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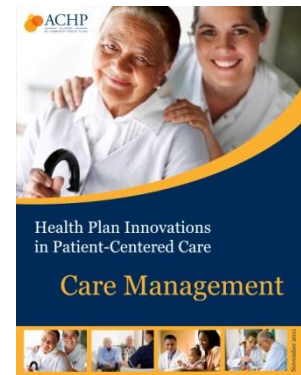
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## **UCare featured in national report highlighting innovative care management programs**

***Alliance of Community Health Plans* report profiles care management models that improve care and the quality of life for patients with chronic illnesses**

MINNEAPOLIS, Dec. 28, 2011 – UCare is featured in the “Health Plan Innovations in Patient-Centered Care: Care Management Handbook” issued by the Alliance of Community Health Plans (ACHP), in Washington, D.C.

The report from this national organization offers a comprehensive look at effective ways in which ACHP-member community health plans partner with health care providers to improve patient care and health outcomes for people living with chronic diseases, such as diabetes or heart disease.



UCare is one of 12 health plans with innovative care management activities highlighted in this ACHP report. The “Care Management” handbook also features two case studies spotlighting UCare’s care management activities for members of UCare’s Minnesota Senior Health Options (UCare’s MSHO) and *UCare Connect*, a plan for adults with disabilities. The case studies present before-and-after summaries of the health of a member in each of the two plans. The studies describe how case management helped members overcome language and financial barriers to needed care, connected these members with appropriate medical and community resources, stabilized variable medical conditions, and led to greater coordination of medical services and decision making by informed family members.

“All of us at UCare are very proud that this topical report features several of our proactive care management initiatives to improve the health of UCare members in Minnesota,” says Russ Kuzel, M.D., Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer, UCare. “Care management for the 12,000 members of UCare’s Minnesota Senior Health Options plan and *UCare Connect* plan for people with disabilities helps them live with, and often self-manage, their chronic conditions for the best possible quality of life. These services also are especially helpful because UCare serves a highly diverse immigrant population that often is unfamiliar with these care concepts.”

### **About care management**

Care management is the coordination of care and services for chronically ill patients who require complex, one-on-one and personalized care, and is emerging as a foundation of patient-centered medical care. The report presents the evolution from disease management to care management approaches that address the “whole person” including social, environmental or financial barriers to good health. It focuses on five key themes that could be adapted more broadly to replicate the positive results found in the care management work of community health plans: physician partnerships, face-to-face encounters, multidisciplinary teams, appropriate use of technology, and community mindedness.

AHP reports that care management programs, many of which are described in the new “Care Management Handbook,” have resulted in decreased emergency room (ER) use, improved health, and lower costs. When reviewing results from its members’ care management programs, AHP also found significant cost savings due primarily to prevention of avoidable hospitalizations and emergency room visits.

### **About UCare**

UCare ([www.ucare.org](http://www.ucare.org)) is an independent, nonprofit health plan providing health care and administrative services to more than 235,000 members. UCare partners with health care providers, counties, and community organizations to create and deliver innovative health coverage products for:

- Individuals and families enrolled in income-based Minnesota Health Care Programs, such as MinnesotaCare and Prepaid Medical Assistance Program.
- Adults with disabilities and Medicare beneficiaries with chronic health conditions.
- Minnesotans dually eligible for Medical Assistance and Medicare.
- Medicare-eligible individuals throughout Minnesota and in western Wisconsin.

UCare addresses health care disparities and care access issues through its UCare Fund grants and a broad array of community initiatives. The health plan received Top 100 Workplaces honors in 2010 and 2011 from the *Star Tribune*.

### **About ACHP**

ACHP ([www.achp.org](http://www.achp.org)) is a national leadership organization that brings together 22 innovative health plans and provider groups that are among America's best at delivering affordable, high-quality coverage and care in their communities. The community-based and regional health plans and provider organizations from across the country that make up ACHP's membership provide coverage and care for approximately 16 million Americans. These organizations focus on improving the health of the communities they serve and are on the leading edge of patient care coordination, patient-centered medical homes, accountable health care delivery, use of information technology and other innovations leading to improvements in affordability and the quality of care.

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