



# County News Briefs



Fall 2010

County Hotline: 1-866-457-7146 (toll free)

## Did you know?

- UCare was the first health plan in Minnesota to provide free transportation services to members **before** transportation became part of the required Minnesota Health Care Programs benefit set. UCare arranges an average of 15,000 bus, van, and cab rides for eligible members per month to and from doctor appointments, and childbirth and pregnancy classes.

To arrange transportation, eligible members must call UCare Health Ride at **612-676-6830** or **1-800-864-2157** (toll free). For more information or eligibility, please [click here](#).

- UCare provides interpreter services at doctor appointments for an average of 5,000 members per month. UCare recently finished a review of its interpreter services provider network to help monitor quality assurance and coverage for interpreters needed by our Limited English Proficiency (LEP) members throughout the state. [Click here](#) to view the list of contracted agencies you can use.



## UCare will continue to offer Special Needs BasicCare in 2011

Each new year typically brings changes to health care programs. 2011 will be no exception, particularly for managed care programs that serve people with disabilities. Minnesota Disability Health Options (MnDHO) will **close on Jan. 1, 2011**. Also, there are several changes in health plan options for SNBC.

*UCare Connect*, UCare's SNBC product, will continue to be available in 41 counties throughout Minnesota next year. *UCare*

*Connect* serves people with physical, developmental, and mental health disabilities who are eligible for Medical Assistance. It also integrates Medicare benefits for individuals who are dually eligible for Medicaid and Medicare. Each member receives care coordination services and additional benefits that are not available in fee-for-service Medical Assistance or Medicare.

Please contact UCare Sales at **1-800-707-1711** if you or your clients have any questions about *UCare Connect*.

## UCare expands into Becker, Cass, Clay, and Crow Wing counties in 2011

On Jan. 1, 2011, UCare will be a new health plan option for certain Minnesota Health Care Program recipients in Becker, Cass, Clay, and Crow Wing counties. We are excited to serve these new areas of the state and look forward to working with our new county partners.

UCare has prepared a map of its Medicare and state public programs (SPP) by county in Minnesota for 2011. To view and download this map, [click here](#).



## UCare County Satisfaction Survey results are in

UCare works closely with county public health and human service agencies to help deliver services to our members. To improve care delivery, UCare asks for feedback from county colleagues about once a year. This input is vital for improved services to members.

In general, the 2010 survey results showed improvement in: satisfaction with UCare, response to contracts and claims; and with Performance Improvement Programs (PIPs) tools and trainings received. There was also high satisfaction with UCare newsletters, health promotion programs, UCare's Minnesota Senior Health Options (MSHO) and *UCare Connect* care coordination audit process, and some new communication strategies.

We look forward to continued feedback from all our county partners. We appreciate our working relationship with you! For detailed County Satisfaction Survey 2010 results, please contact Pang Cha at [pcha@ucare.org](mailto:pcha@ucare.org).



## UCare Fund announces 2010 grants

UCare announced in early September that its **UCare Fund** distributed 27 grants totaling \$829,000 to Minnesota organizations working to reduce obesity and promote healthy lifestyles among people of all ages, cultures, and abilities.

The UCare Fund is a community-directed initiative of UCare, the fourth-largest health plan in Minnesota. Established in 1998, the Fund provides grants and staff support to projects that advance **UCare's mission** to improve the health of UCare members through innovative services and partnerships across communities, and reduce health disparities for disadvantaged populations in the Twin Cities and throughout Greater Minnesota.

"We know there is greater need in the community this year for health care services funding, and the response to our grant solicitation reflected that," said Ghita Worcester, Senior Vice President of Public Affairs and Marketing, UCare. "We're pleased to be able to distribute grants this year to programs that help underserved Minnesotans live healthier lives."

A list of the 2010 UCare Fund grants and grantees, which include Isanti and Otter Tail counties, Bloomington Public Health, and Inter-County Nursing Service, can be found [here](#).

## Flu season is here

UCare encourages members to protect themselves and others by getting a free flu shot.

UCare members can visit their health care provider or attend a community flu shot clinic to receive a free flu shot. We appreciate the flu shot clinics that local public health departments offer in their community.

Transportation to get a free flu shot is available to UCare members. To find an available and nearby flu clinic or for more information, members may call the Customer Services phone number listed on their UCare ID card. UCare staff uses the **Minnesota Department of Health flu shot clinic locator** to help members identify a convenient location.



## Formulary change for cholesterol-lowering drugs

When it comes to health care, quality is the most important consideration – but cost counts, too. Some drugs cost more, but don't necessarily do more.

In order to reduce costs without reducing quality, UCare removed Lipitor® and Vytorin® from its SPP formulary effective Oct. 1, 2010. These two medications will be removed from UCare's MSHO formulary effective Jan. 1, 2011.

There are generic cholesterol medications available that have been proven to work as well as more expensive brand drugs. The generic alternatives for these two drugs are simvastatin, pravastatin, and lovastatin. For UCare members needing a high-potency HMG-CoA inhibitor (also known as a statin), Crestor® is available on the UCare formulary.

The 2001 National Cholesterol Education Program (NCEP) guidelines, and the 2004 update to those guidelines, do not specify a preferred statin to treat high cholesterol because no unique benefit at equipotent LDL-C reducing doses has been proven for one statin over others.

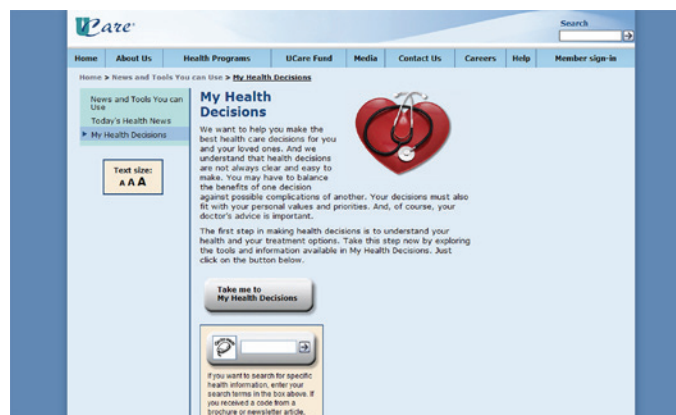
If you have any questions or concerns, please contact UCare's Mary Ptacek, Pharmacy Clinical Manager, at 612-676-3464 or [mptacek@ucare.org](mailto:mptacek@ucare.org).

## My Health Decisions tool debuts on web page

UCare wants to help members make the best health care decisions they can for themselves and their loved ones. We're moving their ability to do that forward with a new online tool called My Health Decisions. It is posted on UCare's [home web page](#).

We understand that health decisions are not always clear and easy to make. Members may have to balance the benefits of one decision against possible complications of another. Decisions must also fit with members' personal values and priorities. And, of

course, the health care provider's advice is important. [Click here](#) to visit My Decisions and explore the "news and tools" that members, you, and others can use to help make sound health choices.



## Birth outcome data reports

UCare works with the Center for Health Statistics at the Minnesota Department of Health every year to collect information on our members' births from official birth certificate records. This "Birth Data Match" initiative provides helpful details about our pregnant population and their birth experiences.

Counties interested in learning more about their UCare births can request the number of UCare births and deliveries in a specific year (or combined) from 2002-2008. For this same seven-year span, UCare also can provide information to counties about low birth weight among your county's UCare births, preterm birth among your county's UCare births, smoking during pregnancy among your county's pregnant UCare members, and the trimester of prenatal care initiation for your county's pregnant UCare members. There will be a two-three week turnaround time to fulfill these requests.

To learn more about UCare births in your county, contact Pat Schaffner at [pschaffner@ucare.org](mailto:pschaffner@ucare.org). Pat replaced Elyse Chadwick (who moved to California) as UCare's Health Educator in the Health Promotion Department. Pat has worked

more than 20 years in health care, and has specific experience designing, implementing, and evaluating hospital-based programs serving women with high-risk pregnancies and parents of premature babies. She is also a former childbirth educator. Welcome, Pat!



UCare Phone List

Clinical Services

Authorization and Intake

612-676-6705  
1-877-447-4384 (toll free)

Mary Grina,  
Clinical Product Liaison  
612-676-3254

Customer Services/Enrollment

612-676-3200 (State Public Programs)  
1-800-203-7225 (toll free)  
612-676-6868 (Special Needs Plans)  
1-866-280-7202 (toll free)

Eligibility Verification

612-676-6824  
1-800-203-7225 (toll free)

Health Connection (24-hour nurse line)

1-800-942-7858 (toll free)  
TTY: 1-877-728-3311 (toll free)

Health Promotion

612-676-3351  
1-866-243-5157 (toll free)

Health Ride Transportation

612-676-6830  
1-800-864-2157 (toll free)

Mental Health Services Behavioral Healthcare Providers

763-525-9919 (Metro)  
1-800-361-0491 (Greater MN)

MMSI

1-800-645-6296 (toll free)

See-A-Dentist Appointment Hotline

1-800-235-0564 (toll free)

Government Relations

Carol Berg, RN, MPH  
Public Health and County Manager  
612-676-3635  
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Monica Carlisle  
State Government Relations Coordinator  
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Pang Cha  
County Relations Coordinator  
612-676-3638  
[pcha@ucare.org](mailto:pcha@ucare.org)

Do you have a question not answered through your regular contacts? Need help untangling an issue? Can't remember who to call? Then use our toll-free County Hotline! We welcome your calls and questions to help you work with our UCare members.

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