

5/5/22

**APPLICATION TO THE NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF
FINANCIAL SERVICES FOR A PREMIUM ADJUSTMENT**

COMPANY: Highmark Western and Northeastern New York

NAIC #: 55204

Prefiling SERFF Tracking #s: HLTH-133230587

EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2023

**THIS APPLICATION IS FOR SMALL GROUP COMMUNITY-RATED
PRODUCTS**

Health insurance premiums reflect the cost of health care in the markets we serve. Health care costs continue to rise at an unparalleled rate year after year and are projected to increase significantly in 2023. Rising medical costs are the primary cause of our proposed small group rates.

With more than 90 cents of every dollar of revenue the company collects from premiums going back out to pay for our members' medical care, we remain focused on initiating new strategies to reduce the overall cost of health care.

However, health insurance premiums **must** correspond with the inflated cost of care provided to our members by doctors, specialists and pharmacists.

From the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've committed to providing our members with access to important tools to combat the virus. While we've historically absorbed costs incurred from COVID-19 treatment and telehealth, the future potential costs associated with covering medically necessary testing and administrative costs of vaccines for our members are factored into our rate requests. The impact increased requested premiums by 0.75%.

While health care costs continue to rise, our affiliation with Highmark Health provides ongoing strength and stability to our organization, as it allows access to shared innovation and strategic partnerships that help drive down costs for small businesses, including helping to minimize the proposed rate increases for 2023. The net cost increase is 14.5%.

This rate change application affects only the members enrolled in community-rated products for small groups. Based on current membership numbers, we estimate that 79,724 members, totaling 6,611 small businesses will be affected by the rate change.

Based on the reasons explained above, we are requesting that the Department of Financial Services grant our submitted premium rate increase of 15.25% for its community-rated small group products to take effect on January 1, 2023.

Accompanying this narrative is the NYS Exhibit 13, which provides a numerical summary of selected information from this rate filing and prior rate filings.