



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**UCare's virtual "A Salute to Excellence!" celebrates 19 providers**  
***Minnesota clinics and care systems recognized for***  
***outstanding 2020 HEDIS results and mental health innovation***

MINNEAPOLIS, Oct. 6, 2021 — [UCare](#), a community-based, nonprofit health plan, held its 13<sup>th</sup> annual "A Salute to Excellence!" event Thursday evening, Sept. 30. The virtual event honored 18 Minnesota clinics and care systems with top results in 2020 Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) measures. Awards were given for health care providers' performance delivering high-quality care to UCare's Medicare, Medicaid and Special Needs Plan members. Convergence Integrated Care (CIC) – a statewide network of community-based mental health programs – received UCare's new Innovation Award for implementing innovative approaches to improve the mental health of UCare members.

This year's A Salute to Excellence! was hosted online, with more than 50 health care clinicians and staff in attendance. The evening opened with remarks from UCare President and CEO Mark Traynor. "UCare's provider partners are a vital extension of our people power. Especially during this pandemic, we are so grateful for the high quality and safe care you and our teams provide our members to put them on a path to their best health," said Traynor at the event. "You're on the front lines every day helping our members overcome their health challenges."

The opening remarks were followed by a feature presentation from Dr. Marilyn Peitso, President, and Janet Silversmith, CEO, of the Minnesota Medical Association (MMA) on clinical implicit bias in health outcomes. The presenters provided an overview of the current state of health inequities and discussed ways the MMA is working to mitigate biases and support adoption of anti-racist cultures by Minnesota health care organizations. They invited the evening's honorees to join this important work.

After the presentation, UCare Associate Vice President of Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders, and Special Needs BasicCare Programs, Jennifer Garber, awarded

UCare's first Innovation Award to Convergence Integrated Care (CIC). This award was created to recognize a partner who is improving the health of UCare members through innovative care delivery and/or payment models. Jinny Palen, the Executive Director of CIC, discussed the innovative mental health strategies CIC is implementing through a grant from UCare to partner with law enforcement and schools to support the mental health of the communities and UCare members they serve.

Next up was Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer Julia Joseph-Di Caprio, MD, honoring guests with UCare Excellence in Health Care Awards for their quality results. "Your partnership makes our mission possible," affirmed Dr. Joseph-Di Caprio. "In 2020, you provided our members and your patients with high-quality preventive care, disease management, mental health and substance use disorder services, maternity care, and assistance with care transitions and medication management."

A Salute to Excellence! honored the following clinics and care systems from across Minnesota and western Wisconsin:

- Alomere Health Alexandria Clinic
- CentraCare
- Gundersen Health System
- HealthPartners/Park Nicollet
- HealthPartners/Stillwater Medical Group
- Mankato Clinic
- Mayo Clinic
- Minnesota Community Care
- NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center
- Olmsted Medical Center
- Open Cities Health Center
- Ridgeview
- Sanford
- St. Luke's Hospital of Duluth
- United Family Medicine
- University of Minnesota Physicians
- Voyage Healthcare
- Winona Health Services

### **About UCare**

[UCare](#) is an independent, nonprofit health plan providing health care and administrative services to more than 570,000 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 twelve consecutive years since the rankings began in 2010.

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