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Promoting food access for UCare members

We're working hard to improve members' access to food in their communities. Since 2018, we've implemented several initiatives to address food insecurity among UCare members.

Member Outreach

In partnership with Second Harvest Heartland and Hunger Solutions, we've conducted outreach in Olmsted, St. Louis, Freeborn, Kandiyohi, Mower and Winona counties and the seven-county metro area.

Through outreach calls and referrals from our case management teams, advocates at partner organizations are connecting hundreds of families across Minnesota to food and other resources. They help members by screening them for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligibility, assisting with completion of the SNAP application, helping find local food resources and making referrals to additional social service programs. Approximately 25% of members contacted receive help with applying for SNAP benefits.

Savings on healthy food at the grocery store

Members can save up to $50 a week on certain healthy foods including milk, lean meats, eggs, fruits, vegetables and more through the Healthy Savings® program. For those with smart phones, all they need to do is download the free app, scan it at check-out and get instant discounts. Alternatively, members can use the Healthy Savings card that UCare mails to each household. In 2019, UCare members saved more than $37,000 at more than 180 grocery stores across Minnesota. As of January 2020, Walmart is newly participating in the Healthy Savings program. To learn more about the Healthy Savings program, visit healthysavings.com/ucare.

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"A member with four young children had been aware of the local food shelf. However, due to past experiences, was not comfortable using their services. We connected the member to another food shelf she was unaware of that was walking distance from her home, as well as the local summer meal sites for her children. We were also able to help the family renew their SNAP benefits."

– Hunger Solutions staff

Pilot program: Healthy food box for members with chronic conditions

Working with Second Harvest Heartland, UCare piloted a six-month FoodRx food box program for Medicaid members with hypertension to promote healthier eating and improve health outcomes. Participants received a box filled with healthy food and educational materials once a month, a blood pressure monitoring wrist cuff and monthly check-in calls. Through the pilot, which ran from November 2018 to April 2019, we found that participants who remained in the program were more likely to experience more favorable outcomes (decreased medical costs, ER visits and inpatient visits) compared to those who dropped from the program.

To build on this success, in 2020 we are piloting the FoodRx box program through our **Health Journey Program** for members with diabetes and heart failure.

Tobacco and nicotine cessation outreach

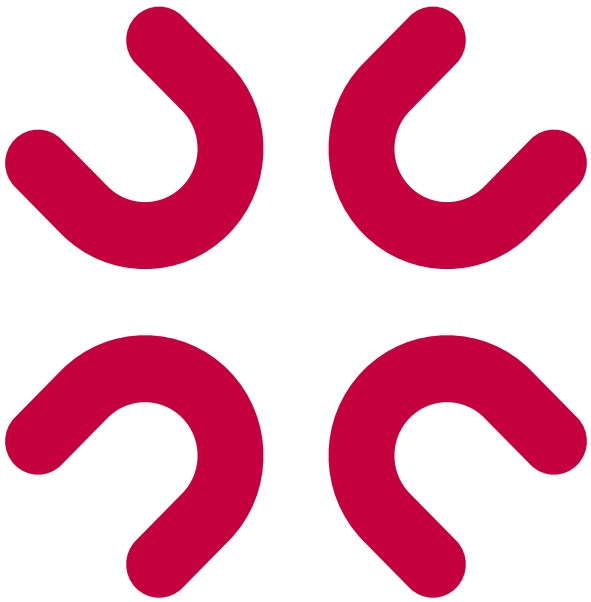
UCare's tobacco quit program **Quit for Life** continues to help members quit tobacco or nicotine by connecting them to resources such as an interactive online platform, telephonic 1-on-1 coaching, a nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) starter kit, a mobile app (coming this spring) and more. UCare includes information about our Quit for Life program in our member materials.

Through our programs, we meet our members where they are at in terms of readiness to quit. In 2019 we implemented the following approaches that continue in 2020:

- **Opt-out approach:** We send a Quit for Life program brochure and make tobacco cessation counseling outreach calls to UCare Connect (SNBC) and UCare Connect + Medicare (HMO D-SNP), Prepaid Medical Assistance Program (PMAP) and MinnesotaCare members with a recent prescription for a NRT starter kit or a service claim for tobacco cessation counseling. Members receiving calls from the Quit for Life coach can continue to receive more calls or opt out of receiving additional calls.
- **Opt-in approach:** UCare mails a Quit for Life program brochure to all members who have a recent service claim indicating tobacco or nicotine use, or reported tobacco or nicotine use on their Health Risk Assessment. Members may opt-in to the program by calling the quit line or registering **online**.

Since implementing these broader outreach efforts in June 2019, we've seen almost double the number of enrollments in our Quit for Life program compared to 2018.

For more information about our Quit for Life program, visit **www.myquitforlife.com/UCare** or call 1-855-260-9713.



Supporting pregnant and postpartum UCare members

UCare is committed to improving members' maternal health and birth outcomes. Kubra Dire, UCare Perinatal Outreach Specialist, makes outreach calls to pregnant and postpartum members every day. "I call members to inform them of prenatal/postpartum resources through UCare and their community," says Dire. "I refer them to resources such as the UCare MOMS Handbook, free car seat program, breast pumps and incentives for timely care visits. I also regularly refer members to public health home visiting programs and WIC."

Through claims, provider referrals and hospital records, we identify pregnant and postpartum members for outreach. In 2019, Dire connected with over 1,000 pregnant and postpartum members to provide support and connect members to resources. Additionally, approximately half of these members completed a pregnancy risk assessment with Dire.

Members who may experience a high-risk pregnancy are referred to UCare's ROSEBUD program for telephonic perinatal case management. Through the ROSEBUD program, members receive check-in calls and education from a perinatal nurse throughout their pregnancy, including care planning, when to contact their doctor, breastfeeding support and more. Our outreach efforts have been instrumental in helping us better understand our members' needs and developing programs that better serve our members.

"Our goal is to promote a healthy pregnancy," says Dire. "We're addressing social risk factors through collaboration with county partners, WIC, Second Harvest Heartland and through tools such as NowPow, a community resource search application. For our non-English speaking members, we use Certified Languages International (CLI) for phone interpretation. The members I've connected with are excited and appreciative, and most importantly, now well informed of resources. For instance, I helped a young pregnant member whose job didn't offer maternity leave, so she was worried about her financial needs after delivery. I was able to connect her to local food and financial programs."

For more information about UCare perinatal outreach, please contact UCare's Health Educator, Shoua Vang, at svang4@ucare.org.

In addition to UCare staff outreach, upon request, UCare's County Team also provides data on prenatal and postpartum members to county public health agencies. To learn more, please contact UCare's County Manager, Annie Halland at ahalland@ucare.org.

New Gender Identity Information Form

UCare's new Gender Identity Information Form can be used to assist transgender or non-gender binary members in getting their health care claims processed correctly and timely.

The form communicates to key UCare departments that there may be a mismatch in the gender that a member identifies with versus the sex assigned at birth. The form tells us the member's preferred gender pronoun and also improves correct claim processing. For example, a female who identifies as male may need a pap smear, or a male who identifies as a female may need a prostate examination.

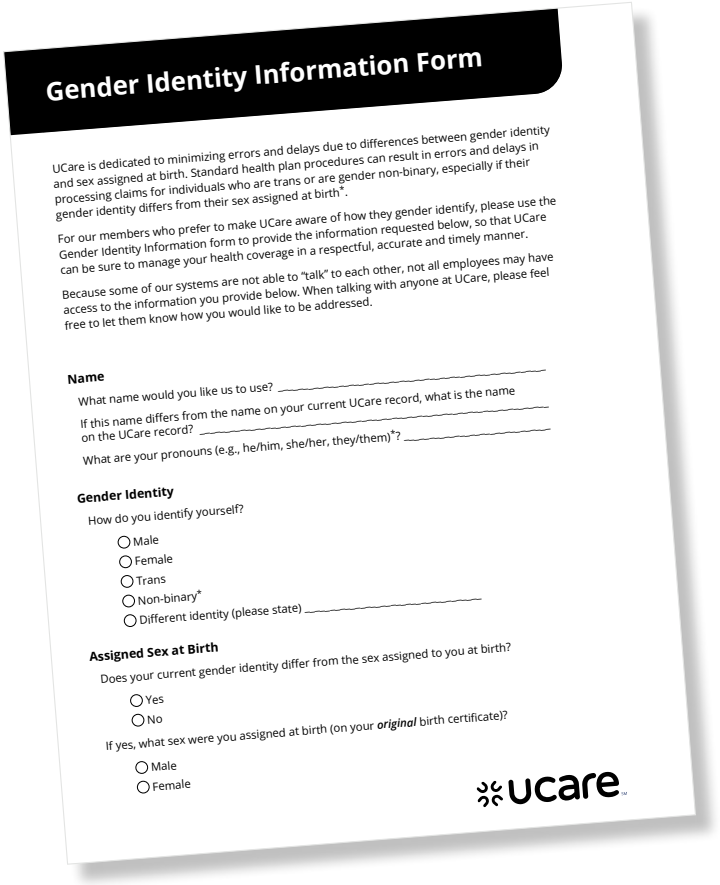
The form is available **here**. At this time, the form cannot be submitted electronically, but it can be downloaded, printed and mailed or faxed to UCare:

Mail:
UCare
Attention: Support Services/Scanning
PO Box 52
Minneapolis, MN 55440

Fax:
612-884-2000

For members in the metro area who prefer to deliver the completed form in person can bring it to the reception area of UCare offices located at 500 Stinson Blvd NE in Minneapolis.

The information on the form is kept strictly confidential and is only used by areas that need the information to ensure the member's health care claims are processed correctly the first time.



Gender Identity Information Form

UCare is dedicated to minimizing errors and delays due to differences between gender identity and sex assigned at birth. Standard health plan procedures can result in errors and delays in processing claims for individuals who are trans or are gender non-binary, especially if their gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth*.

For our members who prefer to make UCare aware of how they gender identify, please use the Gender Identity Information form to provide the information requested below, so that UCare can be sure to manage your health coverage in a respectful, accurate and timely manner.

Because some of our systems are not able to "talk" to each other, not all employees may have access to the information you provide below. When talking with anyone at UCare, please feel free to let them know how you would like to be addressed.

Name

What name would you like us to use? _____

If this name differs from the name on your current UCare record, what is the name on the UCare record? _____

What are your pronouns (e.g., he/him, she/her, they/them)*? _____

Gender Identity

How do you identify yourself?

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female
- ◯ Trans
- ◯ Non-binary*
- ◯ Different identity (please state) _____

Assigned Sex at Birth

Does your current gender identity differ from the sex assigned to you at birth?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

If yes, what sex were you assigned at birth (on your ***original*** birth certificate)?

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female

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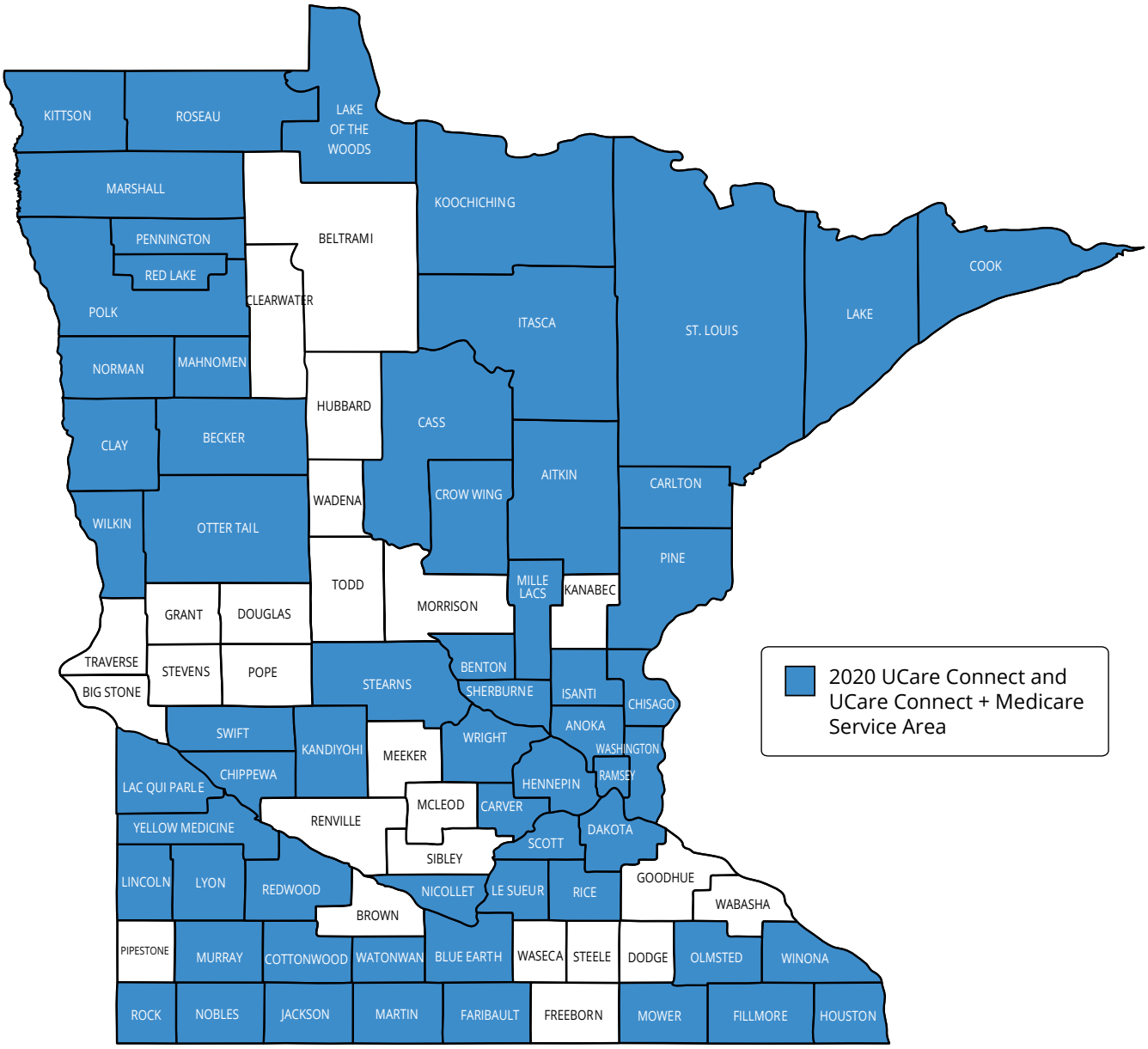
UCare Connect + Medicare (Special Needs BasicCare for dual eligibles) service area expansion update

On January 1, 2020, UCare expanded its service area for UCare Connect + Medicare (HMO D-SNP) to 62 counties throughout Minnesota (an increase of 51 counties). With this growth in service area, we are happy to note that as of January, UCare Connect + Medicare had more than 700 new members, or almost 3,400 members across our service area.

UCare Connect + Medicare provides more benefits than UCare's non-integrated plan, UCare Connect (SNBC). It integrates Medicare Parts A, B and D coverage and includes additional benefits such as routine monthly foot care (for those who qualify) and anti-glare lens coating for eyewear.

UCare mailed UCare Connect members in the new UCare Connect + Medicare service area information about the expansion. The information we sent included partially pre-filled enrollment applications to make it easier for UCare Connect members to upgrade. Individuals can also find information online or by calling UCare's licensed experts at 800-707-1711.

Note that enrolling in UCare Connect + Medicare is voluntary, so UCare Connect members who don't wish to make the upgrade don't need to do anything.



UCare's Mobile Dental Clinic (MDC) is on the road!

Check our **schedule** and note these upcoming dates and locations below:

February 17–21
Winona – Pleasant Valley Church
1363 Homer Rd

February 24–28
Blaine – Christ Lutheran Church
641 89th Avenue NE

March 2–5
Eden Prairie – Immanuel Lutheran Church
16515 Luther Way

March 16–20
Minneapolis – Diamond Lake Church
5760 Portland Avenue S

March 23–27
North Mankato – Nicollet County Social Services
2070 Howard Dr W

March 30–Apr. 3
Forest Lake – Faith Lutheran Church
886 North Shore Drive

April 6–10
West St. Paul – Dakota County Human Services
1 Mendota Rd W

April 13–17
Minneapolis – Diamond Lake Church
5760 Portland Avenue S

April 20–23
Minneapolis – Salem Lutheran Church
4150 Dupont Ave N

April 27–May 1
Duluth – First United Methodist Church
230 E Skyline Pkwy

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