

**Council for Health and Human Service Ministries  
United Church of Christ**

**Statement by the CHHSM Board of Directors on  
Financial Support of CHHSM**

Advancing the work of all health and human service ministries of the United Church of Christ in creating a just, caring and compassionate world is the mission of the Council for Health and Human Service Ministries (CHHSM).

The fundamental work of CHHSM is to advocate the healing and service ministry of the whole church, not exclusively the ministries of its corporate members. Institutions in continuing covenant with the United Church of Christ (UCC) have, through CHHSM, formed their own congregation of witness to help assure that not only their own integrity as Christian ministries is preserved, but that the faithfulness of our denomination and the wider Christian community to Christ's healing work is sustained and advanced. In this sense, CHHSM's work is primarily that of a spiritual community, a congregation. As a Christian congregation, CHHSM certainly has a ministry of mutual nurture and support within its own member community. But, as our mission statement makes clear, we are also called to a larger mission extending beyond service to ourselves.

Because, in many ways, CHHSM's structure reflects that of a membership or trade association, its primary congregational character is often obscured. This is particularly true when it comes to the way we financially support our congregational life and mission. For several decades UCC institutions, as well as those of other denominations, have chosen to support their "congregations" through member determined *dues* assessments that seek to equitably distribute the costs associated with their collective witness. However, *dues* in the CHHSM context cannot be equated with the type of economic exchange typical of a secular trade association where dues represent the purchase of a basic set of common services. A more apropos analogy is that of a pledge to a religious congregation. CHHSM *dues* are a spiritual commitment, a gift of God's bounty made in support of our collective mission to *advance the work of all health and human service ministries of the United Church of Christ in creating a just, caring and compassionate world*. Involvement in this larger, collective mission is one of the chief ways in which faith-based ministries are distinctive from secular institutions.

Finally, it is important to stress the need for good stewardship. The CHHSM Board of Directors, comprised of persons elected by CHHSM member ministries, is the trustee of the "gifts" that faithful UCC institutions provide. We recognize our accountability to the CHHSM membership and our obligation to assure deployment of these resources in effective pursuit of CHHSM's mission.

*Adopted by the CHHSM Board of Directors, 11/7/2002; Revised 11/16/2016*