is also available.</p> <p>In addition, ELCA-Primary members receive at no extra out-of-pocket cost:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Coordinators for help navigating today’s complex health care system • Personalized programs for preventing/managing chronic health conditions • Employee Assistance Program and self-directed online cognitive behavioral therapy for mental health support • Video streaming platforms for holistic, faith-based wellness education and online fitness classes 	<p>The ELCA Retirement Plan is a 403(b) church plan featuring target date funds, social purpose funds, build-your-own funds, shareholder advocacy, clergy housing allowance exclusion, and an annuity option at retirement.</p> <p>In addition, members receive at no extra out-of-pocket cost:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portico Financial Planners for help with saving for retirement, discussing asset allocation, shaping a retirement income strategy, and addressing financial concerns • Portico’s online Retirement Planning Tool and Retirement Readiness Series workshops help with effective retirement planning • Fidelity’s online tools and webinars, including its Financial Wellness Checkup which helps assess what’s going well and what needs to be tackled next • A range of services provided by Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota Financial Counseling for help managing financial challenges
LIFE	DISABILITY
<p>The ELCA Survivor Benefits Plan provides up to \$50,000 basic insurance coverage with voluntary member-paid supplemental and dependent coverage.</p>	<p>The ELCA Disability Benefits Plan provides two-thirds income replacement, and continues health, life, and retirement contributions.</p>

Plan member rights under the plans are governed by the plan documents, which are the full, legal descriptions of the plans. The eligibility for any benefit will be governed by the applicable plan. If any of this information is inconsistent with the corresponding plan document, the plan document is the controlling document.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR 2024

Changes Affecting 2024 Contributions

Portico again is delivering relatively stable pricing to the ELCA community for next year. In August, trustees approved rate increases that are lower than the rates projected for both group and individual markets (non-Medicare).¹

- The ELCA-Primary health contribution baseline rate is increasing 2.5%.² This is lower than the 3% increase of 2023 and is the lowest increase in 10 years. The 2.5% increase also applies to sponsored members receiving the ELCA Medicare-Primary Standard health benefit option.

Reminder: Your organization's 2024 health contributions can also change due to age (about a 2%–3% increase, on average, per year as members age), the benefit option you select, the number of people you sponsor, how many family members each member enrolls, and the member's defined compensation.²

- The ELCA Disability Benefits Plan and the ELCA Survivor Benefits Plan contribution rates are decreasing by a total of 0.7% of defined compensation for employers. (Disability rate dropping from 0.9% to 0.6%, survivor rate dropping from 0.8% to 0.4%.)

2024 Benefit Changes

To keep costs as stable as possible for members, Portico tries to limit changes to out-of-pocket costs in any one year.

- To maintain the ELCA-approved level of cost sharing between employers and members, ELCA-Primary Gold+ option deductibles are increasing to \$1,700 for member only, increasing to \$2,550 for member and children and increasing to \$3,400 for member and spouse or member, spouse, and children.

How It Works

- As a sponsoring organization in Portico's Traditional Benefits Program (health, retirement, survivor, and disability benefits), you are expected to offer ELCA health benefits, cover the health benefit contribution, and annually select a health benefit option on EmployerLink during Annual Enrollment.
- In turn, sponsored members must choose whether to enroll in the option you provide, buy up to a different option, or, if they qualify, waive ELCA health benefits — then submit their choice on myPortico during Annual Enrollment.
- Members can only buy up to an option with a higher base price. Because the Gold+ base price is higher than Silver+, members offered Gold+ can't choose Silver+, but those offered Silver+ can keep it or choose Gold+.
- Members wanting to waive must have and provide information about other valid health coverage (for example, a spouse's employer or coverage through the individual exchange with a subsidy on a state, federal, or state/federal partnership individual health insurance exchange). Without other valid health coverage, members need to enroll in ELCA health benefits or end their participation in Portico's Traditional Benefits Program.
- If your organization doesn't select an option on EmployerLink by the deadline, it will be assigned Silver+ paired with the Level A health savings account (HSA) option. Portico chose Silver+ because most organizations select Silver+ Level A or Gold+, and, in most cases, the cost to the employer is similar. Plus, Silver+ provides greater choice to members — they can stay with Silver+ or buy up to Gold+.



1. PwC Health Research Institute, Medical cost trend: Behind the numbers 2024, <https://www.pwc.com/us/en/industries/health-industries/library/behind-the-numbers.html>

2. Applies to both ELCA-Primary and ELCA Medicare-Primary.

TWO ELCA-RECOMMENDED HEALTH BENEFIT OPTIONS

While the ELCA Church Council approves all four ELCA-Primary health benefit options, it recommends two — Gold+, and Silver+ with an employer contribution into a health savings account (HSA). You're encouraged to take a fresh look at both options, remembering that choosing Silver+ gives your members the choice to select Gold+ or Silver+.

Gold+ and Silver+ are the same in important ways. Both have the same out-of-pocket limit, members pay \$0 for in-network preventive services, and the cost to the sponsoring organization is similar.* The chart below outlines their differences.

 <p>Gold+ Lower medical and mental health deductibles; prescription drug cost-share. This option can help make out-of-pocket costs more manageable and offers a flexible spending account (FSA).</p>	 <p>Silver+ (A or B) High-deductible health plan option paired with an employer contribution to health savings account (HSA); deductible applies to eligible medical, mental health, and prescription drug expenses. HSA offers members a tax-advantaged opportunity to save for both current and future health care needs.</p>
<p>Lower deductible Family coverage includes individual and family deductibles.</p>	<p>Higher deductible Family coverage includes family deductible only; no individual deductibles.</p>
<p>Pay prescription drug cost-share</p>	<p>Pay full negotiated cost of prescription drug until combined medical, mental health, and prescription drug deductible is met, then 20% until out-of-pocket limit is met</p>
<p>Members can elect to make pretax contributions to a health flexible spending account (FSA) and use the FSA to pay for eligible health care expenses accrued during the current plan year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full annual election amount can be accessed Jan. 1. • Unused balance is forfeited if eligible claims are not submitted within four months following plan year end or at four months post-employment, if earlier. 	<p>A health savings account (HSA) allows for employer contributions and member pretax contributions that can be used to pay for eligible health care expenses both during the plan year and in the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only existing balance (from contributions already made) is available to pay for eligible health care expenses. • Money earns interest; savings over \$1,000 can be invested. • Unused money carries over each year and is portable (remains with member post-employment); can be used for future expenses, even in retirement. <p>Members can elect to make pretax contributions to a limited-purpose health FSA. This account can be used to pay for eligible expenses limited to dental and vision until the combined medical, mental health, and prescription drug deductible is met.</p>

*For your estimated costs, refer to your organization's Custom Comparison Report or the calculators on EmployerLink at *Resources > Understanding Portico's Benefits > Calculators*.

Benefit plans are governed and administered individually through separate plan documents and the benefits will be administered according to the terms of the plans. Eligibility for any benefit will be governed by the terms of the applicable plan, program, or policy. Portico reserves the right to change any plan terms at any time through the amendment or termination process described in each plan's summary plan description.



CHECKLIST

2024 Annual Enrollment

Health benefits are critically important to ELCA-rostered ministers and church staff. Use this list to guide your organization through the yearly process of selecting next year’s health benefit option and entering it online this fall.

Note: If more than one person from your organization is registered on EmployerLink, decide which of you will complete these tasks.

JULY 2024	AUGUST – SEPTEMBER 2024	OCTOBER 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="130 971 709 1279"> <input type="radio"/> Identify who will make your organization’s benefit decision. Portico offers several health benefit options. During fall Annual Enrollment, your organization will need to enter your selection for the coming year. To make this choice, the right group of people will want to weigh the options, understand the budget implications, and consider the preference of those you sponsor. <li data-bbox="130 1300 709 1463"> <input type="radio"/> Schedule a meeting to talk health benefits. Put “Discuss 2024 Portico health benefit decision” on your organization’s September calendar, and invite those who will make this decision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="764 971 1339 1166"> <input type="radio"/> Download important documents. When notified by email, sign in to EmployerLink. Get your organization’s 2024 Decision Guide, Custom Comparison Report, and Custom Comparison Spreadsheet. Share these with your decision-makers. <li data-bbox="764 1187 1339 1349"> <input type="radio"/> Encourage your decision-makers to select an option well before the selection window opens in early October. Your organization will have about one week to enter its health benefit selection online. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1400 971 1976 1166"> <input type="radio"/> Enter your organization’s selection on EmployerLink before the Oct. 13 deadline. When notified by email, one of your EmployerLink users needs to sign in and enter your organization’s selection between Oct. 2 and 13.