

UNITED IS THE WAY

NEWSLETTER | MAY 2025



A NOTE FROM OUR CEO

It's no secret that when people have access to healthcare, it fosters social and economic growth within a community, which is why UWECI focuses on increasing access to healthcare within East Central Iowa. Another reason we focus on it is because it is one of our area's largest challenges with dwindling numbers of providers, concentration of providers in urban areas, and 37% of Iowans struggling to afford their basic cost of living.

Unexpected medical expenses can lead to financial hardship quickly, and UWECI is dedicated to each individual thriving in Eastern Iowa. As you read through this edition of *United Is The Way*, I hope you'll be just as impressed as I was with our statistics in the number of volunteers who are helping their neighbors get to medical appointments or how our supporters, like Erica Bergfeld-Reed, are giving back through our Women United affinity group to invest and advocate for women's access to healthcare.

Together, with your time, dollars, and voice we are working to move the needle on our community's challenges. Thank you for your continued support. United is the way to improving access to healthcare.



Kristin Roberts

Kristin Roberts
President & CEO

Improving Access to Healthcare in Eastern Iowa

A healthy Eastern Iowa is one where everyone has access to the healthcare they need. A person's health is the result of several factors, including socioeconomic status, geography, race and ethnicity. By addressing barriers such as cost, transportation, and language, we can start making a positive impact on the well-being of Eastern Iowans.

1:1,530

primary care
providers to people
in Linn Co.

14.5%

without prenatal
care in Linn Co.

3,299

women supported by
Women United funding
in 2024

2,318

volunteer hours by
Transportation program
volunteers

Medical Transportation for Seniors

Reliable transportation is crucial for maintaining independence and ensuring that seniors receive the healthcare they need. Our transportation program volunteers provided over 20,700 hours of free rides to their neighbors, aged 55+, to non-emergency medical appointments outside of the county.

Interested in volunteering or know someone in need of a ride? Visit uweci.org/volunteercenters.



Women United's Impact in Eastern Iowa

Ensuring women have access to quality healthcare is essential to their well-being, empowerment, and ability to thrive in every aspect of life. Women United raises funds for women's access to healthcare in our community and last year alone, supported more than 3,299 women in our community.

Erica Bergfeld-Reed, a Women United member, designates her donations and volunteers for Women United because women's healthcare isn't just important. For her, it's personal and shaped by her own breast cancer diagnosis at 38 years old. She shared that without insurance or financial resources, her journey would have looked different – an obstacle many women in our community face when seeking life-saving healthcare services. **To learn more about Women United and how to get involved, visit uweci.org/womenunited.**

"The work that Women United does helps to take that difficult decision off the table for these women so they can, like I was able to, focus on treatment and living their best life after a diagnosis."

- Erica Bergfeld-Reed

Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP)

Our SHIIP program volunteers provide counseling to seniors with questions about Medicare, Medicare supplement insurance, long term care insurance, and claim filing.

In 2023, UWECI's Jones County program was ranked **#2** for the MIPPA (Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers) "Best in State" for talking to clients about Social Security and Senior Medicare Patrol. Betty, one of UWECI's SHIIP volunteers, gives her time to answer questions for individuals who are navigating the Medicare world.

"I volunteer with SHIIP to make someone's life a little bit easier and to help people better understand Medicare, which can be confusing and complex to some."

- Betty

To learn more about SHIIP, visit uweci.org/volunteercenters.

Make an Impact VIA United Way

Access to healthcare is the foundation of a healthy community, yet there are barriers that prevent people from getting the care they need.

Will you help support access to healthcare in our community?

V

Volunteer your time and make a difference in someone's life through the Transportation Program, SHIIP, or Women United at uweci.org/volunteer

I

Invest your dollars with United Way and know that it's going towards removing barriers for our neighbors to access healthcare at uweci.org/donate

A

Advocate for what's important to you and subscribe to our newsletters to keep up to date on the impact of United Way of East Central Iowa at uweci.org/newsletters