



CULTURE CARE CONNECTION

www.culturecareconnection.org

Increasing the cultural competence of health care providers serving culturally diverse populations
Fall 2018

Funded by UCare

Options for UCare Staff Increase Cultural Competence to Improve Service Delivery

In their efforts to provide culturally competent care to the diverse populations it serves, independent, nonprofit health plan [UCare](#) takes a multifaceted and ongoing training and education approach to give opportunities for staff at all levels and within all functional areas of their organization.

UCare provides health coverage and services to diverse Minnesotans, including Medicare-eligible individuals, and families enrolled in Minnesota Health Care Programs such as MinnesotaCare and Medical Assistance, and adults with disabilities.

That education begins with a day-long diversity training course for all new hires, UCare Community Outreach Manager Monica Gossett said. The course addresses both the diverse communities that make up UCare's members and the diverse employees that serve them. Reflecting their member makeup, currently, 32 percent of UCare's workforce is diverse. "It's a good way to get things started, let new employees know that diversity is important to us,

that we recognize and respect it," said Gossett.

Recognizing that commitment of leadership is essential to an organization's ability to integrate cultural competence, Ghita Worcester, senior VP, public affairs and chief marketing officer leads UCare's cultural competence committee along with Gossett. The committee has at least one



UCare's Diversity Book Club and author Kao Kalia Yang discuss *The Song Poet*, a memoir of her Hmong refugee father.

person from each UCare department to help advance cultural competence throughout the organization.

Knowing the benefit of first-hand experiences with diverse cultures, UCare requires every employee to participate in one diversity event per year. These can include community



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events or company-sponsored activities. UCare's Cultural Competence Committee plans activities in a variety of formats so that staff can choose the learning method they most prefer.

Offerings include outside speakers representing diverse groups and topics ranging from culture to autism to mental health, lunch and learn sessions hosted by internal departments, recorded online videos, and

diversity book clubs. For one book club, UCare invited the author of *The Song Poet*, Kao Kalia Yang, to discuss her work and experiences as a Hmong American.

Participation in diversity events is strong with around 100 employees at

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every diversity event, and 50 to 60 at diversity book clubs, out of almost 900 total employees.

UCare continues to look for new ways to foster conversations about views on culture and diversity. One recent exercise involved the Culture Care Connection [Implicit Bias in Health Care quiz](#). Answers to the 10 questions in this quiz reveal how implicit bias – positive or negative attitudes or stereotypes – affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious way.

Taken initially by the cultural competence committee made up representatives from every UCare department, then later by their government relations department, the implicit bias quiz generated thoughtful discussions on the broad spectrum of biases, and how they might impact interactions with coworkers and UCare members alike. Gossett said other UCare departments expressed interest in taking the quiz as a group diversity exercise.

UCare's cultural competence training also includes a commitment to the

National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services ([CLAS](#)) in Health and Health Care. The principal CLAS standard to “Provide effective, equitable, understandable, and respectful quality care and services that are responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy, and other communication needs,” guides a yearly departmental review of how UCare as an organization is incorporating CLAS standards into their work.

Beyond providing awareness and education, UCare is putting cultural competence into practice to improve service delivery. In one example, individual customer service representatives were finding it challenging to meet the standards for call efficiency, often due to what they perceived as unusually long calls helping Somali members. Because UCare's diversity reflects their member makeup, several Somali customer service reps noticed their colleagues' difficulties and consulted leadership to discuss the issue.

At a team meeting, the Somali reps explained that because of their culture, several people might be in the same house, and a younger English-speaking Somali may call in for multiple, older non-English-speaking Somali members, asking questions for each, one after the next.

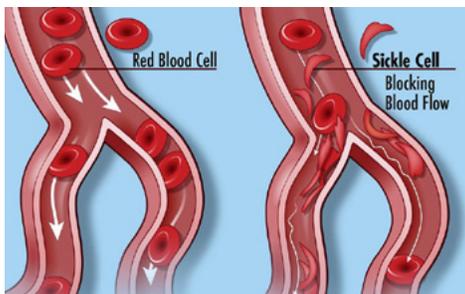
A training session and adjustments to the way those calls are measured addressed the problem. Those steps were made possible in part by UCare's embedded framework to recognize and adapt to the diverse populations they serve.

Awareness of diversity is an essential piece of the puzzle regarding providing culturally competent care. However, awareness is not always equal to preparedness, and UCare proves that designing and implementing training to better prepare for diversity offers real benefits to their organization and their members.

Visit the Culture Care Connection website for information and resources for [improving service delivery](#) and culturally-competent care in your organization.

CLINICAL CORNER

NHLBI-Supported Drug Candidate to Prevent Sickle Cell Pain in Advanced Testing Stage



Pain is one of the unfortunate symptoms of sickle cell disease (SCD), often growing in intensity as patients age. SCD disproportionately

impacts specific racial and ethnic populations including African Americans, Latinos and people of Middle Eastern, Indian, Asian and Mediterranean descent.

Pain is a leading cause of emergency room visits and hospitalizations among people with the disease, and the frequency of those pain-related hospital admissions is a strong predictor of premature death. Researchers have tried for years to find effective pain-relieving alternatives

to improve the management of the condition, but have seen limited success.

That could soon change, thanks to technology developed and tested with support from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI).

A new synthetic antibody prevents red blood cells and other blood cell types from sticking to the walls of blood vessels and causing a cell pileup that restricts blood flow. That blockage is what leads to painful sickle cell crises and organ damage.

In a series of clinical trials, researchers demonstrated that the synthetic antibody appears safe and significantly reduces the incidence of painful crises in patients with SCD.

The antibody could be administered once a month by injection to prevent painful sickle cell crises. [More >>](#)

NEWS AND RESOURCES



September is National Sickle Cell Awareness Month

September is National Sickle Cell Awareness Month. The sickle cell disease (SCD) group of inherited red blood disorders affects millions globally. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that SCD affects approximately 100,000 individuals in the U.S. National Sickle Cell Awareness Month 2018, will focus on helping to raise awareness about the importance of sickle cell disease research and treatment. [More >>](#)



September is Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanic Heritage Month (HHM) takes place every year from September 15 to October 15. HHM celebrates the histories, cultures, and contributions of the Latino community in the U.S., raises awareness about Hispanic/Latino health gaps, and provides a platform for national Hispanic/Latino health organizations to discuss the challenges and opportunities in helping end health disparities. This year, the HHS Office of Minority Health will focus its

efforts on building awareness about health disparities in the Hispanic/Latino community and highlighting the importance of Hispanic/Latino community participation in research studies to help scientists and medical professionals better treat diseases.

[More >>](#)



Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Tobacco Product Use Among Middle and High School Students — United States, 2014–2017

Wide disparities in tobacco product use have been documented among the largest U.S. racial/ethnic groups. However, apart from the three most populous groups (non-Hispanic whites, non-Hispanic blacks, and Hispanics), little is known about tobacco use among youths from other racial/ethnic groups. This CDC report explores new data on tobacco use by Native Hawaiians/Other Pacific Islanders, American Indians/Alaska Natives, and Asians. [More >>](#)



Community Health Worker Resources

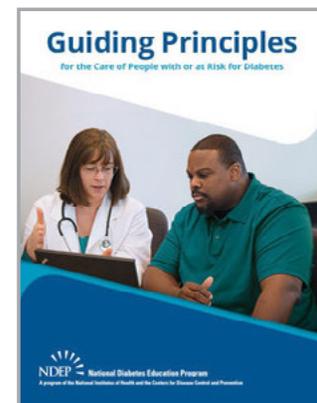
This collection of resources from the CDC is designed to help community health workers facilitate access to services and to improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery.

[More >>](#)



Breastfeeding Toolkit for Working Mothers

This online resource is a tool for breastfeeding mothers who are returning to work or school. The toolkit not only provides assistance and information to breastfeeding mothers, but also provides assistance to the new mom's employer, family, and friends. Produced by the WIC Works Resource System, a project of the Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. [More >>](#)



Guiding Principles for the Care of People With Or At Risk for Diabetes

These Guiding Principles from the National Diabetes Education Program aim to identify and synthesize areas of general agreement among existing guidelines to help guide primary care providers and health care teams to deliver quality care to adults with or at risk for diabetes. Principle 10 is: Consider the needs of high-risk racial and ethnic groups with diabetes.

[More >>](#)

EVENTS

Webinar: Promising Practices to Improve Hispanic Health - Approaches to Hispanic Health Research
Tuesday, September 25, 2018
12:30–2:00 p.m.

National leaders will discuss current trends in research practices to advance Hispanic/Latino health in the U.S. and globally. [More >>](#)

Webinar: Health Disparities - Using Data to Identify and Act
Wednesday, October 10, 2018
12:00–12:45 p.m.

Minnesota ranks high for quality of care and health status, but has stark disparities within the overall population. By analyzing patient data, clinics can reveal disparities and health

equity issues. West Side Community Health Services will share how they use REL data to identify and address gaps through quality improvement initiatives.

[More >>](#)

Workshop: Cultural Competence in Health & Human Services
Sunday, October 14, 2018
Amherst H. Wilder Foundation

This one day workshop includes film vignettes, planning activities, role-plays, and other interactive activities. It is based on national standards for cultural and linguistic competence, as well as federal laws and national best practices.

[More >>](#)

Many Faces of Community Health Conference
October 25-26, 2018
Hyatt Regency Bloomington
Registration Early Bird Deadline is October 4

The Many Faces of Community Health conference explores improving care and reducing health disparities in underserved populations and among those living in poverty. The conference examines community care innovations, health care delivery models, and other health care reform initiatives that promote health equity, prevent and manage chronic diseases, and ensure access for all. Visit Stratis Health's exhibit at the conference to hear about our latest cultural competence tools and resources. [More >>](#)

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Stratis Health is a nonprofit organization that leads collaboration and innovation in health care quality and safety, and serves as a trusted expert in facilitating improvement for people and communities.

Stratis Health works toward its mission through initiatives funded by federal and state government contracts, and community and foundation grants, including serving as Minnesota's Medicare Quality Improvement Organization.

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