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**Minnesota's first online cultural  
competency learning center for  
health care practitioners launches Sept. 30**

*The [Culture Care Connection web site](#), developed by [Stratis Health](#) and funded by [UCare](#), aims to improve culturally competent care in Minnesota*

MINNEAPOLIS (Sept. 30, 2009) – A unique, state-focused online resource and learning center—the [Culture Care Connection](#) ([www.culturecareconnection.org](http://www.culturecareconnection.org)) – launched today at 12 p.m. CST. The web site is designed to help Minnesota health care providers, staff, administrators, and county agencies offer culturally and linguistically appropriate care to the state's growing multicultural populations in order to reduce health care disparities and achieve improved health care outcomes.

The Culture Care Connection web site is a “cyber-clearinghouse” of information tools and resources developed to be concise, actionable, and evidence-based. It was created by [Stratis Health](#) and funded by a [UCare](#) grant [announced in October 2008](#). The site offers current information on cultural competence concepts, health topics, ethnicities, stakeholder organizations, and resources that reflect the needs of Minnesota's diverse populations, as well as the health care organizations that serve them.

UCare and Stratis Health share the mutual goal of increasing cultural competence among Minnesota's health care provider community in order to reduce racial and ethnic disparities, improve the quality of health care received by Minnesota's multicultural populations, and achieve better health outcomes. Many emerging populations are represented among UCare's more than 180,000 members. Stratis Health works with health care providers, care systems, and consumers to develop and implement initiatives and projects for clinical and organizational change, as well as connect them with health education and quality improvement information.

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“Minnesota’s population is becoming more diverse every day, and our health care provider community and county resources are often challenged by language and cultural barriers that impede care delivery to multicultural populations. This lack of knowledge can lead to disparities in health care access and outcomes,” says Nancy Feldman, President and CEO, UCare. “UCare is very proud to support the creation of this remarkable web site and make this rich repository of cultural competency and health literacy resources available to Minnesota’s health care providers, county agencies, and the public.”

“Working with clinicians on cultural competence highlighted for us just how scattered resources were on the topic and how few providers were aware of what was available,” said Jennifer Lundblad, PhD, MBA, president and CEO, Stratis Health. “We’re delighted that today health care organizations can go to Culture Care Connection for Minnesota-focused information and actionable resources. Implementing the tools and training through Culture Care Connection will help clinicians better communicate with and relate to a diversity of patients—ultimately providing better care.”

Minnesota’s multicultural population is projected to increase from 14 percent in 2005 to 25 percent in 2035.\* As Minnesota’s population becomes more diverse, health care providers are seeing a patient population that may not speak English, may not be familiar with Western medical customs, and may be distrustful of how health care is delivered in the United States.

Site resources will help clinics meet the 14 national standards on [Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services](#) (CLAS) of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services’ [Office of Minority Health](#).

The new Culture Care Connection web site offers profiles of each Minnesota county with key demographic, socioeconomic, and health status data so health care practitioners can learn more about the characteristics of the communities they serve. The profiles are one of several Culture Care Connection resources Stratis Health developed with the UCare grant. Other site highlights include:

- A free, online CLAS Assessment, to assess how well health care organizations meet national cultural and linguistic standards.
- Fact sheets to help health care providers learn more about the background, religious and cultural beliefs, and common health issues of the predominant minority populations in Minnesota, including African American, American Indian, Hispanic/Latino, Hmong, Russian, and Somali.

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UCare is also funding Stratis Health to provide cultural competency training materials and programs to more than 20 UCare-contracted, adult primary care clinics that work with underserved populations.

### **About Stratis Health**

Stratis Health is a nonprofit organization founded in 1971 that leads collaboration and innovation in health care quality and safety, and serves as a trusted expert in facilitating improvement for people and communities. Visit the Stratis Health Web site at [www.stratishealth.org](http://www.stratishealth.org) for more information.

### **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 180,000 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.

\* Minnesota State Demographic Center, Minnesota Populations Projections by Race and Hispanic Origin 2005 – 2035, (January 2009) [www.demography.state.mn.us/resource.html?Id=19887](http://www.demography.state.mn.us/resource.html?Id=19887)

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