



Doing Things Differently

BY NICK MORIELLO, PRESIDENT, HIGHMARK BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD DELAWARE

HEALTH CARE IS VERY EXPENSIVE. Outcomes could be better. So, how can we initiate real and meaningful change and transformation? This is a question that has kept me up at night for years.

Prior to joining Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware, I spent the majority of the last 25 years within the industry representing purchasers of health care. My clients were individual consumers, sole proprietors, business owners of a variety of sized businesses, and Medicare beneficiaries. They shared challenges in common: cost for their health insurance and benefits, and difficulty in navigating the system.

When I had the opportunity to join Highmark, I was excited about the possibilities. With our size and limited number of participants in the system, Delaware provides the perfect opportunity to do things differently. Traditionally, insurance companies and medical providers have had contractual relationships. These have been negotiated with a primary focus on fees. But by taking a different approach, there is the possibility of partnership between these parties which focus on the patient – or member,

Above: Representatives recipient organizations were joined by Highmark Vice President Government Affairs Michael Warfel, Delaware Insurance Commissioner Trinidad Navarro, Delaware Secretary of Health and Social Services Dr. Kara Odom Walker, Delaware Lt. Governor Bethany Hall-Long, Highmark Medical Director Avani Virani, MD, Highmark Vice President & Executive Medical Director Strategic Initiatives Caesar DeLeo, MD, MSHA, Highmark Delaware President Nick Moriello, and Senator Stephanie Hansen.



KELLY

Benefit Strategies

The Business of Better

*People who care
Technology that matters
Comprehensive solutions
customized and integrated
to meet your needs*



BENEFITS · PAYROLL · TECHNOLOGY

kellybenefitstrategies.com

Guide to Health Care

customer, client – all words that we use in the industry to describe the same person. These partnerships are creating better experiences and deeper relationships.

A great example of collaborative efforts with other organizations is between our parent company, Highmark Health, and Penn State Health. Together we invested more than \$1 billion to create a value-based, community care network, including new facilities to ensure easier access to care, and to reinforce existing care facilities. It also focused on advanced population health management capabilities, analytics and care models to more effectively manage chronic conditions and ultimately lower the total cost of care. And by working together, we have been able to concentrate on creating innovative, patient-focused co-branded health care insurance products, and to fund medical and health sciences education, and advanced research.

Here in Delaware, we partner with the community through BluePrints for the Community, our donor-advised fund, powered by the Delaware Community Foundation. We provide over \$1 million in funding for health-related programs and initiatives through BluePrints every year. Our grants are aimed at addressing social determinants of health, reducing health care disparities among minorities, developing the health care workforce and increasing access to care among the under- and uninsured. By partnering with organizations throughout the state to meet the needs of our community, we know our collaborative efforts will lead to more impactful, more sustainable and more meaningful solutions.

In all Highmark markets, we have partnered with primary care physicians through our innovative True Performance program, which recognizes primary care physicians for delivering high-quality, value-based care that leads to better health outcomes for members. In Delaware, 79 entities, 125 practices, and more than 240,000 members, participated in the program. Since we launched True Performance in 2017, we have seen a reduction in preventable hospitalizations and emergency department visits in all of Highmark's market areas. More than \$600 million in costs have been avoided as a result.

I am optimistic that we can continue to leverage partnerships and implement innovative approaches to health care in order to accomplish real, impactful change in Delaware, and become a model of excellence for other states. ■

BluePrints for the Community recently announced a more than \$1.1 million commitment to eight nonprofit organizations to fund programs that are battling the opioid crisis in Delaware. The recipients include atTack addiction, Bellevue Cause Community Network, Boys and Girls Clubs of Delaware, Friendship House, Jewish Family Services, The National Council on Agricultural Life and Labor Research Fund (NCALL), Sussex County Health Coalition, and TRIAD Addiction Recovery Services.