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UCare Foundation grants enhancing Minnesotans' mental well-being support Mental Health Awareness Month

More than \$500,000 provided to 11 mental health and substance use disorder initiatives address a crisis in access and equity for underserved populations

MINNEAPOLIS, May 22, 2024 — [The UCare Foundation](#) is improving the lives of vulnerable Minnesotans by funding targeted mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) programs that serve new parents, traumatized children, Muslim patients, embedded law enforcement mental health workers, queer and trans youth in Greater Minnesota, SUD peer support groups and more. Individual grants range from \$25,000 to \$50,000.

Recent events such as the pandemic and George Floyd's murder exacerbated mental health issues for vulnerable youth, adults and families across the state. Immediate needs range from mental health workforce staff, education to bridge cultural gaps, trauma relief, opioid use interventions and embedded mental health workers in police departments. Mental health community resources have also been stretched to the limit. In recognition of the essential need for more mental health services and innovative strategies, the UCare Foundation awarded grants to organizations offering effective programs to improve the lives of Minnesotans.

"Healing our members' mental health and creating pathways to recovery is as important as supporting their physical health," said Jennifer Andersen, UCare's Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Operations Director. "Our members come from a variety of communities with different needs. I am excited about the Foundation's support of high-impact programs that have the potential to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our members across communities."

Snapshot of UCare-sponsored programs across Minnesota

Families and children

[Alongside Network](#), *Wellbeing Groups serving the mental health needs of families with children in the NICU and PICU* – A significant health equity issue, up to 80% of families who have a child who experiences a life-threatening illness or injury have a measurable level of post-traumatic stress. Alongside Network will offer the Take a Breath curriculum to host Wellbeing Groups with impacted parents/caregivers to validate, connect and increase coping skills.

[Bellis](#), *Always a Mother: Support after Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)* – The Bellis™ Stronger Together Peer Support model addresses the emotional isolation and shame experienced by birth mothers who lose parental rights. The goal of the project is to help women build resiliency and a greater sense of power over their lives by addressing the trauma experienced in receiving a TPR order.

[Connections to Independence](#), *Circle of Support* – Connections to Independence (C2i) Circle of Support (CoS) program provides additional programming for foster youth to address mental health difficulties and multiple diagnoses. CoS partners with [Kente Circle](#) to supplement with individual and group therapy sessions.

[CornerHouse](#), *Rapid Response to Trauma* – UCare funding supports the use of a trauma screening tool to identify the severity of trauma a child is experiencing immediately after a forensic interview and offer Accelerated Resolution Therapy (ART), an evidence-based therapy that can be effective in just a few sessions. This enables CornerHouse to provide critical mental health care that accelerates healing of traumatized children.

[RECLAIM](#), *Mental Health Care for Queer and Trans Youth in Greater Minnesota* – UCare is funding a pilot project to hire contracted therapists to provide mental health care to queer and trans youth on behalf of RECLAIM. The goal is to hire therapists who live and work in communities in Greater Minnesota to expand access to affirming mental health care in places where resources currently do not exist.

Mental health workers

[Miller-Dwan Foundation](#), *Problem Management Plus (PM+)* – PM+ is a 5-session therapy developed and tested by the World Health Organization and specifically designed for delivery by trusted lay staff at community organizations.

[Nexus Family Healing](#), *Supporting a New Resource Serving Minnesota Youth with Complex Behavioral/Mental Health Needs* – UCare helps finance child-specific items and clinical training needed for the launch of a new Psychiatric Residential Treatment

Facility (PRTF) that will address critical unmet mental health needs of youth in our state. Funding will help purchase sensory items, recreational equipment, games, art supplies and other items to support youth activity and overall wellness, as well as trauma-informed training (and related tools/resources) to clinical staff and direct care teams who will provide 24/7 care and treatment for youth with complex, high-acuity mental health needs.

[Open Path Resources](#), *Expanding Understanding of Mental Health Through Community Influencers* – Funding supports improving cultural understanding and the community climate of care for Muslim patients by organizing trainings and conversations with Muslim Spiritual Care Providers (MSCP) working in Hennepin Healthcare's Psychiatric Units. Mental health providers gain increased confidence and cultural competency in meeting the holistic needs of their Muslim psychiatric patients and their families. The education also enhances follow-up care after discharge.

[People Incorporated](#), *Community Police Partnership* – UCare funding helps People Incorporated to sustain and expand the impact of its embedded mental health worker program (which was the first of its kind in MN) in more community police departments in the Twin Cities.

Substance use disorders

[Change the Outcome](#), *An Opioid Impact Awareness Initiative* – Change the Outcome delivers life-saving programming to young people in middle schools and high schools throughout Minnesota. The UCare grant supports updating, production and distribution of program literature and media that addresses the co-occurring public health crisis of opioid and fentanyl use, and rising mental health diagnoses among youth.

[Minneapolis Health Department \(MHD\)](#), *SUD Peer Support Groups for Minneapolis Public Housing Residents* – Funding enables MHD to pilot on-site substance use disorder (SUD) groups for residents living in six Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA) high rises. MHD will lead the coordination of these projects in partnership with [Volunteers of America \(VOA\)](#), [MPHA](#), [Neighborhood HealthSource \(NHS\)](#), and [Minnesota Recovery Connection \(MRC\)](#).

About UCare

[UCare](#) is an independent, nonprofit health plan providing health care and administrative services to nearly 600,000 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 14 consecutive years since the rankings began in 2010.

About the UCare Foundation

Since 1998, the [UCare Foundation](#) has improved the lives of UCare members and their communities through grants that address urgent community health needs. We focus grant-making on initiatives that improve the health of underserved individuals across Minnesota. The UCare Foundation funds high-impact services, education, community outreach and research addressing health equity, social drivers and access barriers.

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