



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UCare hires Dana Essex as Business Processes Director

Essex holds Black Belt in Lean Six Sigma

MINNEAPOLIS, March 30, 2011 – [UCare](#) has hired Dana L. Essex, Ph.D., as the organization's Business Processes Director. Essex previously was a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt at the University of Minnesota Medical Center, Fairview in Minneapolis, Minn., where she led process improvement project teams of health care professionals at all levels to drive organizational change.

In her new position, Essex serves as the health plan's internal business performance improvement consultant and is responsible for comprehensive business performance improvement initiatives. Essex also oversees the management of UCare's business relationships and contracts, including delegated functions such as care management for members with disabilities, chiropractic services, delegated care/case management services, dental services, and the Mobile Dental Clinic.

Essex reports to Laurie Dean, UCare's Senior Vice President, Operations.

"Dana's extensive knowledge of Lean Six Sigma and organizational change will significantly strengthen UCare's efforts to serve our members as efficiently and productively as possible," says Dean. "We look forward to her leadership and contributions to our delivery of state public programs and Medicare products to our members."

Essex has extensive experience creating and enacting efficiency and research initiatives in the health care field. Prior to her work at University of Minnesota Medical Center-Fairview, Essex was Black Belt Manager and Director at UnitedHealth Group in Minnetonka, Minn. She also has experience as a survey research consultant at Data Recognition Corp. in Maple Grove, Minn., and at Pearson VUE in Edina, Minn.

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Essex earned her doctorate degree in psychology in 2000 at Claremont Graduate University in Claremont, Calif., where she also completed her master's degree in psychology in 1991. She holds a bachelor's degree in biology from California State University, Fresno. She has attended several post-doctorate training courses at organizations including Mayo Clinic Center for Healthcare Innovation, University of Minnesota Humphrey Institute, Minnesota Council for Quality, and University of Minnesota Carlson School of Management.

Professional affiliations include the American College Healthcare Executives, International Society of Six Sigma Professionals, and the American Psychological Association. Essex is a member of the Quality Committee of LifeLink III's Board of Directors.

Essex's community service includes acting as a community partner with the University of Minnesota Doctor of Nursing Practice program, and previous work as a Minnesota Quality Award program evaluator for the Minnesota Council for Quality.

Essex and her family live in Plymouth, Minn.

About UCare

UCare (www.ucare.org) is an independent, nonprofit health plan providing health care and administrative services to more than 200,000 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 a Top Workplaces 2010 honor from the *Star Tribune*.

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