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UCare joins text4baby mobile messaging program

Program offers free texting service for new and expectant mothers to help improve birth outcomes and infant health

MINNEAPOLIS, June 9, 2010 – UCare has signed on to become an outreach partner for the new text4baby initiative that will serve UCare members who are expectant or new mothers.

UCare says the new program offers an innovative way to provide outreach to its Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare members who are pregnant or new moms. UCare will launch this program to eligible members this summer.

text4baby is a free mobile information service that provides pregnant women and new moms with information to help them care for their health and give their babies the best possible start in life. It is the largest national mobile health initiative to date. Participating cell phone carriers, which cover 96 percent of all cell phone users, waive all fees for receiving the texts. The opt-in program's text messages communicate helpful information aimed at curbing premature births, and deaths of children before age 1.

The national, educational program was launched in February 2010 by the [National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition \(HMHB\)](#). HMHB reports that, each year in the United States, more than 500,000 babies are born prematurely and an estimated 28,000 children die before their first birthday. As of May 18, 2010, there were 39,756 text4baby enrollees, of which 94 percent report that they would recommend the service to a friend.

Women who sign up for the service by texting BABY to 511411 (or BEBE in Spanish) will receive free SMS text messages each week, timed to their due date or baby's date of birth. The messages focus on a variety of topics critical to maternal and child health, including birth defects prevention, immunization, nutrition, seasonal flu, mental health, oral health, caring for the baby, and safe sleep. Text4baby messages also connect women to prenatal and infant care services and other resources.

The program was featured in an article entitled “[Take Two Texts and Call Me in the Morning.](#)” published in the May 3, 2010, issue of *Time* magazine.

About text4baby

Text4baby is made possible through a broad, public-private partnership that includes government, corporations, academic institutions, professional associations, tribal agencies and non-profit organizations. Founding partners include HMHB, Voxiva, CTIA - The Wireless Foundation and Grey Healthcare Group (a WPP company). Johnson & Johnson is the founding sponsor, and premier sponsors include WellPoint, Pfizer, and CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield. U.S. government partners include the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Defense Military Health System. The mobile health platform is provided by Voxiva and free messaging services are provided by participating wireless service providers. Implementation partners include BabyCenter, Danya International, Syniverse Technologies, Keynote Systems, and The George Washington University. MTV Networks is a media sponsor.

About HMHB

HMHB is a recognized leader and resource in maternal and child health, reaching an estimated 10 million health care professionals, parents and policymakers through its membership of over 100 local, state and national organizations. HMHB was founded in 1981, prompted by the U.S. Surgeon General’s conference on infant mortality.

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.