

# David L. Holmberg Biography

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David L. Holmberg is president and chief executive officer of Highmark Health, an \$18 billion blended health organization that includes one of America's largest Blue Cross Blue Shield insurers and a growing regional hospital and physician network. Based in Pittsburgh, PA, Highmark Health's 35,000 employees serve millions of customers nationwide through the nonprofit organization's affiliated businesses, including Highmark Inc., Allegheny Health Network, HM Insurance Group, United Concordia Dental, and Helion.

One of the nation's most influential and transformative health care executives, Holmberg is helping to shape the future of this fast-evolving industry. He has proactively and regularly engaged with trade associations, regulators, peer organizations, strategic partners, and government entities — both regional and national — to resolve critical health care issues and ensure the equitable treatment of Highmark Health's patients, policyholders, and business customers. In 2016, Highmark Health sued the U.S. government in federal claims court, resulting in a 2020 Supreme Court ruling that affirmed that the federal government must fulfill its promises to preserve the trust that makes successful public-private partnerships, including the ACA marketplace, possible.

Holmberg joined Highmark Inc. in 2007 and served in a series of executive positions, including president of its Diversified Businesses, where he was responsible for businesses representing more than \$3.5 billion in revenue, chief executive officer for HVHC Inc. and chief executive officer and chairman for HM Insurance Group, United Concordia Dental and San Antonio, Texas-based Visionworks, which was divested in 2016 for \$1.6 billion.

Under Holmberg's leadership, Highmark Health successfully navigated the tumultuous post-ACA years as well as the financial turnaround of Allegheny Health Network, which was nearing bankruptcy when it was acquired by Highmark Inc. in 2013. In addition to delivering 11 consecutive quarters of positive operating income prior to the COVID 19 pandemic, the health delivery system has expanded to include 12 hospitals in western Pennsylvania, as well as five multi-specialty medical malls. In 2019, Holmberg successfully negotiated an agreement with the Pennsylvania Attorney General to provide residents of western Pennsylvania with continued access to the region's two leading health systems.

In early 2020, Highmark Health's financial strength and stability enabled the rapid deployment of resources needed to diagnose, treat and support the organization's members and patients through the COVID 19 pandemic. It has also enabled the implementation of a bold transformation strategy designed to lead the change in the health care experience for consumers by providing affordable, accessible, high-quality, community-based medicine and coverage options. The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic accelerated that strategy due to Highmark Health's differentiated position in the industry as a vertically integrated payer-provider.

#### Current Board of Director affiliations:

- Chairman, Highmark Inc., the Blue-branded health insurance affiliate of Highmark Health
- Chairman, Blue Cross Blue Shield Association (BCBSA)
- America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP)
- Allegheny Health Network
- The Allegheny Conference on Community Development
- The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust

## Thought Leadership Topics:

Unlike many of his peers, who are tenured doctors or career health care executives, Holmberg is applying his retail industry expertise and proven customer-centric concepts to the health care experience — all designed to disrupt the industry by delivering higher quality care at lower cost on consumers' terms.

### The Patient Health Experience

- Not just treatment, but how consumers/patients are treated during their health care journey.
- How consumers can become more engaged in their own health.
- How caregivers can be freed to focus on supporting them.

### The Inevitable Health Care Revolution

- There will be a revolution if we do something OR if we don't — consumers demand it.
- Success is no longer just about access and pricing. Health care leaders must differentiate through delivering a robust, seamless customer/caregiver experience.
- There is an imperative to build a better end-to-end system and experience that has the flexibility to serve multiple customer segments on their terms.

### Making Allies out of Adversaries

- To truly succeed in changing health care, everyone needs to work together.
- Partnerships vs. M&A: Highmark Health doesn't need to own everything — Highmark Health partnerships include Emerus, Penn State Health, Johns Hopkins Medicine, and Geisinger, among others.
- Aligning incentives and improving data aggregation, analytics, and insights to customize or individualize care interventions.

## Interviews/Articles:

### Pittsburgh Business Times, May 2020: Vision Pittsburgh

<https://players.brightcove.net/pages/v1/index.html?accountId=6057940550001&playerId=RlpK8BZI8I&videoId=6160816783001&autoplay=true>

*"Health care has to be more consumer friendly and telemedicine is a critical part of that. We've invested heavily in the technology to be able to do 4,000, 5,000 telehealth visits in a day. It has opened up dialogue with patients and members that has been good for everyone. It's going to be a unique opportunity to improve access to care, improve quality of care, and make it more affordable and available to a broader range of people. We need to manage the virus ... but we can't let it define us."*

### Axios View from the Top, May 2020: The Hidden Health Crisis

<https://www.axios.com/coronavirus-pandemic-hidden-health-crisis-axios-event-32810037-c886-4a7b-973a-c89d3126f5ce.html>

*"[Being an insurer and a health care provider], we knew we would be the front line of defense if [COVID 19] came to America. We were watching closely, all the way back in December, what was happening in China. When we saw the early cases start to emerge, it was very clear that it was not in control. As cases developed in Europe and ultimately patient zero in New Rochelle, we realized that we needed to stand up our pandemic operations center. It is designed to give us as much information as possible, both from the Blue Cross Blue Shield side but also from the front-line caregivers to be able to look for the early indicators."*

### Washington Post Live, May 2018: The Future of an Evolving Industry

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/postlive/highmark-health-ceo-lets-go-on-getting-technology-involved-in-health-care/2018/05/15/075bebfe-5848-11e8-9889-07bcc1327f4b\\_video.html?noredirect=on](https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/postlive/highmark-health-ceo-lets-go-on-getting-technology-involved-in-health-care/2018/05/15/075bebfe-5848-11e8-9889-07bcc1327f4b_video.html?noredirect=on)

*"I would say the biggest challenge is the health care system was built in a model that was based on past need. And the world has changed. I think the biggest challenge in health care is recognizing that we can — it's no longer about us, it's got to be about them. It's got to be about the people that we serve. And meaning, we need to have a retail mindset where we understand what motivates that individual, how do we connect with them, and then how do we provide them the services and capabilities that fit their lifestyle and their choices?"*

### Modern Healthcare, December 2017: Q&A with Highmark Health CEO: New model of care should lead to lower hospital utilization

<https://www.modernhealthcare.com/article/20171230/NEWS/171239993/q-a-with-highmark-health-ceo-new-model-of-care-should-lead-to-lower-hospital-utilization>

*"Affordability is about dealing with the real issue, which is the cost of care and how care is consumed. I think we would all agree that if we can create better access to care and give more people the ability to have health care, that's a good thing, but at what price? So I think what we're doing is providing a bridge for the government, a bridge for employers, and a bridge for individuals to start finding that sweet spot where you can give access and create that, but you also make it more affordable."*

### Highmark Health Straight from the CEO Blog Series:

<https://www.highmarkhealth.org/blog/tags.shtml?tag=Straight%20from%20the%20CEO>