

**Resolution B:**  
**Call for review of granting disability status to person experiencing Mental Illness**

Whereas, Portico Benefits Services provides disability benefits to rostered ministers of this church; and

Whereas, to be eligible for this coverage a sponsoring entity (congregation, synod, churchwide organization or agency) needs to cover salary and benefits for 60 days before a rostered minister is able to apply for these benefits; and

Whereas, persons experiencing mental illness have resigned their call before this period is completed and have been denied these benefits because of this technicality; and

Whereas, synod offices or sponsoring entity do not always know that the resignation has been submitted until after receiving it and the effective date does not meet the 60-day requirement; and

Whereas, the rostered minister might otherwise qualify for these benefits except for this requirement;

**Therefore, be it resolved** that the Northwest Washington Synod Assembly memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly to ask Portico Benefit Services and the Conference of Bishops to review the requirements of the Portico Disability program for persons suffering mental illness; and be it further

**Resolved** that specific attention be given to the ways in which timing related to the rostered minister's resignation affects potential eligibility for coverage; and be it further

**Resolved** that a report of this review be given to the Church Council by its 2023 fall meeting.

**Submitted by:** Rev. Wm. Chris Boerger

**1. What is the financial impact of this resolution on the synod budget? If expenditures are required, what are the sources of income anticipated to accomplish the purpose of the resolution?**

There should be limited financial impact to the Churchwide budget or to Portico Benefit Services for the review process. There would be financial impact to the Disability Plan assuming that there would be more individuals qualifying for this benefit. This cost would be covered by the plan through the normal rate setting process.

**2. What are the personnel implications within our synod (or churchwide)?**

Portico Benefit Services would have staff that would need to participate in the review. Synod Relations, the Conference of Bishops and/or the Office of the Secretary would also need to participate in the review. This type of review is a regular activity for both organizations.

**3. Who will be responsible for implementation of the resolution?**

Churchwide staff would coordinate the implementation of this resolution. I assume it will fall to the Office of the Secretary and to the staff of Portico Benefit Services.

**4. How does this resolution enhance and forward the mission of the church and our synod?**

The ELCA has placed a priority on the health of its rostered ministers. The existence of Portico Benefit Services is required by the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This constitutional requirement shows the importance of supporting rostered ministers. This specific situation happens rarely but when it does the impact on the roster minister or former rostered minister is significant and is a hardship on them and on those around them. Addressing this issue would be a further step in caring for those who lead this church.