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UCare Foundation supports Connected Communities for seniors in rural Minnesota

***\$200,000 contributed to pilots integrating health care, social services
and community supports for Medicare Advantage plan members in
Alexandria and Perham communities***

MINNEAPOLIS, Dec. 8, 2021 — [UCare](#), a community-based, nonprofit health plan, is partnering with the philanthropic arm of LeadingAge Minnesota, [LeadingAge MN Foundation \(LAMF\)](#), to bring a visionary new model of integrated care to aging adults living in rural communities in west central Minnesota. Through separate funding, LAMF has awarded Connected Communities for Healthy Aging pilot grants of \$800,000 each to two [LeadingAge Minnesota](#) members – [Knut Nelson](#) in Alexandria, Minnesota and [Perham Health](#) in Perham. The UCare Foundation contributed an additional \$100,000 to each organization to support program design and implementation through year-end 2022.

With the goal of helping older adults experience healthier aging, the pilots will coordinate and deliver an inter-connected continuum of community-based supports (socialization, meals, transportation); preventive and primary care; acute, post-acute and long-term care; and other services to support and enhance older adults' quality of life. Key objectives are:

- Convene and advance a local and collaborative whole-system, whole-person approach to serving seniors in the community
- Experiment and improve care of Medicare Advantage members in a local health plan in coordination with providers of primary care, acute- and post-acute care, home care and community-based services
- Connect consumers to local resources for healthier aging
- Implement effective workforce strategies to support this collaborative model

The infographic illustrates how this model will work – with older adults and their families at the center of care.



“For too many older Minnesotans – especially those living in remote rural communities – the prospect of healthy aging diminishes when they reach their older years,” said Ghita Worcester, Senior Vice President of Public Affairs and Chief Marketing Officer. “Through these pilot projects in west central Minnesota, we will create integrated hubs of essential resources that will help people recapture their sense of a life well-lived.”

“The Connected Communities for Healthy Aging pilots will show there is a better way to age. We will leverage recent changes in Medicare Advantage reimbursements, implement learnings from previous rural pilot projects, and design coordinated systems of care that support all dimensions of health for people in all the places they call home,” added Gayle Kvenvold, President and CEO of LeadingAge Minnesota.

About UCare

[UCare](#) is an independent, nonprofit health plan providing health care and administrative services to more than 570,000 members throughout Minnesota and parts of western Wisconsin. UCare partners with health care providers, counties, and community organizations to create and deliver Medicare, Medicaid and Individual & Family health plans.

The health plan addresses health care disparities and care access issues through a broad array of community initiatives. UCare has received Top Workplaces honors from the Star Tribune for 12 consecutive years since the rankings began in 2010.

About LeadingAge MN Foundation

The [Leading Age MN Foundation](#) (LAMF) sponsors initiatives to transform and enhance the experience of aging by building the workforce for tomorrow, advancing promising new approaches to service delivery, and developing leadership at all levels. LAMF supports the work of LeadingAge Minnesota, the largest association of organizations serving Minnesota seniors. LAMF assists more than 1,400 LeadingAge Minnesota members in improving the quality of life for older adults and their families in all the places they call home, including independent senior housing, assisted living communities, in-home care, adult day services and skilled nursing facilities.

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