



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**UCare grants promote health equity
in communities across the state**
***Focus on opioid management, social conditions,
dental access, behavioral health and primary care***

MINNEAPOLIS, Mar. 5, 2019 — UCare has awarded grants totaling more than \$1.5 million for health improvement initiatives benefitting underserved populations across the state. In line with the nonprofit health plan’s mission to improve the health of members through innovative services and partnerships across communities, UCare made contributions to organizations advancing health equity for diverse communities in greater Minnesota.

“The 2019 grants leverage the expertise of community partners to extend our health and wellness mission deep into Minnesota communities,” said Ghita Worcester, Senior Vice President of Public Affairs and Chief Marketing Officer. “It means a great deal to us to be able to improve social conditions and access to care for Minnesotans, especially those living in rural communities where health disparities prevail.”

Examples of UCare-sponsored programs in different regions of the state

Northern Minnesota

Chronic Opioid Management Program at [CentraCare Health](#) and detoxification programming in [Wright County](#) aims to decrease potential adverse events for patients through best practices for responsible opioid prescribing and to fund detoxification and withdrawal management services for Medical Assistance UCare members living in Wright County

Food Insecurity Screening and Referral programs at [Essentia Health](#) and [Lakewood Health System](#) address hunger for Essentia Health families at pediatric and primary care clinics through a partnership with Hunger Solutions and establish system-wide screening and intervening workflows within EPIC at Lakewood

Expansion of integrated behavioral health in [St. Luke's Hospital of Duluth](#) primary care clinics follows the SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment) model

Monthly dental access in [Itasca County](#) for Medical Assistance patients expanding preventive and restorative dental care from Children's Dental Services for those lacking dental access within the community.

Southern Minnesota

Sustainable opioid management program at [Olmsted Medical Center](#) through participation in Project ECHO which enables clinical care teams to partner with community providers and health workers to better serve people with opioid use disorder

Somali family engagement and health education at [Faribault Families First Alliance](#) and [Somali Community Resettlement Program](#) empowering women and families on their journey toward optimal health and wellbeing

Integrated behavioral health implementations at [Mankato Clinic](#), [Mayo Clinic](#) and [Olmsted County Public Health](#) bridging gaps in mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and integration with primary care

Dental equipment in [Nicollet County](#) for low-income residents supporting dental varnishing and dental care education.

[Allina Health](#) clinic-community connections in [Rice County](#) and [Winona Health Wellbeing Collaborative Pathways Community HUB](#) enhancing community-based care coordination to address health-related social needs of Rice County's growing diverse populations and social determinants of health such as food insecurity in Winona

Statewide

[Minnesota Community Health Worker Alliance](#) advancing health equity and optimal health outcomes for Minnesotans via community health worker strategies

Supportive housing programs from [Hearth Connection](#) for UCare members in out-state Minnesota experiencing long-term homelessness

[North Memorial community paramedic program](#) expansion to metro and rural counties to cover gaps in care with home health checkups

About UCare

[UCare](#) is an independent, nonprofit health plan providing health care and administrative services to more than 420,000 members throughout Minnesota and parts of western Wisconsin. UCare partners with health care providers, counties, and community organizations to create and deliver Medicare, Medicaid and Individual & Family health plans.

The health plan addresses health care disparities and care access issues through 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.

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