

EPC Benefit Resources, Inc. Annual Report to the 46TH General Assembly



Michael D. Busch, FACHE
Chairman

Introduction

EPC Benefit Resources, Inc (BRI) serves church pastors and staff by providing a comprehensive benefits package including five (5) medical plan designs, two (2) dental plan designs, a vision plan, life insurance and long-term disability insurance. Additionally, BRI administers a 403(b)(9) defined contribution church retirement plan available to all actively employed pastors and church staff.

Participants in these plans are served by four (4) experienced BRI team members including the Executive Director, Director of Benefits, Benefits Accounting Analyst and Communications Associate.

The nine (9) member Board of Directors have two (2) standing committees; the Investment Committee, overseeing fund investments of the 403(b)(9) retirement program as well as investments supporting the medical plan, and the Benefits Plans Committee, overseeing health benefits provided through the self-funded medical plan and additional health care benefits.

A Compliance Committee was established in 2025 consisting of two (2) Board members representing the two Board Committees plus two (2) members of the BRI Staff. The Committee reviews state and federal guidelines and regulations and ensures compliance with these requirements.

In March of 2025, Bart Francescone, who served as Executive Director since 2017 announced his resignation to pursue other opportunities. Carolee Richendollar who served as Director of Benefits since 2023 was appointed as BRI Executive Director with formal announcement at General Assembly in June 2025. Carolee has developed the BRI team, advanced new efficiencies, and enhanced policies and procedures in collaboration with the EPC OGA.

The BRI Board meets four times annually, with two in-person at the Office of the General Assembly in Orlando, FL. Each Board Committee also meets four times during the year and provides a report and recommended actions to the BRI Board.

Members of the 2025-2026 BRI Board of Directors include:

2025 – 2026 Board Members

TE/RE	First Name	Last Name	Church	Presbytery
RE (Chair)	Mike	Busch	Memorial Park Church	Alleghenies
RE	Bill	Overcast	Second Presbyterian	Central South
NO	Cathy	Scott	Fourth Presbyterian Church	East
TE	Brandon	Jolley	Hopewell PC	Midwest
RE	Bob	Coleman	Second Presbyterian	Central South
RE	Greg	Sipos	Graystone EPC	Alleghenies
RE	Jeff	Andersen	Colonial Presbyterian	Great Plains
NO	Michael	Moore	Second Presbyterian	Central South
RE	Ken	Scearce	First Presbyterian	FL/Caribbean

Benefits Plans

EPC Benefit Resources, Inc's (BRI) continues to advance its mission to improve the health and well-being of our pastors, lay staff team members and their families in Christian ministry so they can better serve the greater mission to fulfill the Great Commission.

Through the medical benefits plans, participants have access to a national network of healthcare providers, including primary, specialty and virtual care. BRI engages various industry leading experts, advisors and consultants to guide plan administration and to support the most competitive and contemporary benefit plans. These advisors provide analytics-grounded, industry-leading insight and recommendations to the Board and BRI leadership to enable forward-looking plan design and performance.

Member Services

Participants in the medical plan are supported through contemporary health management services, including.

- Nurse Health Coaching. 24/7 access to manage chronic conditions.
- Maternity Management Program for expectant mothers.
- Healthcare Bluebook. Access to low-cost, high-quality options for health care services to minimize out-of-pocket costs and receive incentives for these decisions.
- BeneCard Pharmacy Benefits. Access to b-Well Ahead program for a full clinical pharmacist assessment of prescription care to ensure effective treatment.

Benefit Plan Enhancements

In calendar year 2025, a number of new services were added to promote health and well-being and enable a positive active lifestyle.

- Hinge Health. Supports Musculoskeletal health conditions
- Health Navigator. Pinnacle Health assists members with identifying and scheduling appropriate provider care.
- SunLife 360 for critical care access.

- Hospital pre-admission/post-discharge guidance. Members requiring hospital stays or surgical procedures are supported by the Meritain pre-admission/post-discharge program, ensuring smooth transitions of care and shorter hospital stays.
- Mental Health Services. Easy-to-access virtual consultations through the Aetna network provide personalized, private and professional behavioral health care providers.
- Urgent Care. Rapid-access, lower cost primary care through CVS/Target Minute Clinics.
- Alongside Ministry Wives. Specialized support is offered through the program geared specifically to care for spouses of pastors in their unique roles.

Finally, in 2025 a new benefit enrollment platform (MyEnroll) was introduced that significantly enhanced administrative efficiencies, the member experience and access to benefit support, improving processing for church administrators with enrollment and premium billing.

MyEnroll provides direct, rapid and up-to-date access to employee and dependent information previously unavailable, and enables seamless on-line benefits enrollment, updated life events, and personal information in real time. Additionally, the ability to pay premiums via ACH was made available to churches requesting this service.

Medical Plan Trends

Calendar year 2025 saw significant high-cost claims that severely challenged the plan as members experienced greater need for medical care. Cancer, chronic health conditions and high-cost medications topped the claims list in 2025. Highlights:

- Plan reserves declined by 42% from \$6.6M to \$3.8M
- Net operating losses increased from \$1.8M to \$4.8M, representing a net margin loss of 9.5% and 24.5% respectively
- Premium revenue from members (excluding fully insured products) grew by only \$0.9M, or 4.8% despite a 9% premium increase for calendar year 2025.
- Member enrollment declined 2.8% or by 30 to 1,052, representing a revenue loss approximating \$478,000, while dependent covered lives declined 6.7% or 127 to 1,762. Total covered lives of 2,814 declined 5.3% or 157
- Church enrollment declined by 5 churches that left the EPC accounting for about 15 covered lives.

BRI continues to work to ensure stability and sustainability of the benefits plan by introducing additional care options designed to heal the body and mind, supporting participants with chronic needs and reducing claims cost. Look for new programs and enhancements in 2026 and forward.

Communications to support members by making sure information and education is readily available grew in 2025. For 2026 a new remodeled, user-friendly website was introduced. BRI communications on social media via Instagram and Facebook were brought to life and the BRI Team began hosting live webinars to educate members on benefits including the Retirement plan.

EPC Member church engagement in the Medical Plan remains a top priority. With so many churches opting not to enroll in the EPC plan, the overall mission of serving the body continues to be at risk.

Retirement Plan

Participation in the Retirement Plan grew steadily in 2025 - 2026 with two churches transition from other 401(k) plans into the EPC 403(b)(9) plan. Plan assets currently sit at approximately \$ 2.8M. EPC has approximately 2,100 participants with balances; 1,900 listed as active employees. 39% of participants are contributing to the plan along with 61% who are receiving only employer contributions.

Plan Enhancements

With the unique tax benefit related to Ministerial Housing, the Pastor Identification Project was completed, identifying approximately 750 participants as Teaching Elders. With this project completed, processes were put in place making it easier for pastors to withdraw funds under the Ministerial Housing Allowance tax free.

Along with this project, the BRI team implemented an additional safeguard to ensure that pastors who request large or total roll out of funds are contacted and educated about the forfeiture of the housing allowance benefit should they move forward with a withdrawal. This has helped prevent inadvertent loss of this tax benefit when pastors have received financial counselling from professionals unfamiliar with the 403(b)(9) provisions.

Recommendation to the General Assembly

As a continued benefit to the pastors of the EPC, the Board makes one recommendation again to the General Assembly.

Recommendation to the 2026 General Assembly:

1. Recommendation 46-34:

Action. That ordained ministers drawing retirement income from the EPC 403(b)(9) Defined Contribution Retirement Plan be allowed to designate up to 100% of their retirement income for housing allowance as permitted by applicable regulations adopted pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code.

Grounds: Permits retired, ordained ministers to take advantage of significant tax benefits in retirement, thereby making more retirement income available for living expenses. Adopting this recommendation on an annual basis as required by the IRS provides retired ministers with a readily available reference, if asked by tax authorities.

Future Enhancements and Innovations

The BRI team continues to work to ensure that members are aware of their benefits through the retirement plan which also includes financial wellness education, services, and loan options.

Protecting and growing participants' retirement plan assets remains a top priority. More than 20% of participants do not have a beneficiary currently listed on their record.

Constant communication reminders via newsletters, mailings and social media posts are used to make them aware of the importance of this matter.

Additionally, the Investment Committee is actively working to update the plan document to include Secure Act provisions to support participants. This document is targeted to be released in the 3rd quarter of 2026.

We are pleased to continue to provide additional benefits plan and retirement plan enhancements and innovations in care, introduced during 2026 to support good health and provide new resources to plan participants. Look for these announcements as they are released.

Conclusion

The Board of Directors and the BRI team work together to ensure that EPC Churches have the highest quality and competitive employee benefits package available to care for the health and well-being of their pastors and church staff. Our team serves those carrying out the Great Commission by providing the most comprehensive and contemporary medical and retirement programs. We are blessed to advance this mission.

As we approach open enrollment for calendar 2027 in the fall of 2026, we strongly urge EPC pastors and elders to consider engaging with the EPC Benefits Plan in support of your colleagues in service. Prayerfully consider this option and engage with the BRI team as your Session discerns choices for the coming year. The EPC body will be stronger, together.

In His Service,

Michael D. Busch

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Chairman