2020 Quality Program Description

03/10/2020: Approved by the Quality Improvement Committee
03/19/2020: Approved by the Quality Improvement Advisory and Credentialing Committee
04/08/2020: Approved by the Board of Directors
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Introduction
UCare’s Quality Program Description provides the structure used to guide the formal processes for evaluating and improving the quality and appropriateness of health care services and the health status of the populations we serve. It describes the structure applicable to activities undertaken by UCare, including those activities undertaken for the benefit of UCare enrollees. The program allows UCare the flexibility to target activities that focus on patterns identified at the state, regional and national levels. The Quality Program provides a structure for promoting and achieving excellence in all areas through continuous improvement.

UCare maintains a company-wide commitment to quality and industry best practices and standards as set forth by state and federal regulations, as well as accrediting organizations. The Quality Program Description serves to resource, coordinate, integrate and oversee the Quality Program. This Program Description defines the program purpose, structure, policy and procedure for UCare in the framework of UCare’s Mission and Values.

UCare’s Quality Program Description applies to the following products:

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Mission Statement
UCare will improve the health of our members through innovative services and partnerships across communities.

Values (UCare’s Philosophy)
- **Integrity**: UCare stands on its reputation. We are what we say we are; we do what we say we will do.
- **Community**: UCare works with communities to support our members and to give back to the communities through UCare grants and volunteer efforts.
- **Quality**: UCare strives to continually improve our products and operations to ensure the highest quality of care for our members.
- **Flexibility**: UCare seeks to understand the needs of our members, providers and purchasers over time, and to develop programs and services to meet those needs.
- **Respect**: UCare respects its members by providing quality care and services that recognize their unique needs. UCare respects its employees by providing a supportive work culture that encourages their development and embraces their diversity.

Quality Program
The Quality Program is a commitment to innovation, affordability, professional competence and continuous learning, teamwork and collaboration. The clinical aspects of the Quality Program are structured from evidence-based medicine. The Quality Program also ensures health services needs of members, including those with limited English proficiency and diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds are met. The Quality Program supports efforts to understand the population served, in terms of age groups, disease categories, social factors and special risk status through analysis, monitoring and the evaluation of processes. The quality of care and services are optimized and continuously improved while maintaining cost effective utilization of health care resources. This is accomplished by systematic monitoring and evaluation of provided services and by actively pursuing opportunities for improvement.
Goals
The goals of UCare’s Quality Program are to:

- Achieve NCQA accreditation for all products.
- Continue our focus on maintaining and improving member health through Medicare and IFP Star Ratings and Medicaid measures through innovative initiatives.
- Coordinate quality improvement activities across all products to achieve efficiencies and reduce duplicative efforts.
- Continuously improve the quality, appropriateness, availability, accessibility, coordination and continuity of health care services to members across the continuum of care.
- Identify and implement strategies to address social factors influencing health and health care disparities to improve overall health and health outcomes of our members.
- Develop a more robust population health management strategy to address the needs of our members across the continuum of care.
- Define, demonstrate and communicate the organization-wide commitment to improving the quality of patient safety.
- Foster a partnership among members, caregivers, providers, and community, which allows UCare to promote effective health management, health education and disease prevention, as well as encourage the appropriate use of health care and services by members and providers.
- Ensure a high-quality network through credentialing, peer review and contracting processes.
- Collaborate with providers to share best practices and implement coordinated strategies to improve care coordination and quality.
- Improve and manage member outcomes, satisfaction and safety.
- Maintain compliance with local, state and federal regulatory requirements, and accreditation standards.
- Provide oversight of delegated entities to ensure compliance with UCare standards as well as state and federal regulatory requirements and accreditation standards.
- Ensure UCare’s organizational initiatives related to cultural competency and diversity for members and providers meet the needs of the UCare membership.
- Improve member and provider experience and enhance UCare’s understanding of key factors contributing to satisfaction.

Patient Safety
The Quality Program includes an emphasis on patient safety. A number of activities are in place to monitor aspects of patient safety that include but are not limited to:

- Physician credentials are verified in accordance with NCQA, state and federal guidelines. Disciplinary actions against physicians are monitored on an ongoing basis.
- The Quality of Care Program monitors adverse events through both standard reports of inpatient claims and the identification of potential and/or actual adverse events referred from any part of the health care delivery system.
- The process of Utilization Management plays a vital role in the monitoring of patient safety through concurrent review, identification of potential quality of care issues and identification of potential trends in under and overutilization.
- Member complaints are monitored for adverse events. The Quality Management Department, in consultation with clinical practitioners, investigates, tracks, analyzes and brings referred events to the appropriate committee, as needed.

Safety measures may be addressed through the collaboration with primary care providers by:

- Education of members regarding their role in receiving safe and effective services through member newsletters, our web site, and direct mailings.
- Distribution of Clinical Practice Guidelines to practitioners.
- Education of providers regarding improved safety practices in their clinical practice through provider newsletters and our web site.
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- Evaluation for safe clinic and/or medical office environments during office site reviews.
- Education to members regarding safe practices through home health education and discharge planning.
- Intervention for identified safety issues as identified through care management, potential quality of care assessment, and the grievance and clinical case review process.
- Dissemination of information to providers and members regarding activities in the network related to safety and quality improvement.

Organizational Structure

To promote quality throughout the UCare organization, specific relationships and linkages between the Board of Directors, program committees, operational departments and UCare employees are described on the following pages. UCare has created committees to provide oversight and implementation of all quality improvement activities.

2020 Quality Program Committee Structure

Board of Directors

UCare’s Board of Directors (“BOD”) along with the Chief Executive Officer, executes the leadership function and are ultimately responsible for the Quality Program including systems and procedures designed to ensure the quality of care provided to our members. Results of pertinent quality improvement activities are reported at each meeting. The BOD meets every other month and its responsibilities include:
The Chair of the Board of Directors appoints a Quality Improvement Advisory and Credentialing Committee, which is comprised of physicians and staff from clinics that are participating providers under contract with the corporation.

- The Chair of the Board appoints a committee chair from among the committee’s members.
- Reviews, evaluates and approves the Quality Program Description, annual Quality Work Plan, and the annual Quality Program Evaluation.
- Review of programs and standards to promote the provision of optimal achievable patient care by the corporation’s participating clinics and other providers.

**Membership consists of:**

- Chairperson: Head of the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at the University of Minnesota Medical School;
- Finance Officer, Department of Family Medicine at the University of Minnesota Medical School;
- Six elected UCare health plan members;
- Five physicians appointed from the faculty of the Department of Family Medicine;
- One member appointed by the Dean of the University of Minnesota Medical School;
- One at-large member elected from the community.

**Frequency of Meetings:** The Board meets every two months throughout the year.

**Quality Improvement Advisory and Credentialing Committee (QIACC)**

The Quality Improvement Advisory and Credentialing Committee (QIACC) oversees and directs the Quality Improvement Program for the organization, promotes the provision of optimal, achievable patient care and service by providing guidance to UCare on the quality of care provided to its members. The committee reports to the Board of Directors. The committee is responsible for the following tasks:

- Directs the development and approves the annual Quality Program Description, Quality Work Plan, and Quality Program Evaluation, and makes recommendations for changes and/or improvements.
- Approves quality improvement guidelines and standards for patient care activity, including review of key clinical surveys and interpreting results.
- Advises the corporation on appropriate strategies and procedures for assurance of such quality standards.
- Reviews and provides input on clinical improvement activities, including review of patient care evaluation studies.
- Advises UCare on provider-related standards for quality assurance.
- Oversees the activities of the Quality Improvement Council and the Health Services Management Council.

**Membership consists of:**

- The Chairperson is appointed by the Board Chair from among the committee’s members.
- External participants include 5 to 10 professionals participating in the UCare network, including representatives of primary care disciplines such as: Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, OB - GYN, Geriatrics, and Psychiatry. Additional provider representatives who serve ethnic communities, representative of UCare membership are also encouraged.

In addition, the following UCare staff attends:

- SVP, Chief Medical Officer
- SVP, Public Affairs and Chief Marketing Officer
- SVP, Chief Legal Officer and Corporate Secretary
- VP, Clinical Services
- VP, Chief Informatics Officer
- VP, Marketing and Product Management
- VP, Provider Relations and Contracting
- VP, Quality Management & Pharmacy
- Medical Directors
- AVP, Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services
- Pharmacy Director
- Quality Improvement Associate Director
- Senior Associate General Counsel

**Frequency of Meetings:** The committee meets quarterly throughout the year.
Health Services Management Council
The Health Services Management Council (HSMC) seeks to improve the health of members through oversight to ensure appropriate cost, utilization, and efficacy of clinical services. The HSMC coordinates utilization management, clinical policy development, delegated services and other health services. The HSMC also monitors, evaluates and recommends, as needed, modifications to initiatives. Responsibilities include:

- Assesses cost, utilization and appropriateness of clinical services, including medical, mental health and substance use disorder services, pharmacy, dental, chiropractic and physical therapy care. Based on this assessment, the Annual Health Services Management Report and Plan are developed.
- Reviews and approves the Annual Health Services Management Report, which identifies opportunities to improve Total Cost of Care and reduce over and under-utilization of clinical services.
- Annually reviews and approves the Health Services Management Plan, which contains initiatives to address opportunities identified in the Health Services Management Report.
- Monitors and evaluates the Health Services Management Plan initiatives and suggests modifications to initiatives as appropriate.
- Provide oversight to Quality of Care

Membership consists of:
Chair: SVP, Chief Medical Officer
SVP, Chief Financial Officer
VP, Chief Informatics Officer
VP, Clinical Services
VP, Provider Relations and Contracting
VP, Quality Management & Pharmacy
AVP, Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services
Medical Directors
Associate Director, Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services
Director, Pharmacy
Director, Financial Analytics
Director, Strategy and Product Management
Manager, Health Care Analytics

Frequency of Meetings: The committee meets bi-monthly throughout the year.

Clinical Utilization Management Work Group
Utilization Management (UM) is an organization-wide, interdisciplinary approach to balancing quality, risk, and cost concerns in the provision of member care. UM is accomplished through proactive data analysis, utilization review, case management, and referral management. It is the process of reviewing the medical necessity, appropriateness, and efficiency of health care services. The purpose of this work group is to identify, monitor, and evaluate utilization metrics and trends that may have an impact on resources, services, and member outcomes related to medical, or pharmacy services. This group is responsible for implementing strategies and/or interventions that impact utilization. Responsibilities include:

- Review key utilization metrics, trends, and accompanying analysis. Key metrics may include but are not limited to; ambulatory care sensitive conditions, preference sensitive conditions, inpatient and emergency utilization, and pharmaceutical.
- Evaluate and recommend utilization benchmarks for adoption by the Health Services Management Committee.
- Identify opportunities for additional analysis and recommend the development of initiatives to ensure appropriate utilization of medical and pharmaceutical services.
- Assign sub-groups to study, develop, and prioritize strategies to impact utilization.
- Analyze over and underutilization data on a scheduled and ad-hoc basis and report results at least annually to Health Services Management Committee for further review and action.
- Study organizational monitoring activities including utilization reports, cost/trend reports, and other data and make recommendations to Health Services Management Committee.
- Monitor studies, new findings, and emerging utilization trends for potential impact on UCare utilization.
- Provide recommendations to the Health Services Management Committee.
Membership consists of:
Chair: Director of Clinical Services - Operations
Utilization Review Manager – Medical Services
Clinical Pharmacy Manager
Medical Directors
Health Care Analytics Associate Director
Health Care Analytics Manager
Health Care Analyst
Clinical Services Analyst
Clinical Intake Manager
Quality Improvement Associate Director
Clinical Services Director, Care Management
Stars Manager (Ad Hoc)
Health Promotion Program Manager (Ad Hoc)

Frequency of Meetings: The committee meets quarterly throughout the year.

Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services Utilization Management Work Group
Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services Utilization Management (UM) is an organization-wide, interdisciplinary approach to balancing quality, risk, and cost concerns in the provision of member care. Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services UM is accomplished through proactive data analysis, utilization review, case management, and referral management. It is the process of reviewing the medical necessity, appropriateness, and efficiency of health care services. The purpose of this workgroup is to identify, monitor, and evaluate utilization metrics and trends that may have an impact on resources, services, and member outcomes related to mental health, substance use, or pharmacy services. Responsibilities include:

- Review key utilization metrics, trends, and accompanying analysis. Key metrics may include but are not limited to: mental health diagnosis trends, outpatient programs, inpatient and emergency utilization, substance use disorder services, and pharmaceutical services.
- Evaluate and recommend Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services utilization benchmarks for adoption by the Health Services Management Committee.
- Identify opportunities for additional analysis and recommend to the Health Services Management Committee the development of initiatives to ensure appropriate utilization of mental health, substance use disorder, and pharmaceutical services.
- Assign sub-groups to study, develop and prioritize strategies to impact Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services utilization.
- Analyze over and underutilization data on a scheduled and ad-hoc basis and report results at least annually to Health Services Management Committee for further review and possible action.
- Review and analyze cost saving initiatives taken by the Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services department.

Membership consists of:
Chair: Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services Associate Director
Vice Chair: Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services Manager
Clinical Pharmacy Manager
Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services Medical Director
Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services Operations Manager
Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services Clinical Manager
Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services Supervisor(s)
Health Care Analytics Associate Director
Health Care Analytics Manager
Health Care Analyst
Quality Improvement Specialist
Provider Relations and Contracting Network Manager

Frequency of Meetings: The committee meets quarterly throughout the year.
Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee (P&T)
The Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee is comprised of practicing physicians and pharmacists who oversee formulary management, prior authorization, step therapy, quantity limitations and other drug utilization activities on the pharmacy and medical benefit. The Committee may also advise UCare on other pharmacy matters to continuously improve the delivery and quality of drug therapies administered through the pharmacy or medical benefit. Responsibilities include:

- Clinically evaluate drugs and therapeutic guidelines to determine medication inclusion or exclusion on all UCare formularies. Decisions for formulary inclusion or exclusion made by the P&T are binding. Information to support this responsibility shall include:
  - Clinical evidence and efficacy: drug formulary monographs, established practice guidelines, peer reviewed literature.
  - Medication safety: adverse drug reactions, drug-drug & drug-food interactions, therapy monitoring, unusual administration or stability issues and potential for medication error.
  - Comparable data: evaluation of a drug’s efficacy, safety, convenience, and costs with those of therapeutic alternatives.
- Review all drug formularies and therapeutic classes at least annually.
- Make reasonable effort to review a new FDA approved drug product (or new FDA approved indication) within 90 days and make a decision on each new FDA approved drug product (or new FDA approved indication) within 180 days of its release on to the market, or clinical justification will be provided if this timeframe is not met. Drugs or new indications for drugs within the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) classes of clinical concern are subject to expedited review under CMS provisions, and a decision shall be made within 90 days.
- Review all Utilization Management Programs (Prior Authorizations and Step Therapy) annually for both the pharmacy and medical benefits. This includes Part B step therapy requirements through Medicare Part B.
- P&T Committee will review the transition of care policy to ensure transition decisions are appropriately reviewed and are aligned with regulatory requirements.
- P&T Committee will review policies and procedures applicable to drug related coverage determination requests for both the pharmacy and the medical benefit.
- Substantially all Protected Classes (e.g. anticonvulsants, antipsychotics, antidepressants, antineoplastic medication, antiretroviral agents and immunosuppressant), will be added to all Medicare Formularies and be reviewed as expeditiously as possible.
- Oversee maintenance of drugs currently included in the formulary (e.g. new generic, new indication, new formulation) and minimize duplication of basic drug types, or drug entities within specific medication classes.

Membership consists of:
Chair: Plan Medical Director
Vice Chair: Plan Pharmacy Director
Internal UCare Members:
Medical Director(s) – non-voting*
Pharmacy Director – non-voting*
Clinical Pharmacists(s) – non-voting
*Chair or Vice Chair will vote in the event of a tie.

External Members (6-10 members):
Membership consists of a majority of practicing physicians representing a broad range of primary care and specialty areas including, but not limited to: Endocrinology, Gastroenterology, Family Practice, Internal Medicine, Gerontology, Pediatrics, Cardiology, and Pulmonology. Other practice areas such as Psychiatry, Rheumatology, and Oncology will be available for consultation. Membership will include at least one practicing physician and one practicing pharmacist who is an expert in geriatrics or disabled persons. Credentialing status is in good standing.

Frequency of Meetings: The committee meets at least quarterly throughout the year.
Medical Policy Committee

The purpose of the Medical Policy Committee (MPC) is to oversee the development, evaluation and implementation of medical policies. The Committee will evaluate the clinical evidence of topics and issues related to medical necessity of new and emerging health technologies, assess its safety and effectiveness, establish clinical indications for evidence-based application of the service, procedure or treatment, and develop and update medical policies as new evidence is published at intervals not to exceed 24 months. UCare medical policies are used within UCare to direct or clarify benefit design, coverage determinations and/or medical management operational issues; they are used externally as clinical guidance for UCare providers and as a reference for members. Responsibilities include:

- Sets priority for medical policy development and implementation through a systematic, structured decision analysis.
- Evaluates clinical evidence and assesses the safety and effectiveness of new and emerging technologies, as well as new applications of existing technologies to determine their impact on health status and disease outcome. Medical policies are based upon published peer-reviewed clinical evidence, where such evidence exists and uses input from clinicians, UCare participating specialists and professional staff.
- Reviews and recommends appropriate indications for use of relevant services, procedures, or treatments.
- Approves UCare’s medical policies for content.
- Guides monitoring and evaluation of the medical policies to assess their utility and impact.
- Oversees assessments that ensure medical policies are effectively achieving anticipated outcomes and objectives.
- Revises and updates the policies in a consistent and timely manner.
- Considers nationally accepted consensus statements and expert opinion and incorporates where appropriate based upon clinical evidence.
- Reviews policies and procedures for case adjudication where affected by medical policies and recommends changes if needed.

Membership consists of:
SVP, Chief Medical Officer
Medical Directors
Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services Medical Director
VP, Clinical Services or Delegate
AVP, Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services or Delegate
Coverage Policy Program Manager
Senior Associate General Counsel
Clinical Services Director, Operations
Clinical Pharmacist
Coding Manager
Medicare and Medicaid Benefits Manager
Product Management Director
HCE Business Analyst
Optional:
Physician Expert
Configuration Manager
Customers Services AVP
SVP, PA & Chief Marketing Officer

Frequency of Meetings: The committee meets monthly throughout the year.

Member Health Initiatives Sub-Committee

The Member Health Initiatives Sub-Committee reports to the Health Services Management Committee. This committee provides organizational input, evaluation, and recommendations on current and future care model structures, whole-person models/approaches and innovative pilots/programs. This committee supports UCare’s ten-year outcomes to improve the health of our members through creative services and partnerships across communities while addressing the integration of social and medical needs. The committee collaborates to enhance UCare’s market position with internal and external stakeholders including members, providers, community entities and purchasers. This committee annually participates in the review of care models and provides thought leadership for select member sub-populations such as women, children, elders and others as appropriate. Responsibilities include:

- Member health initiatives or pilot proposals.
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- Evaluates and recommends initiatives/pilot proposals.
- Utilizes organization-wide thought leaders to inform strategies around care model and innovative initiatives (e.g., new product clinical care design, use of CHWs).
- Reviews outcome measurement criteria utilized to evaluate initiatives/pilots and standardize as necessary for data collection and utilization.
- Define what is scalable, measurable, and has potential to be integrated as a component of the product.
- Identifies potential strategies and/or initiatives for member sub-populations such as women’s health, pediatrics, and disabled members.
- Seeks out and/or creates opportunities with community partners (including but not limited to community agencies, allied and physician practices, care systems, counties) to address social determinants of health, and cultural barriers for member population.
- Summarize pilot failure and successes to include lessons learned for work and communicate as necessary.
- Identify member health initiative funding.

**Membership consists of:**

**Chair:** VP, Clinical Services  
**Vice Chair:** VP, Marketing & Product Management  
**Associate Director Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services**  
**VP, Provider Relations and Contract**  
**Clinical Services, Care Management Director**  
**Clinical Services, Clinical Innovation and Research Analyst**  
**Clinical Services, Disease Management Manager**  
**Government Relations, County Manager**  

**Health Care Analytics, Associate Director**  
**PA & Community Outreach, Manager**  
**Pharmacy Management, Clinical Pharmacist**  
**Quality Improvement Associate Director**  
**Product Management, HP & Innovation Specialist**  
**Product Management, Director**  
**Product Management, Health Promotion Manager**  
**Member Experience Manager (Ad Hoc)**  
**Product Development Manager (Ad Hoc)**

**Frequency of Meetings:** The committee meets monthly.

**Key Partner Collaborative**

The Key Partner Collaborative reports to the Health Services Management Council. The intent of the collaborative is to promote bi-directional communication and integration of care between Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services and medical care practitioners and the health plan. We use a cross-sectional group of practitioners and key partners in our collaborative. The collaborative reviews UCare information and provides insight from experiences and ideas on improving the continuity and care of our members as they receive care by both medical and mental health and substance use disorder services practitioners. The group will help identify opportunities and activities to achieve this goal and come prepared to discuss and participate in collaborative interchange. Responsibilities include:

- The group will focus on understanding service needs and challenges as well as identifying opportunities to strengthen collaboration between health care providers and practitioners through the exchange of information and coordinated work with members.
- Discuss data on the access of care, for the diagnosis, treatment and referral of mental health & substance use disorders with recommendations for process improvement.
- Discuss information pertaining to the appropriate use of psychotropic medications, as well as other adjunctive therapies.
- Discuss information pertaining to the management of coexisting medical and mental health and substance use disorder conditions.
- Discuss the effectiveness of the management of coexisting medical and mental health & substance use disorders.
- Identify possible mental health & substance use disorder prevention initiatives based on community needs.
- Identify supportive efforts directed toward continuity of care for members with Serious & Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI) and other mental health conditions, as well as substance use disorders.
- Identify opportunities within the community to address mental health and substance use disorders and problem solve together regarding ways to address the same concerns.
The group will consider issues concerning specific populations, such as children, adolescents and their families, as well as seniors, and any specific treatments and interventions related to those populations.

Address issues related to culturally responsive practices, and the unique needs of specific cultural groups.

Possible review of ongoing key metrics to inform the group regarding utilization patterns, and any blossoming or waning utilization trends.

**Membership consists of:**

Chair: AVP, Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services
Vice Chair: Associate Director, Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services
SVP, Chief Medical Officer
Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services Medical Director
Community Psychologist
Community Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner
Community Pediatric Nurse Practitioner
Community Family Practice Physician
Community Psychiatrist
Advocacy Organization Leadership
County Partner Representative
Substance Use Disorder Services Provider
Child and Adolescent Organization Provider
CCBHC Organization Leadership
Culturally Specific Organizational Leadership
Community Mental Health Center Leadership
UCare Government Relations Staff
UCare Product Staff

Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services Clinic Leadership
VP, Government Relations
VP, Provider Relations & Contracting
Manager, Government Relations County Team
AVP, and Public Affairs
MN DHS Managed Care Liaison
Specialty Treatment Provider Leadership
Healthcare System Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services Operations Manager
Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services Clinical Manager
Provider Contracting Principal
Community and Provider Liaison
Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services Program and Policy Coordinator
Quality Improvement Specialist
Provider Experience Manager
Law Enforcement Representative

**Frequency of Meetings:** The committee meets quarterly.

**Quality Improvement Council (QIC)**

The Quality Improvement Council provides direction regarding the planning, design, implementation and review of improvement activities. The Quality Improvement Council ensures that quality activities align with the strategic objectives of the organization. Responsibilities include:

- Provides oversight and direction to initiatives that improve population health and member experience.
- Reviews quality improvement activities to achieve objectives.
- Reviews organizational monitoring activities including surveys, audits, rates, and Star ratings; provides direction regarding improvement opportunities.
- Reviews reports from quality committees that report directly to the Quality Improvement Council.
- Reviews and makes recommendations for the Quality Program Description, annual Quality Program Evaluation, and annual Quality Work Plan.
- Works in collaboration with the Health Services Management Council to achieve “Triple Aim” goals.

**Membership consists of:**

Co-Chair: VP, Quality Management & Pharmacy
Co-Chair: VP, Chief Informatics Officer
President and Chief Executive Officer
SVP, Chief Medical Officer
SVP, Chief Legal Officer & Corporate Secretary
SVP, Chief Administrative Officer
SVP, Chief Financial Officer
SVP, Public Affairs & Chief Marketing Officer

VP, Clinical Services
VP, Marketing and Product Management
VP, Government Relations
VP, Compliance and Internal Audit
VP, Provider Relations and Contracting
Medical Director(s)
AVP, Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services
Credentialing Committee
The Credentialing Committee reports to the Quality Improvement Council and is responsible for credentialing decisions, standards of care, effectiveness of the credentialing program, peer review and review and approval of the credentialing policies and procedures. The committee will review credentialing and recredentialing files that do not meet the established criteria documented in the Credentialing Plan and approve or deny provider’s request for network participation. The Committee oversees and coordinates the provider credentialing appeals as specified by the UCare Credentialing Plan. Responsibilities include:

- Provides oversight and direction to UCare’s credentialing functions.
- Reviews case files for credentialing and makes decision regarding whether a professional subject to the UCare credentialing process shall be credentialled.
- Sends a designee to QIC to provide a summary report on the activities of the Committee, at least quarterly.
- Makes decisions on new credentialing delegates based on information and recommendations from the credentialing delegation coordinator with input from Provider Relations and Contracting (PRC).
- Advises credentialing and PRC staff on delegation issues, including issues with pre-delegation and annual oversight audits.
- Reviews and makes recommendations regarding NCQA, MDH, and CMS requirements for credentialing, including current trends.
- Oversees and coordinates provider quality and credentialing appeals, including appeal hearings as appropriate.

Membership consists of:
Chair: Medical Director(s)
Associate Medical Director(s)
Associate Counsel
VP, Quality Management & Pharmacy
Quality Operations Associate Director
Credentialing Manager
Credentialing Delegated Coordinator
PRC representative

External Members
4 to 6 members representing primary care disciplines, such as: Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, OB-GYN, or Geriatrics, plus Psychiatry. Special consideration is given to providers from community clinics and clinics serving ethnic communities representative of UCare membership.

Frequency of Meetings: The committee meets monthly throughout the year.

Quality Measures Improvement Committee
The Quality Measures Improvement Committee (QMIC) reports to the Quality Improvement Council. The committee identifies areas of opportunity for performance improvement, operational efficiency, and increased program integrity for all UCare products. QMIC monitors UCare’s quality performance in Star Ratings, NCQA Accreditation & Ratings, Quality Rating System, PIPs and quality initiatives related to SPP programs performance and goals. Responsibilities include:

- Reviews and advises on project action plans and performance targets for initiatives related to quality measures.
- Allocates resources to projects, to include oversight of quality project budget.
- Annually develop a Star Ratings Program Strategy designed to maintain and/or improve UCare’s overall Star Rating.
- Monitor program performance for each measure as defined in the overall program strategy.
- Assess effectiveness of previous years’ interventions and goals.
Membership consists of:

Chair: Quality Improvement Associate Director
VP, Chief Informatics Officer
VP, Clinical Services
VP, Marketing and Product Management
VP, Provider Relations and Contract
VP, Quality Management & Pharmacy
Associate Director Partnership & Network Innovation
AVP Sales
AVP, Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services
Clinical Pharmacist
Clinical Project Coordinator Stars Measures
Clinical Services Director - Care Management
Clinical Services Director – Operations

Customer Service Director
Customer Services Workforce Manager
Federal Government Relations Manager
Health Promotion Manager
HEDIS Manager
Medical Directors
Member Experience Manager
Pharmacy Director
Product Management Director
Quality Analytics Manager
Quality Improvement Specialist- QI
Quality Improvement Specialist- Stars
Quality Operations Associate Director
Stars Program Manager

Frequency of Meetings: The committee meets monthly throughout the year.

Health Equity Committee

The purpose of the Health Equity Committee is to ensure that UCare’s organizational initiatives work to eliminate health disparities and reach health equity for all. This helps advance the health of all UCare membership and helps reach UCare’s quality goals. The Committee will initiate and support internal diversity training activities as appropriate. The Committee will develop, implement and evaluate health care initiatives and unique partnerships aimed at reducing the disparities in health status among targeted UCare populations. Responsibilities include:

- Ensure that UCare policies and programs work to eliminate health disparities and reach health equity for all our members.
- Connect with diverse communities that UCare serves.
- Create annual CLAS (Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services) standard work plan developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health.
- Promote diversity and cultural competency initiatives for our members and providers.
- Maintain, disseminate and annually review the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan for the Minnesota Department of Human Services.
- Explore opportunities to coordinate efforts and larger initiatives to reduce health disparities/improve health equity.

Membership consists of:

Chair: SVP, Public Affairs & Chief Marketing Officer
Medical Directors
Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services Operations Manager
Community Outreach Manager
Community Relations Coordinator
Communications Lead
Customer Service Manager
Employee Experience Manager
Government Relations Associate Director
Government Relations County Manager
Marketing Analyst
Medicaid Product Manager

Member Billing and Enrollment Production Manager
Member Experience Manager
Quality Improvement Associate Director
Privacy Officer, Corporate Compliance
Product Specialist
Provider Data & Analytics Manager
Provider Services Associate Director
Senior Pharmacy Operations Coordinator
SNP Sales Representative
Star Ratings Manager
State Government Relations Specialist
State Public Programs Communications Lead

Frequency of Meetings: The committee meets quarterly throughout the year.
**Member Experience Steering Committee**

Provides strategic direction to the organization in the prioritization and ongoing review of member experience program improvement opportunities. Responsibilities include:

- Oversees and monitors the progress and outcomes of member experience program improvement activities at UCare.
- Reviews, evaluates and monitors member experience program initiatives, work plans and dashboard metrics.
- Serve as a focus group or advisor for and prioritizes efforts impacting member experience.
- Monitors member experience/satisfaction data to prioritize and direct UCare member experience improvement efforts, including CAHPS scores, member survey results, focus group findings, appeals and grievances, and Customer Service call analytics.
- Addresses and ensures that significant member-facing changes are brought to the steering committee.
- Serves as the governing body for select performance improvement efforts geared toward improving member experience, such as member correspondence rapid improvement work; directs work to departments, committees, and work groups focusing on efforts to improve member satisfaction/experience including but not limited to the Quality Measures Improvement Committee and the Member Experience Work Group.
- Each committee member is encouraged to attend at least one member-facing event each calendar year and share insights about the experience with the committee.

Membership consists of:

| Chair: Member Experience Manager | AVP, Customer Service Director |
| SVP, Public Affairs & Chief Marketing Officer | AVP, Membership Billing and Enrollment |
| SVP, Chief Administrative Officer | Marketing Analysis Manager |
| VP, Clinical Services | Member Experience Manager |
| VP, Marketing and Product Management | Privacy Officer |
| VP, Quality Management & Pharmacy |

**Frequency of Meetings:** The committee meets monthly throughout the year.

**Quality Program Resources**

The resources that UCare devotes to the Quality Improvement Program and specific quality improvement activities are broad and include cross-departmental staff, potentially delegated business services clinical quality staff, data sources, and analytical resources such as statistical expertise and programs. Evaluation of quality improvement resources is determined through evidence that the organization is completing quality improvement activities in a thorough and timely manner per the quality work plan.

An annual assessment of UCare’s current quality program occurs through the review of the annual Quality Program Evaluation by the Quality Improvement Council, the Quality Improvement Advisory and Credentialing Committee, and the Board of Directors. Throughout the year, UCare monitors its performance and progress as it relates to numerous quality-related activities and key metrics.

**SVP/Chief Medical Officer**

The Chief Medical Officer, the VP, Quality, and Quality Management staff hold primary responsibility for UCare’s Quality Program. The Chief Medical Officer reports to the Chief Executive Officer and serves as a member of UCare’s senior management team, participating in strategic planning and policy direction for the organization, providing leadership and guidance on clinical strategic initiatives and operations to ensure high quality, cost-effective care for UCare members. UCare’s Chief Medical Officer manages relationships with contracted care systems to ensure implementation of UCare’s utilization and quality management strategies. In addition to these key responsibilities, the Chief Medical Officer supports the development, implementation, maintenance, and evaluation of quality improvement, population health, utilization review, disease and high-risk population management, and care management activities of the health plan in conjunction with staff in Clinical Services, Quality & Pharmacy...
Management, Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services, and Provider Relations and Contracting departments.

The Chief Medical Officer serves on the following committees: The Quality Improvement Advisory and Credentialing Committee, the Quality Improvement Council, the Health Services Management Council, and the Medical Policy Committee.

**Vice President of Quality Management & Pharmacy**

The Vice President of Quality Management & Pharmacy is a member of UCare’s leadership team, reporting to the SVP, Chief Medical Officer. The primary objective of this position is to provide strategic direction and oversight for UCare’s quality management and pharmacy operations. Provides leadership for the development, implementation, and evaluation of UCare’s Quality Program. Responsible for the strategic planning, project implementation and fiscal management for all pharmacy operations, medication management and clinical pharmacy programs.

**Quality Management and Pharmacy Department**

The Quality Management and Pharmacy department includes Appeals & Grievances, Credentialing, Pharmacy, Quality Improvement, NCQA Accreditation, HEDIS chart retrieval and abstraction, and Stars Ratings. The functions of each of these areas is described in the table below. There are unique synergies realized with the grouping of these areas in one department. Quality Improvement, Star Ratings, NCQA Accreditation, benefit administration and compliance are shared responsibilities across the department and there is a great deal of collaboration which is evident in the high ratings realized by UCare.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Management and Pharmacy Department</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A&amp;G (Appeals and Grievances)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credentialing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>QI (Quality Improvement), HEDIS (Health Effectiveness Data and Information Set) &amp; Stars</td>
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**Quality Improvement Associate Director**

The Quality Improvement Associate Director reports to the Vice President of Quality Management & Pharmacy and is responsible for the development, management and accountability of quality improvement initiatives within the department in support of the organizational Quality Program. This position provides leadership for related projects,
surveys, reports and audits. Provides oversight to each of UCare’s Star Ratings programs. Additional responsibilities include, development and management of the Quality Improvement team, ensuring timeliness of overall quality initiatives, and managing Performance Improvement Projects development and regulated quality requirements.

**Quality Department Staff**

The Quality department staff are responsible for implementation, analysis and reporting on quality improvement activities. They also provide support for all departments in the organization for quality improvement projects. Working with the Chief Medical Officer, the Medical Directors and UCare leadership, the Quality Department coordinates the quality committees and provides direction related to quality programs. Quality Department staff works with improvement teams and on committees to ensure that quality improvement activities are executed. The majority of the QI staff have at least masters-level education and extensive experience in quality. In addition, the Health Care Economics department provides analytics support for QI projects.

**Additional Resources**

The following individuals and departments provide additional key resources and guidance to UCare’s overall Quality Program:

- **CEO**
- **Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services Health Medical Director**
- **VP Clinical Services and staff**
- **VP, Compliance and Internal Audit and staff**
- **Customer Service Associate Vice President and staff**
- **VP, Government Relations and staff**
- **VP, Chief Informatics Officer and staff**
- **VP, Marketing and Product Management and staff**
- **VP, Provider Relations and Contract**

**Mental Health & Substance Use Disorders Services**

UCare partners with professionally trained and licensed mental health and substance use disorder service practitioners to improve the overall mental health and substance use disorder outcomes of its members. UCare
enlists the expertise of trained psychiatrists by means of the Quality Improvement Advisory and Credentialing Committee. Physicians and licensed clinical social workers provide key input and insights, assisting UCare in building a strong, robust mental health and substance use disorder service program that supports all members.

Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services are provided by UCare staff for eligible health plan members. Mental health and substance use disorder QI activities are integrated into the QI program through regular reporting and through regularly scheduled workgroup meetings, which provide ongoing monitoring of mental health and substance use disorder services. Mental health and substance use disorder QI documents, including the QI Work Plan, Program Evaluation, and Program Description are reviewed and approved annually.

**Adequacy of Quality-Related Resources**
UCare’s Quality Program is resourced through the annual budget process. Quality program resource requirements are evaluated to ensure that staffing, materials, analytic resources and information systems are adequately resourced for the upcoming year per the completion of the previous year’s work plan, upcoming key quality metric initiatives, and audit/survey findings.

**Members with Complex Health Needs**
UCare works to improve the health and quality of life for all UCare’s members with complex health conditions by the following strategies and objectives:

**Strategies**
- Health promotion and disease prevention.
- Disease and care management.
- Complex case management.

**Objectives**
- Encouraging self-management techniques.
- Improving the member’s understanding of their conditions.
- Facilitating processes to actively assist members and providers with the management of complex conditions.
- Maintaining, reviewing and updating, as needed, complex case management processes and resources to address member’s needs.
- Maintaining a case management system which supports the complex case management program by providing necessary, evidence-based, clinical guidelines, algorithms, assessments and documentation.

In addition, the identification and management of members with Special Health Care Needs (SHCN) is an integral part of the medical management of UCare members. The program identifies persons with special health care needs, assists identified members with access to care, and monitors their treatment plan for positive behavior change. All Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP) members are eligible for case management through this program.

Health Plans within the service area may offer Medicare Special Needs Plans (SNP), including the Special Needs Plan for Dual-Eligible Beneficiaries based on the CMS requirements for the SNP Model of Care. The Model of Care approach is based on effective population health management with the goal of achieving optimum outcomes for members. Through early identification and predictive modeling, UCare can anticipate a member’s potential health state and intervene accordingly. Special focus is designed for meeting the needs of the frail/disabled enrollees, meeting the needs of members with multiple chronicity and meeting the needs of members at the end-of-life.

These programs are designed to optimize the quality of the health care system for members while maintaining cost effective utilization of services. This is accomplished by actively pursuing opportunities for improvement through systematic monitoring and evaluation of services provided.
Data and Information Support
UCare’s ability to understand and meet the unique health needs of our members is supported by our capabilities to effectively access, integrate, and analyze data. We have built and continue to invest in our people and technology to support industry-leading capabilities in data analytics and our Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW). UCare’s data warehouse supports data integration from a variety of sources and can support data and analytics solution needs. Our experienced Health Care Economics (HCE) team includes 30 staff members responsible for the data mining, statistical analysis, quality improvement reporting, clinical support, and actuarial analysis. The HCE team includes certified actuaries and analysts with degrees in statistical analysis. Our deep understanding of health care analytics and statistics enables us to develop and adjust standard methodologies and achieve targeted and accurate results. We apply industry standards and statistical precision to support our analysis including: attribution, clinical measures, cutoffs or continuous variable frameworks, confidence intervals and data sufficiency minimums, particularly as it relates to clinical program evaluations, product pricing, and quality program measurement.

We continue to expand our state-of-the-art EDW that consolidates and stores clinical and non-clinical data for all members, providers and products. UCare’s EDW houses data including, but not limited to: enrollment, member, eligibility, claims, provider, clinical, regulatory, legal, and financial data. UCare’s EDW integrates non-clinical member and claim information with additional clinical data including lab values, health risk assessments, provider-submitted patient histories, and medical record review abstractions to perform a broad range of analytics. Our EDW is updated daily with data from UCare’s core systems and from vendor files as soon as they are available. This schedule ensures UCare is able to create and distribute timely information both internally and externally. While the transactional data originates from other source systems, the EDW is UCare’s primary source of data for UCare’s analytics and reporting. Data quality programs are in place to rigorously check and confirm the quality and timeliness of the EDW data, including completeness and consistency with originating data sources.

Our data warehouse solution allows for a variety of tools to connect to the system such as SQL, SAS, or various Microsoft tools to perform analytics and reporting functions. Additionally, our EDW environment contains Business Objects™ and MedeAnalytics™ analytics tools that provide flexibility and definition for integrating and analyzing data. We utilize Business Objects™ ETL tools to extract, transform and load data to and from the EDW from multiple disparate sources and to obtain and share data with external partners. We use John Hopkins ACG™ resource utilization bands to define several strata of illness levels ranging from perfectly healthy to critically ill, and multiple categories of increasing levels of illness in between these two strata. Our NCQA-Certified HEDIS software calculates and measures results, and UCare retains a longitudinal history of member-level quality measure results for ongoing analysis. Examples of the analysis performed include:

- Measure and compare providers (utilization and financial performance).
- Measure rates and look at patterns of utilization.
- Help develop guidelines and disease management programs.
- Assess provider compliance with clinical practice guidelines.
- Measure and analyze customer service interactions.
- Produce HEDIS reports and dashboards that are used to measure quality improvement projects, effectiveness of care, utilization, and to provide comparison data.
- Store provider demographics in a central database that can be easily and quickly accessed.
- Communicate informal complaints to the appropriate department for resolution.

External audits and surveys also provide useful information to assess overall quality. Examples include:

- DHS Triennial Compliance Audit
- Medicare and Medicaid Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems Surveys
- Disenrollment Surveys and Comments
- Health Outcomes Surveys
Systems for Communication
Communication of the Quality Program activities is achieved through systematic reporting to the appropriate committees and utilizing a variety of mechanisms as follows:

- Quality improvement activities are reported regularly to the Quality Measures Improvement Committee, the Quality Improvement Council, and the Quality Improvement Advisory and Credentialing Committee.
- Providers are informed through the Provider Manual, Provider Portal, newsletters, oversight meetings, site visits, contracts, direct correspondence and feedback, and electronically.
- Members are informed through newsletters, direct correspondence, Member Guides, the UCare website and in collaboration with community and public health partners.
- UCare employees are informed through the Intranet, updates at All Employee Meetings, updates at department staff meetings, orientation and training, and internal correspondence.
- Regulatory agencies are informed through reports, site visits, and meetings.

Scope of Activities
The Quality Program encompasses all aspects of care and service delivery. Components of UCare’s quality improvement activities include:

- Clinical components across the continuum of care from acute hospitalization to outpatient care. Pharmaceutical, dental and mental health aspects of care are also included within this scope.
- Organizational components of service delivery such as referrals, case management, discharge planning, prior authorizations, as well as other procedures or processes that affect care including access and provider reimbursement arrangements.
- Monitor initiatives in the population health strategy for improved health outcomes across the continuum of care.
- Key business processes that impact our members or providers of care such as claims, interpreter services, enrollment, customer services, credentialing/recredentialing, utilization management, provider contracting, care transitions, etc.
- Member satisfaction.
- Patient safety.
- UCare’s delegated entities.

In addition, the UCare quality program includes activities which address the areas of focus outlined in the Home and Community-based (HCBS) Quality Framework that includes participant access, participant-centered service planning and delivery, provider capacity and capabilities, participant safeguards, participant rights and responsibilities, participant outcomes and satisfaction, and system performance.

Quality Improvement Activities
There are a number of ways that actions are taken to improve the care or services UCare provides. These include:

- Establishing plans and policies to address quality. Examples include development of strategic plan goals, the annual Quality Work Plan and the Credentialing Plan.
- Monitoring compliance with policies, standards and practice guidelines. Monitoring activities include the medical record standards audit, the HEDIS audit, guideline compliance audits, survey activities and the credentialing and recredentialing process.
- Monitoring adequate access to care including availability of services, coordination and continuity of care, appropriate coverage and authorization of services and taking action when appropriate.
- Monitoring compliance with UCare medical record keeping standards, including confidentiality and accuracy and taking action when appropriate.
- Monitoring adequate access to medical and mental health and substance use disorder care including availability of services, coordination and continuity of care, appropriate coverage and authorization of services and taking action when appropriate.
Monitoring member safety through on-going review of reports and data.

Investigating and resolving concerns from members, providers, and regulators.

Identifying recurring patterns of problems or areas of concern by analyzing trends and patterns from various sources of data and taking action. Data sources include surveys, medical record audits, member and provider contacts, utilization data, complaint data, grievance and appeal data and standardized reports such as the CMS Star Ratings, Marketplace Star Ratings and HEDIS®.

Refraining data-driven Population Health Management program to identify the needs of members and develop programs and identify resources to support each member in improving their health. Conducting a chronic care improvement program that includes methods for identifying enrollees with multiple or sufficiently severe chronic conditions that would benefit from participating in a chronic care improvement program and mechanisms for monitoring enrollees that are participating in the chronic care improvement program.

Conducting performance improvement projects (PIPs) and Quality Improvement Strategy (QIS) that are expected to have a beneficial effect on health outcomes and enrollee satisfaction, and include a focus on significant aspects of clinical care and non-clinical services, assessing performance under the plan using quality indicators, performance assessment on the selected indicators based on systematic ongoing collection and analysis of valid and reliable data, achieving demonstrable improvement and being able to report the status and results of each project to regulatory bodies as requested.

Improving clinical and business processes through informal and formal process improvement teams that define, measure, analyze, implement and evaluate changes made.

Instituting system interventions as warranted.

Providing feedback and educational interventions to both members and providers.

Delegation of Quality Management Functions
UCare does not delegate Quality Management functions. If Quality Management functions are delegated in the future, UCare will oversee and have final responsibility for all delegated quality management activities. At a minimum, the delegated entity will be evaluated annually to ensure that activities are conducted in compliance with UCare’s expectations.

Collaborative Activities
UCare works on collaborative quality improvement activities across other health care sectors (e.g. primary care providers, the Department of Human Services (DHS), etc.) and other managed care organizations. UCare identifies opportunities for improvement based on HEDIS, Stars, QRS, CAHPS, HOS, ECHO and DHS withhold measures to develop quality improvement activities.

UCare’s work with primary care providers in the community includes HEDIS, Stars, QRS, CAHPS, ECHO, and HOS measures focusing on but not limited to, providing action lists for gaps in care, and education and training for how to improve measures and health outcomes for members. UCare’s work with other managed care organizations includes designing and developing interventions for Performance Improvement Projects (PIPs) and internal quality projects. UCare also works with the state on making improvements to withhold measures for improved health outcomes.

Annual Quality Work Plan
The Quality Work Plan specifies quality improvement activities UCare will undertake in the upcoming year. The plan includes goals and objectives based on the strengths and weaknesses identified in the previous year’s evaluation and issues identified in the analysis of quality metrics. The Work Plan is a mechanism for tracking quality improvement activities and is updated as needed to assess the progress of initiatives. The Work Plan includes:

- Quality of clinical care
- Quality of service
- Safety of clinical care
- Member Experience
- Program scope
• Yearly objectives
• Yearly planned activities
• Time frame within which each activity is to be achieved
• The staff member responsible for each activity
• Monitoring previously identified issues
• Evaluation of the QI program

The Quality Improvement Council, Quality Improvement Advisory and Credentialing Committee, and the Board of Directors review and approve the annual Quality Work Plan.

**Annual Quality Program Evaluation**

The Quality Program Evaluation is evaluated annually and approved by the Quality Improvement Council, Quality Improvement Advisory and Credentialing Committee and the Board of Directors. The quality and utilization improvement activities outlined in the Quality Program Evaluation are evaluated for appropriateness and effectiveness in assessing and improving the quality of care and service UCare’s members received. Evaluations and recommendations from regulatory agencies and other external quality review organizations are also considered in assessing the strength of UCare’s Quality Program. When substantial changes are made to the Program Description, documents are filed with the Minnesota Department of Health.

**Supporting Documents**

- Bylaws of UCare Minnesota
- Committee Charters
- Minnesota Rules, parts 4685.1110, .1115, .1120, .1125, and .1130
- *CMS’s Medicare Managed Care Manual*, chapter 5
- Policy CCD021 Delegation Management
- Policy QCR007 Credentialing Plan
- Organizational Structure
- Utilization Management Plan