



The Wholecare COMMUNICATOR



APRIL
2022

Welcome to the first edition of *The Wholecare Communicator*, a quarterly newsletter published by Highmark Wholecare to inform you of important health care happenings at the community level. Each quarter, we will highlight key issues and dynamics affecting our most vulnerable citizens within their communities throughout the Commonwealth, and the efforts being made to improve lives.

Highmark Wholecare, formerly Gateway Health, is a wholly owned subsidiary of Highmark Inc. with 30 years' experience serving vulnerable members of the Commonwealth. Today, we manage the delivery of health care services for more than 365,000 Pennsylvanians who are eligible for either Medicaid or Medicare Advantage as a dual-eligible (eligible for Medicare and Medicaid simultaneously). Our Medicaid service area covers 40 counties across the state, while our Medicare Advantage service area encompasses 58 of 67 counties.

Our mission is to care for the whole person in all communities where the need is greatest. We see a future in which everyone has equal opportunity to achieve their best health.

We're proud to offer this brief account of our public affairs efforts over the last quarter in this region.



Our Recent Rebrand

After having a 50% ownership stake in Gateway Health for many years, Highmark acquired full ownership of the organization last summer. This acquisition has empowered us to leverage the Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield brand as Highmark Wholecare. We operate within a structure conducive to sharing innovative service delivery approaches, experience and system resources to build upon our history of success and deliver best-in-class value for Pennsylvanians in need.

Our organization is driven to reinvent the health experience of our plan members, their clinicians and associated community-based organizations. Intently focusing on health equity will close care gaps and mitigate disparities for the Commonwealth's most diverse populations.



Did You Know?

Eighty percent of an individual’s overall health status is determined by non-clinical factors. Thus, supporting community efforts that bring to bear relevant and timely non-clinical services, including work supports, healthy meals, housing resources, educational opportunities and more is a vital core competency to stabilizing comorbidities, improving overall health status and remaining an outstanding fiscal steward.



Filling Backpacks to Feed Local Children

Packing Bags of Food with the Cambria County Backpack Project



Highmark Wholecare Senior Community Engagement Specialist Jennifer Jones recently assembled shelf-stable meals and snacks for children in the Johnstown area through the Cambria County Backpack Project (CCBP). The mission of the CCBP is to “work collaboratively to leverage resources in our communities to alleviate childhood hunger, while closing the gap between chronic hunger and academic achievement.” Each week during the school year, volunteers help pack bags of food for more than 300 children and youth so they have food to eat over the weekend. The bags are then delivered to participating Cambria County schools by CCBP partners.



Team Member Spotlight



TOMICA DYKES

Title: Senior Community Engagement Specialist

Service Area: Western PA - Erie, Crawford, Mercer counties

What you love about your job: I love going out in my community and making a positive impact on the lives of those who need it.



GEORGE IFILL

Title: Senior Community Engagement Specialist

Service Area: Western PA - Beaver, Washington, Armstrong counties

What you love about your job: Having the responsibility of representing Highmark Wholecare in the community and knowing that our members deserve the best care that we can provide. Interacting with our members and collaborating with organizations in order to support a healthy community.



Teaming Up with Habitat for Humanity

Highmark WholeCare and Habitat for Humanity of Greater Pittsburgh Team Up to Help the Underserved with Housing



Highmark Wholecare and Habitat for Humanity of Greater Pittsburgh have equally strong passions and desires to help those in need.

It's why, as part of its ongoing efforts to address the social determinants of health, Highmark Wholecare has established a longstanding partnership with Habitat for Humanity to build homes and create close-knit communities in Allegheny County.

Housing deficiencies in Pittsburgh are at an all-time high, with more than 15,000 affordable homes needed due to the burden of home ownership for families with a limited income.

Since the inception of the Highmark Wholecare Habitat volunteer program, more than 30 volunteers have invested more than 240 total hours building and rehabbing one dozen houses for limited-income families. Highmark Wholecare's partnership with Habitat Pittsburgh helps eliminate the barriers to a better, healthier, more financially stable life for its members through affordable home ownership for families with limited incomes.

"Volunteering is important to Highmark Wholecare because we are here to serve communities where the needs are greatest," said Ellen Duffield, President and CEO, Highmark Wholecare. "Our associates embrace our mission and want to give back to the community."

In addition to building homes, Highmark Wholecare has donated healthy home kits which, among other items, include smoke and CO₂ detectors, fire extinguisher and flashlights to all the residents of the houses built by Highmark Wholecare volunteers.

Highmark Wholecare believes one way to make a long-lasting impact on our local communities and for those in need is through the organization's volunteer efforts with Habitat for Humanity of Greater Pittsburgh.



Upcoming Events

04/29

Spring into the Vaccine

8350 Frankstown Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA

04/30

August Wilson Birthday Block Party

[Link to Birthday Celebration Details](#)

05/14-15

Children's Theater Festival

[Link to Details](#)



We Are Here for You

Communications is a two-way street so we want to hear from you! If you have suggestions on how we may improve this newsletter, constituency matters warranting attention or questions regarding our legislative priorities, please contact:

Karen Rollins-Fitch, Manager of Local Government and Community Affairs, at 412-327-3815 or krollins-fitch@HighmarkWholecare.com

Joe Glinka, Government Affairs Director, at 412-255-1336 or jglinka@HighmarkWholecare.com

Disclaimer: Health benefits or health benefit administration may be provided by or through Highmark Wholecare, coverage by Gateway Health Plan, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association ("Highmark Wholecare").