

# Profiles in Diversity Journal<sup>®</sup>

Special CEO Edition



*David P. Steiner, Waste Management, Inc. • John D. Forsyth, Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield • Doug Parker, US Airways  
Diane P. Holder, UPMC Health Plan • Mandy Shapansky, Xerox Canada • Angela F. Braly, WellPoint, Inc. (not pictured)*

**CEO** Leadership  
**in Action**  
**WINNERS**

▶ 2011 AWARD WINNER

# John D. Forsyth

“Together we will continue to enhance our diversity and inclusiveness and, as a result, be a better company.”

**D**iversity is more than just the right thing to do at Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield. It's one of our core values and a critical ingredient in our vision to improve the health of Iowans and South Dakotans.

Recognizing, respecting and celebrating our differences, both seen and unseen, also provides an advantage in the marketplace, makes us an employer of choice in Iowa and South Dakota, and enhances our value in the community.

As CEO, I am personally responsible and accountable to ensure diversity is central to everything we do as a company. That said, our culture is the result of a team effort. Some of the work we're doing includes the following:

**Workforce:** Wellmark's investment in an inclusive workforce begins both at the top of the organization, with our diverse leadership team, and among individual employees who are empowered to regularly recommend diversity-related ideas directly to me. These efforts meet in the middle with Wellmark's Inclusion Council. The council, which I chair, is comprised of employees throughout the company who serve as our eyes and ears internally, and as community ambassadors.

Diversity is also important for our recruiting and education efforts. Wellmark participates in job fairs and leverages community affiliations to ensure we attract a diverse pool of candidates. Inclusion is reflected in each leader's performance goals, and we encourage leaders to get involved with diverse organizations in the community.

**Workplace:** Wellmark recently moved into a new headquarters built with diversity and inclusion in mind. The facility features hearing-aid compatible phones, adjustable-height workstations, scooter accommodations and touch-free equipment in the restrooms and café. Our Well for Life Fitness Center offers options for all physical capabilities and fitness

levels. Employees were used as consultants throughout the design and building process.

**Marketplace:** Diversity is part of Wellmark's day-to-day work, including customer service, product development and provider networking. We're also active in the marketplace, seeking opportunities to reach potential customers and attract diverse employees. At the recent CelebrAsian festival, for example, Wellmark offered free health screenings and fitness exhibitions.

Wellmark's inclusion efforts were honored in 2010 by the NAACP and Greater Des Moines Partnership. Our employees are also engaged. In a recent survey, 99.3 percent could name our diversity goal of acceptance and appreciation; 99.4 percent could define stereotypes; and 93.3 percent could identify the appropriate response when hearing offensive remarks.

We understand the value of a diverse workforce, workplace and marketplace. It's a journey that has made a difference and never ends. Together we will continue to enhance our diversity and inclusiveness and, as a result, be a better company. **PDJ**



**COMPANY:**  
Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield

**HEADQUARTERS:**  
Des Moines, Iowa

**WEB SITE:**  
www.wellmark.com

**PRIMARY BUSINESS:**  
Health Insurance

**ANNUAL REVENUES:**  
\$3.3 billion

**EMPLOYEES:**  
1,900

**TITLE:**  
Chairman & CEO

**EDUCATION:**  
BS, Business Administration and MA, Economics, Michigan State University

**FIRST JOB:**  
Age 10-18, morning paper route for 95 residents

**WHAT I'M READING:**  
*The Blue Zones*, Dan Buettner and *All The Devils Are Here - The Hidden History of the Financial Crisis*, by Bethany McLean and Joe Nocera

**MY PHILOSOPHY:**  
If you don't have integrity, you don't have anything. Lead with passion and compassion.

**BEST ADVICE:**  
Make sure you have balance in your life and always give back to your community.

**FAMILY:**  
Wife, Rita

**INTERESTS:**  
Sports, cars, economics, work, volunteering, reading

**FAVORITE CHARITY:**  
Variety - The Children's Charity