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## **EssentiaCare expands to three Wisconsin counties in 2019**

### ***Medicare Advantage plan from UCare and Essentia Health coming to Bayfield, Douglas and Washburn counties***

MINNEAPOLIS, Sept. 19, 2018 — [UCare](#), a nonprofit health plan, and [Essentia Health](#), an integrated health system, will expand their *EssentiaCare* plan to three western Wisconsin counties in 2019 within Essentia Health’s service area. *EssentiaCare* is a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) Medicare Advantage plan combining the strengths of UCare’s Medicare coverage with Essentia Health’s quality care and network of specialists, physicians and advanced practitioners.

The *EssentiaCare* plan will now be available to individuals in Bayfield, Douglas and Washburn counties. This collaborative Medicare Advantage plan is an attractive option that combines both care and coverage for Wisconsin residents who are becoming eligible for Medicare or exploring a different plan when 2019 information becomes available, starting Oct. 1, 2018.

Since 2016, *EssentiaCare* has delivered this progressive, shared model to patients of Essentia Health’s extensive network of physicians, advanced practitioners, clinics and hospitals, including access to the Mayo Clinic for rare or complex health issues. UCare and Essentia Health have 50/50 equity in the plan’s administration, risk and results. As such, the partnership enables Essentia Health’s practitioners to design cost-effective and high-quality care models to best serve the needs of UCare members.

“We are excited to bring this highly valuable plan to benefit Wisconsin Medicare members who will get the best of UCare and Essentia Health,” said Mark Traynor, UCare President and Chief Executive Officer. “By combining UCare’s extensive Medicare Advantage experience with Essentia Health’s high-quality health care, we support member health with a caring team. Since the plan was introduced, member satisfaction has been high and enrollment growth steady.”

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“This is a unique partnership designed to deliver trusted, affordable care to our patients. This allows us to better know and understand our patients, facilitating personal care to meet their individual needs, which improves their health and vitality. We’re excited to bring the same experience and health to our Wisconsin patients next year,” said Essentia Health CEO David Herman, MD

In September, UCare is holding educational [Medicare Basics](#) sessions in Wisconsin that inform Medicare enrollees and their families about the parts of Medicare, enrollment timelines, plan types and coverage options. The sessions are also an opportunity for the community to meet UCare’s Medicare experts.

### **About UCare**

[UCare](#) is an independent, nonprofit health plan providing health care and administrative services to more than 400,000 members throughout Minnesota. UCare partners with health care providers, counties, and community organizations to create and deliver:

- [Individual and Family Plans](#) available on [MNsure](#)
- [Coverage for adults with disabilities](#), [MinnesotaCare](#) and [Prepaid Medical Assistance](#) programs
- [Medicare plans](#) with an “Excellent” NCQA rating, and a [partnership](#) with Essentia Health.
- Programs for [older Minnesotans with Medical Assistance](#), or with both [Medical Assistance and Medicare](#).

UCare addresses health care disparities and care access issues through its [UCare Foundation](#) grants and a broad array of community initiatives. UCare has received Top Workplaces honors from the Star Tribune for nine consecutive years since the rankings began in 2010.

### **About Essentia Health**

Essentia Health is an integrated health system serving patients in Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota and Idaho.

Headquartered in Duluth, Minn., Essentia Health combines the strengths and talents of 14,700 employees, including more than 1,900 physicians and advanced practitioners, who serve our patients and communities through the mission of being called to make a healthy difference in people’s lives.

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Essentia Health, which includes many Catholic facilities, is guided by the values of Quality, Hospitality, Respect, Joy, Justice, Stewardship and Teamwork. The organization **lives out its mission by having a patient-centered focus at 15 hospitals, 73 clinics, six long-term care facilities, three assisted living facilities, three independent living facilities, five ambulance services and one research institute.**

Essentia Health is accredited as an Accountable Care Organization by the National Committee for Quality Assurance.

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