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UCare's "A Salute to Excellence!" celebrates 23 providers

Clinics and care systems across Minnesota recognized for exceptional quality care, with a special award for mental health innovation

MINNEAPOLIS, Oct. 18, 2022 — [UCare](#), a community-based, nonprofit health plan, held its 14th annual "A Salute to Excellence!" event Thursday evening, Oct. 13, at the University of Minnesota McNamara Alumni Center. The event honored 22 Minnesota clinics and care systems with top results in 2021 Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) measures. Awards were given for health care providers' performance delivering high-quality care to UCare's Medicare, Medicaid and Special Needs Plan members. NUWAY[®] – a statewide provider of co-occurring substance use and mental health disorder treatment – received UCare's new Innovation Award for implementing innovative supportive housing programs as part of addiction care.

This year's A Salute to Excellence! was a hybrid celebration. Many honorees and UCare leaders gathered in-person at the McNamara Alumni Center while other honorees – especially in greater Minnesota – joined the program virtually. The evening opened with a welcome from UCare President and CEO Hilary Marden-Resnik. "Speaking on behalf of our Board of Directors and leaders, we feel deep gratitude for what we at UCare call "people power" and for your partnership in making sure our members get the care they need – and even more importantly – the quality of care they deserve," said Hilary Marden-Resnik. "Like we do every day at UCare you put your patients and our members first."

The opening remarks were followed by a feature presentation from Joan Sandstrom, Vice President of Primary Care at Park Nicollet. For nearly a decade, UCare has honored Park Nicollet for the outstanding care they deliver to UCare members. That level of consistent, high quality requires rigorous technology and processes. Sandstrom shared the secret sauce behind Park Nicollet's highly effective quality program.

Following Park Nicollet's presentation, UCare Vice President of Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders, and Special Needs BasicCare Programs, Jennifer Garber, awarded UCare's Innovation Award to NUWAY. This award recognizes a partner who is improving the health of UCare members through innovative care delivery and/or payment models. NUWAY helps individuals gain access to sustainable recovery from addiction through housing support. It was one of the nation's first halfway houses for addiction.

Garber explained how NUWAY has expanded their Recovery in Supportive Environments (R.I.S.E.) model throughout the state. A recent study indicates that clients utilizing R.I.S.E. stay in treatment on average 37 days longer and are 20% more likely to discharge with staff approval. They are also better able to sustain their recovery and self care. Monique Bourgeois, NUWAY's Chief Community Relations Officer, accepted the special award on behalf of her team at NUWAY.

Next up was UCare's new Executive Vice President and Chief Medical Officer, Tenbit Emiru, MD, PhD, MBA, honoring guests with UCare Excellence in Health Care Awards for their quality results. "We know that quality care for our members starts with all of you," affirmed Dr. Emiru. "In 2021, you provided our members and your patients with high-quality preventive care, disease management, mental health and substance use disorder services, maternity care, and assistance with care transitions and medication management."

A Salute to Excellence! honored the following clinics and care systems from across Minnesota and surrounding areas.

- Avera Health
- Bluestone Care Coordination
- Catholic Health Initiatives
- CentraCare
- Essentia Health
- Fairview Physician Associates
- Genevive
- HealthPartners/Park Nicollet
- HealthPartners/Stillwater Medical Group
- Lakeview Clinic Ltd.
- Lakewood Health System
- Mankato Clinic
- Mayo Clinic
- Minnesota Community Care
- North Memorial
- Olmsted Medical Center
- Ridgeview

- Sanford Health
- St. Luke's Hospital of Duluth
- Tri County Hospital
- Voyage Healthcare
- Winona Health Services

About UCare

[UCare](#) is an independent, nonprofit health plan providing health care and administrative services to nearly 650,000 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 13 consecutive years since the rankings began in 2010.

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