



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**UCare expands UCare Connect, a health plan for adults with disabilities and/or mental illness, to metro area**

***Coordinated care and coverage available to eligible adults in seven metropolitan counties starting Jan. 1, 2010***

MINNEAPOLIS, Oct. 19, 2009 — [UCare](#) announced today that it is expanding [UCare Connect](#), its health care program for adults with physical or developmental disabilities, and/or mental illness, to the metro-area counties of Hennepin, Ramsey, Anoka, Dakota, Washington, Carver, and Scott.

*UCare Connect* provides health coverage to help eligible Minnesotans take control of their health and improve their quality of life using a coordinated approach to care that connects community resources and health care providers. It emphasizes prevention and management of chronic care needs, and promotes effective navigation of health and social service systems. Membership is voluntary, and eligible adults must:

- Be eligible for Medical Assistance without Medicare, or with both Medicare Parts A and B.
- Be at least age 18 and under age 65.
- Have a certified disability or developmental disability (including mental illness).
- Live in the 41-county *UCare Connect* service area.

Eligible adults may enroll in the seven new counties beginning Nov. 15, 2009; enrollment is ongoing in its current 34-county Greater Minnesota service area of Benton, Blue Earth, Carlton, Chippewa, Chisago, Cottonwood, Faribault, Fillmore, Houston, Isanti, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Lac Qui Parle, Le Sueur, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, Mille Lacs, Mower, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Olmsted, Pine, Redwood, Rice, Rock, Sherburne, Stearns, St. Louis, Watonwan, Winona, Wright, and Yellow Medicine counties.

“We are very proud to work with Minnesota counties to offer *UCare Connect* to adults with disabilities, including mental illness,” says Nancy Feldman, President and CEO, UCare. “This new product offers health care options to individuals who may not have had those choices before. UCare has a long history of offering innovative programs for underserved people with special needs. With *UCare Connect*, we are extending our expertise and coverage to people who clearly will benefit from a personal case management approach.”

UCare created *UCare Connect* and began enrolling members in January 2008 as the result of legislation passed by the Minnesota Legislature in 2006 authorizing a health care program for people with these disabilities.

*UCare Connect* members work with a Health Plan Navigator in their home county, and a Case Coordinator with UCare. These professionals work together to help plan members take advantage of available resources, while facilitating connections that will lead to sustained health improvements. *UCare Connect* members have access to an extensive provider network. They also enjoy free membership and no monthly dues at the YMCA, and dental care that includes UCare's [See-A-Dentist Guarantee](#)<sup>SM</sup> and service aboard [UCare Tooth Care](#), UCare's mobile dental unit.

### **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, community organizations, and other member-directed groups to create and deliver innovative health coverage products 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.

UCare addresses health care disparities and care access issues through its UCare Fund grants and a broad array of community initiatives.