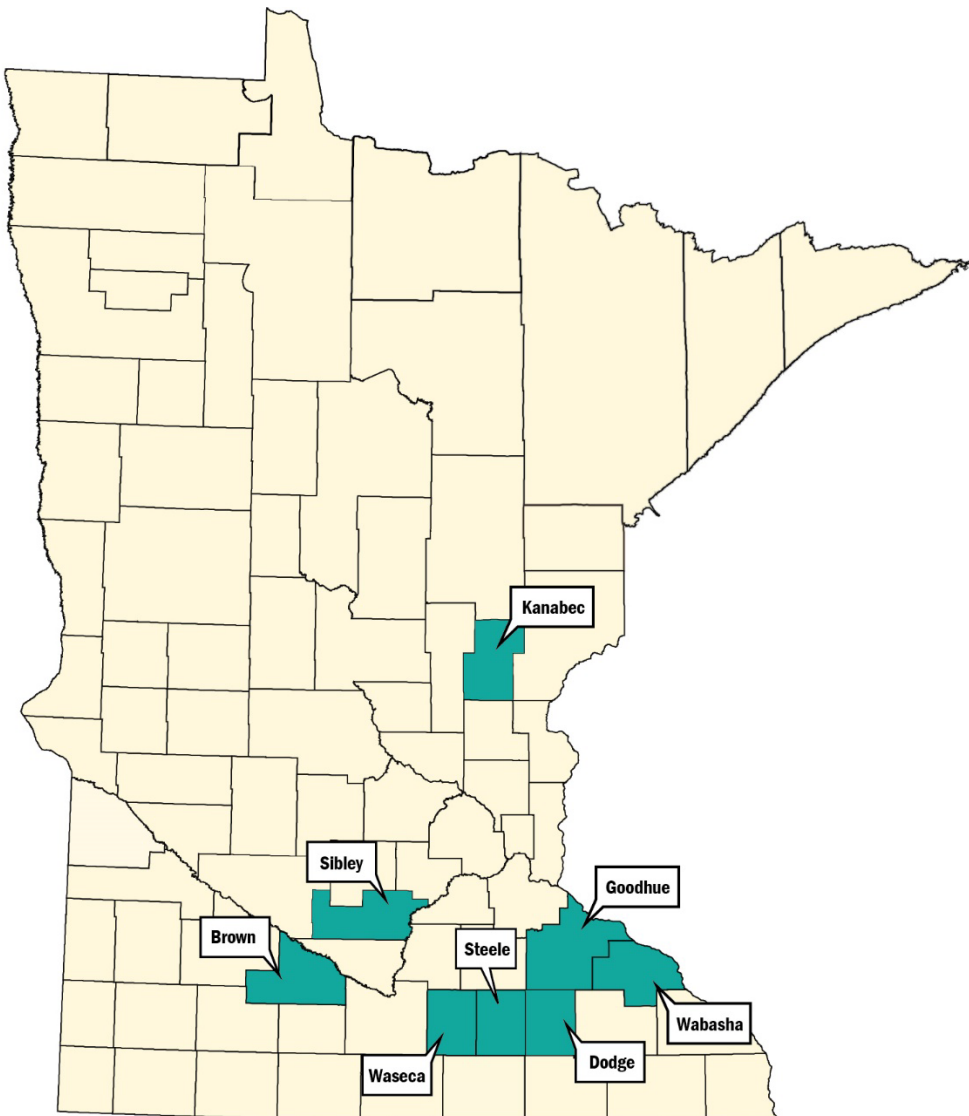


Chapter 1

Introduction to South Country Health Alliance

South Country Health Alliance (South Country) offers health care coverage in eight Minnesota counties: Brown, Dodge, Goodhue, Kanabec, Sibley, Steele, Wabasha, and Waseca.

Map of South Country's Service Area



The Provider Manual is a source of guidance and is not meant to be the only source for billing, authorization and coverage. Please visit the Provider section of our website, www.mnscha.org, for additional information, updates, and link to the online Provider Portal.

About South Country Health Alliance

South Country's mission is to empower and engage our members to be as healthy as they can be, build connections with local agencies and providers who deliver quality services, and be an accountable partner to the counties we serve.

To accomplish this, South Country uses a care coordination model that integrates both medical and social services and enables our members to receive services in a comprehensive and cohesive manner.

South Country became Minnesota's first multi-county-based purchasing organization in 2001. Authorized by Minnesota Statute 256B.692, county-based purchasing (CBP) is a health care purchasing system intended to be operated by a county or group of counties, for the initial purpose of purchasing health care services for county residents enrolled in Minnesota Health Care Programs. CBP presents an enhanced alternative to the fee-for-service state-purchased and operated public programs and to the Prepaid Medical Assistance Program (PMAP), where the state of Minnesota purchases services through contracts with private health maintenance organizations or "HMOs."

CBP entities must meet the same requirements as HMOs or Community Integrated Service Networks (CISN), as provided for under Minnesota Statutes, chapters 62D and 62N. Requirements are also set out in portions of Minnesota Statutes, chapters 62A, 62J, 62M, 62Q, and 72A; and in Minnesota Rules Part 4685. These requirements include standards for access, quality, and financial solvency. Once operational, a county-based purchasing entity is subject to a contractual agreement with the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) and regulatory oversight by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

CBP plans integrate medical services and social/public health resources into a single care delivery model. CBP plans assume full financial risk for all eligible services. A CBP plan adds value to public programs by:

- Improving access to providers and local community resources;
- Improving coordination of health and human services; and
- Stabilizing, supporting, and growing community provider networks.

South Country is governed by a Joint Powers Board (JPB) comprised of one commissioner from each of the member counties. The JPB provides the vision, policy direction, and governance for South Country. South Country staff support the board and oversee the regulated activities of South Country functions. A listing of JPB commissioners and leadership staff can be found on our website www.mnscha.org.

We look to county public health and social services agencies and their in-depth understanding of the local programs and resources available for our members to connect members to the right services at the right time. South Country is committed to delivering programs that integrate medical services with the services coordinated by the counties and other partners to form a single-care delivery system, including care management, transportation, and other services. By combining our efforts with local providers and county agencies, South Country has been able to partner in new ways to help deliver more effective, higher-quality care aimed at reducing costs.

South Country Health Alliance Community Care Connectors

South Country employs a Community Care Connector (Connector) to service each of the eight county service areas. The Connector is a county social services or public health employee who can meet with South Country members directly. The Connector also works closely within the county agencies to assist other county workers with South Country members and is the local expert on South Country benefits. The Connector serves as the operational link between South Country and the county services.

Third-Party Administrators

South Country contracts with *Delta Dental of Minnesota* to provide dental services for members. Delta Dental is responsible for managing the network of dental providers, dental claims processing, dental provider support, and dental member support.

South Country also contracts with *PerformRX* to provide pharmacy services for members. Like Delta Dental, PerformRx is responsible for managing the network of pharmacies, pharmacy claims processing, pharmacy provider support, and some member support such as Medication Therapy Management.

South Country Health Alliance Provider Network

South Country has well-established and geographically dispersed medical, pharmacy, dental, chiropractic, and behavioral health provider networks that serve our members across all public programs. Within our service area, all public health and social services agencies, essential community providers, and community mental health centers participate in the network. South Country also includes subsets of specialized providers that are focused on the unique and diverse needs of our members.

South Country uses a primary care model allowing members to select a primary care clinic (PCC), which is their “medical home.” If the member has not selected a PCC, South Country will assign a PCC or a “medical home” to that member. Members can access any of the specialists in the network without a referral from their PCC. Some covered services require prior plan authorization before members can access the service. Details of plan benefits can be found in the member handbooks, other member materials, and the South Country Provider and Pharmacy Directory, found on our website at www.mnscha.org.

South Country Health Alliance Programs

South Country has five programs and two Medicare Advantage plans to meet the health care coverage needs of our diverse residents in our service area:

Families & Children (also known as Medical Assistance or PMAP) – A program for families and people up to 64 years of age who meet income measures.

MinnesotaCare – A program for people of any age without access to affordable health care coverage. Members may pay a monthly premium to the state. The premium is based on income measures and determined by the state.

SingleCare (SNBC) – A Special Needs BasicCare (SNBC) program for people ages 18 to 64 who are certified disabled and are eligible for Medical Assistance but not eligible for Medicare.

Minnesota Senior Care Plus (MSC+) – A program for people ages 65 and over who meet income measures and may have Medicare primary outside of South Country. Seniors are eligible for Elderly Waiver benefits.

SharedCare (SNBC) – A Special Needs BasicCare program for people who are certified disabled and are eligible for Medical Assistance and Medicare. South Country only administers the Medical Assistance benefits.

AbilityCare (HMO SNP) – A Medicare Advantage plan for dual eligible SNBC adults from 18 to 64 years of age. Members must be eligible for Medical Assistance, enrolled in Medicare Part A and B, and certified disabled or blind – certified through the Social Security Administration, SMRT or through the county for purposes of the DD waiver. AbilityCare includes Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage.

SeniorCare Complete (HMO SNP) – A Medicare Advantage plan and Minnesota Senior Health Options (MSHO) program for dual eligible seniors 65 years of age and older. Members must be eligible for Medical Assistance and enrolled in Medicare Part A and B. SeniorCare Complete

includes Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage. Seniors are eligible for Elderly Waiver benefits.