

Drug discounts save Methodists \$349,000: Innovative church-sponsored program

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United Methodists who have signed up for an innovative church-sponsored drug discount program have saved \$348,728 in prescription costs since the plan was unveiled in March, church officials say.

The partnership between the United Methodist Church and DestinationRx allows participants to save up to 50 percent on prescriptions, medical supplies and even pet medicine at 30,000 pharmacies across the country. It is the first such program between a church and a drug company.

“One of the great satisfactions to me is to know that persons who needed help are getting help,” said Mearle Griffith, president of the United Methodist Association of Health and Welfare Ministries, who helped broker the deal. “Some people are now buying food who once had to make a choice between paying for groceries and paying for their prescriptions,” he told United Methodist News Service.

More than 31,000 people have enrolled in the free program, which is not restricted to the country’s 8.3 million United Methodists. Griffith said some local churches have used the program to help poor and needy families in their areas. Since its debut, the program has financed \$1.2 million in prescriptions to members. The United Methodist Church, with an average member age of 57, has one of the oldest memberships among U.S. denominations.

Dan Jadosh, senior vice president of DestinationRx, said his company is pleased that it can play a small role in bringing aid to the elderly and the 44 million Americans without health insurance. “It’s not a situation that’s an end-all to fixing the problem, but it will provide help at least,” he said. *-Religion News Service*