



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Deanne Probst

612-676-3630

[dprobst@ucare.org](mailto:dprobst@ucare.org)

## **Medicare beneficiaries still have time to change Part D plans**

***Open Enrollment Period extends to March 31, 2008***

MINNEAPOLIS, Jan. 22, 2008 -- While Medicare beneficiaries had a Dec. 31, 2007, deadline to enroll in or switch their Medicare Part D health plan, those who already enrolled still have an opportunity to change Part D plans through March 31, 2008.

“With the passing of the Annual Election Period deadline, many of the state’s beneficiaries are unaware they still have a chance to move to a different Part D or Medicare Advantage plan to find the best possible health care solution to fit their prescription drug needs,” said Ghita Worcester, UCare’s Senior Vice President of Public Affairs and Marketing.

During this phase, called the Open Enrollment Period, Medicare beneficiaries:

- Enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan with Part D can switch to a different Medicare Advantage plan with Part D.
- Enrolled in Original Medicare and a stand-alone prescription drug plan (PDP) can switch to a Medicare Advantage plan with Part D and vice versa.

Medicare Advantage plans offer a complete set of health care benefits, including Part D coverage, for an affordable price. These types of plans are held to high performance standards. In fact, The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) recently ranked UCare’s Medicare Advantage plan *UCare for Seniors* in the top 8% of health plans nationwide for its quality performance and member satisfaction.

For some members of the Medicare population, the Part D enrollment period continues throughout the year. Medicare beneficiaries meeting the following criteria may enroll in a Part D plan at any time:

- Residents of a nursing facility, long-term care facility, rehabilitation hospital and other psychiatric/medical institution.

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- Those who became eligible for Medicare because of a disability.
- Those eligible to participate in Medicare Savings Programs.
- Those who are dually eligible for Medical Assistance and Medicare.
- Those who move permanently outside their plan's service area.
- Other reasons that apply to Special Election Periods (SEP).

“We encourage those who already signed up for Part D to consider their options carefully. If they want medical and prescription coverage in one coordinated plan, a Medicare Advantage plan may be the answer,” explained Worcester. For more information about the *UCare for Seniors* Medicare Advantage plan, beneficiaries can call 1-877-523-1518 (toll free).

### 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 137,000 members. UCare partners with health care providers, counties, community organizations, and other member-directed groups to create and deliver innovative health coverage plans for:

- Medicare-eligible individuals throughout Minnesota and in western Wisconsin.
- 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.

In 2007, UCare's *UCare for Seniors* Medicare Advantage plan ranked in the top 8 percent of health plans nationwide for outstanding performance. UCare addresses health care disparities and care access issues through its UCare Fund grants and a broad array of community initiatives.

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