



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT:
Wendy Wicks
612-306-3698
wwicks@ucare.org

UCare Foundation advances health equity and access across Minnesota

\$1 million awarded to improve outcomes in BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color), immigrant and aging communities

MINNEAPOLIS, Dec. 22, 2020 — In this season of Covid-19, the [UCare Foundation](#) has awarded more than 15 grants throughout Minnesota for health improvement initiatives focused specifically on health and racial equity, access to care and coverage, food insecurity and senior health. The grants fund programs addressing prevailing health disparities in the state among families, children, immigrant communities and older Minnesotans. The UCare Foundation is a community-directed initiative of UCare supporting innovative services, education, community outreach and research.

“We focused our grants on supporting organizations leading change in health access and equity for Minnesotans facing the most challenges,” said Ghita Worcester, Senior Vice President of Public Affairs and Chief Marketing Officer. “These grants provide much-needed services to underserved and marginalized communities, families and children, and aging Minnesotans. The severe impact of Covid-19 on BIPOC communities this year magnified already existing health disparities.”

Snapshot of UCare-sponsored programs across Minnesota

Health and racial equity

Bridge funding for the [African American Babies Coalition](#) to continue training, outreach and engagement that identify and address achievement gaps for Black and Brown infants, children and parents

CAPi USA Covid-19 community coordination activities for Hmong, Vietnamese, Lao and East Indian people in Hennepin County (in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Health and Hennepin County Public Health Department) - services include Covid outreach, testing, hotline, contact tracing and assistance in enrolling in public benefits

Lutheran Social Service hospital readmission prevention program specifically supporting UCare immigrant and refugee community members by promoting health

equity and care coordination through Community Companion certified Community Health Worker services

[Faribault Families First Coalition](#) expanded programming of adult and early childhood education for Somali and Latinx individuals and families – including flu shots and immunizations, telehealth, healthy living and food access, and mental health support

[Somali Circles of Health & Wellbeing program in Minneapolis and Rochester](#) to support Somali women's and families' whole health through customized resources and education around cooking, exercise, nutrition and accessing health care

[Somali Community Resettlement program](#) in [Olmsted County](#) support to improve the overall health of Somali seniors, adults and children with culturally appropriate care

Access to care and coverage

[Angel Foundation](#) free emotional support services to 400 metro and rural Minnesota families struggling with cancer – including Angel Pack backpacks, monthly activities, camps, medical play, teen groups and phone consultations

[Community Dental Care](#) providing a diverse community of Medical Assistance (Medicaid) members, children, families and the elderly with an array of preventive, restorative and emergency dental services

[Minnesota Association of Community Health Centers](#) improving access to primary care and programs such as diversity, equity and inclusion training; staff resiliency; teledentistry; social determinants of health programs; and value-based care

[Portico Healthnet](#) navigator community expansion to provide immediate assistance with [Medical Assistance \(Medicaid\) renewals](#) once the public health emergency ends, and enduring capacity for outreach and enrollment strategies to connect uninsured Minnesotans to public health coverage

Food insecurity

[Food Group](#) programs at the intersection of food access, equity and nutrition issues related to hunger in 32 counties in Minnesota and Wisconsin; supporting growing nutritious food locally and getting that food to those who need it most

[MATTERbox](#) healthy meal kits and snacks distribution to first responders providing hunger relief for emergency and ongoing needs – such as Fire/Sheriff departments, paramedics, MAD DADs, daycare workers, schools and more

[Second Harvest Heartland](#) Covid response to end hunger through free drive-up emergency grocery pop-ups offering fresh produce and food staples as well as meal distributions from the Minnesota Central Kitchen (MCK) caterers and restaurateurs

[Twin Cities Mobile Market](#), a [Food Group](#) program bringing affordable fresh and healthy foods to Twin Cities neighborhoods where there is a scarcity of grocery stores

Senior health

[Light the Legacy](#) advanced care planning for rural Minnesotans by education and empowerment through facilitated conversations and actions

[Lutheran Social Service](#) [Senior Companions](#) visits, support and advocacy for aging neighbors in the Twin Cities, Brainerd and Duluth through assistance such as transportation to medical/dental appointments and help with errands

About UCare

[UCare](#) is an independent, nonprofit health plan providing health care and administrative services to more than 500,000 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. All UCare health plans have earned accreditation from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

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 11 consecutive years since the rankings began in 2010.

#