

Written by Harry Colbert, Jr.
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The Minneapolis Urban League (MUL) has teamed with St. Paul's Century College and NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center to train aspiring health care professionals right in their proverbial back yard.

The unique program that began earlier this month will have trained 20 individuals to be certified as **health unit coordinators** by the end of the first session and applications are already being processed for a second session to begin this fall.

Scott Gray, president and CEO of the Minneapolis Urban League said this program benefits the residents of north Minneapolis in a multitude of ways.

"Century College is in St. Paul and it is bringing this wonderful education opportunity to 2100 Penn Ave., North," said Gray, referring to the address of the Minneapolis Urban League where classes are taking place. "This is the first time the Minneapolis Urban League and Century College have partnered to create a wonderful employment opportunity to get a world-class education and credentialing, and get students on the path to a career in health care."

Gray said the other component that makes this program so attractive is the partnership with NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center. A community leader in wellness, NorthPoint – located across the street from the Minneapolis Urban League – will offer 40-hour internships once students successfully complete the program.

"The beautiful thing about that is when people intern they get the opportunity to make a positive impression with an employer and have a great opportunity to land a permanent job," said Gray. "It's always unique when you have an employment partner, an educational partner and a nonprofit come together to make sure that not only do individuals gain training, but make sure they are able to get a job at the end of their credentialing."

So what is a health unit coordinator?

"They are the pivotal connector in the unit," said Bridgett Backman of Century College. "They're the ones you see at the front desk (of a medical care facility), they're the ones in charge of inventory. When a patient goes into cardiac arrest and hits the nurse button, they're the ones who first gets the call and dispatches the proper personnel."

Gray said the three-way partnership with Century College and NorthPoint will start paying immediate dividends for the residents of north Minneapolis.

"The more our participants learn about healthcare, the more they take back to their families and community," said Gray. "These future healthcare workers will become health ambassadors and promote positive health throughout the community."

Urban strategy: League forms unique partnership with Century College, NorthPoint Health and Wellness C

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To learn more about the Health Unit Coordinator program or to enroll in the coming fall session, visit the Minneapolis Urban League online at www.mul.org or call (612) 302-3100.