

# Deborah L. Rice-Johnson Biography

LinkedIn Profile: [linkedin.com/in.deborahricejohnson](https://www.linkedin.com/in/deborahricejohnson)



Deborah Rice-Johnson is CEO of Diversified Businesses for Highmark Inc. and chief growth officer. She is an innovative health leader, driven by a passion for reinventing health care experiences and pioneering provider relationships designed to keep care close to home and change antiquated reimbursement methods. Through diverse and inventive relationships ranging from joint ventures to equity interest partnerships, she has spearheaded affiliations and clinical alliances with Penn State Health and many other regionally-based health care providers.

Ms. Rice-Johnson leads a national network of diversified businesses and market-leading capabilities collectively known as Allied Works, which drive growth, reduce costs and improve outcomes for Highmark Health, as well as forward-thinking health organization customers across the country. As CEO of Diversified Businesses, she is responsible for Highmark subsidiaries including United Concordia Dental, a top ten national dental plan that serves the largest voluntary dental program in the world with TRICARE; and HM Insurance Group, a top ten national stop loss carrier with additional managed care reinsurance solutions.

Under Ms. Rice-Johnson's leadership, Highmark has emerged as a national pacesetter in improving prescription drug affordability and access, including through innovative partnerships with fellow Blue Cross Blue Shield organizations that increase the supply and stabilize the cost of essential generic medications, analyze the clinical benefits of therapies, and improve the drug value chain.

AlliedWorks is a key component of how Highmark has transformed from a traditional health insurance company with about \$2.3 billion in annual revenue in the mid-1990s, to a \$29 billion enterprise that improves tens of millions of lives across the country.

As chief growth officer, Ms. Rice-Johnson is responsible for pursuing a range of strategic partnerships, affiliations and acquisitions that enables Highmark to unlock the shared value to organizations and transform healthcare. Together, we will realize the potential of a Living Health model, which creates a better system for customers and clinicians through innovative solutions and partnerships while strengthening community-based care, improving health outcomes and lowering costs for members.

When in her role as president of Highmark Inc., Ms. Rice-Johnson provided senior leadership and strategic direction for the company's multi-state health insurance organization. During this time, she guided Highmark through successful affiliations in Delaware, West Virginia, Western and Northeastern New York, as well as a merger in Northeastern Pennsylvania. As a result, Highmark Health Plans are now among the largest Blue Plans in the country, serving approximately 7.1 million members.

Ms. Rice-Johnson has more than 40 years of experience in the health insurance industry. Her leadership has not only redefined the payer-provider relationship and yielded unparalleled financial performance, but she has also delivered innovative clinical solutions that aim to improve health outcomes. She is also keenly committed to positively impacting the employment situation of our nation's military veterans and those with disabilities through championing private-sector hiring efforts.

Ms. Rice-Johnson holds a bachelor's degree in business management from Carlow University. In 2014, she was named a Carlow Laureate, the university's most prestigious alumni award recognizing those whose work, thought and action demonstrate the highest standards of professional accomplishment and leadership. She was also named to Modern Healthcare's Top 25 Women Leaders in 2022, a program honoring female executives who are guiding health care delivery improvement across the country.

## Board of Director Affiliations:

- Evio, Chairman
- Highmark Ventures, Chairman
- Penn State Health
- Dollar Bank
- Mindera Health
- Newport Healthcare
- Carlow University
- The United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania
- Epilepsy Association of Western and Central Pennsylvania, Chairman Emeritus

## Thought Leadership Topics:

### Business Diversification and Health Transformation

- Unifying Highmark's Diversified Business solutions and other market-leading capabilities that drive growth, reduce costs and improve outcomes for health organization customers across the country.

### Creating Community-Based Networks of Care

- Developing a continuum of provider partnerships, clinical joint ventures, and integrations that bring primary and specialty care closer to where people work and live. This includes Highmark's ongoing investments in Allegheny Health Network and partnerships with Penn State Health, Geisinger and Lehigh Valley.

### Forging Innovative Payer-Provider Partnerships

- Collaborating with providers to align financial incentives to improve patient outcomes and satisfaction.

### Improving health care affordability

- Combatting the rising cost of prescription drugs through value-based agreements that hold pharmaceutical companies accountable for clinical and cost effectiveness.
- Ensuring members and patients receive evidence-based, high-quality care in the most cost-effective and convenient care setting.

### Creating a remarkable health experience

- Investing in technology, care navigation tools and other resources that make it easier for our members and patients to manage their health and access the right care at the right time.

### Helping Veterans Reach Their Full Potential

- Applying veterans' unique skills and experience to employment opportunities at Highmark and in all of the communities we serve.

## Interviews/Articles:

### Disability Matters Podcast: Deborah Rice-Johnson: Helping Highmark Stay Committed to Hiring People with Disabilities, January 2025

<https://voiceamerica.net/libsyn.com/show/1ee0dd03-f7fd-4d27-9b16-149aegef6650/deborah-rice-johnson-helping-highmark-stay-committed-to-hiring-people-with-disabilities> Ms. Rice-Johnson highlights her duties organization-wide that assist the commitment to hiring people with disabilities.

### City & State PA 2024 Power of Diversity: Women 100' list, December 2024

<https://www.cityandstatepa.com/power-lists/2024/12/cspa-2024-power-diversity-women-100/401790/> Celebrates women in public service, nonprofit and advocacy, business executives and academics for their impact on their local communities and statewide.

### Becker's Hospital Review Podcast: Deb Rice-Johnson, CEO of Diversified Businesses, Chief Growth Officer at Highmark Inc., March 2024

<https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/podcasts/podcasts-beckers-hospital-review/deb-rice-johnson-ceo-of-diversified-businesses-chief-growth-officer-at-highmark-inc-131735138/> Deb Rice-Johnson joins the podcast to share insights into her background & 4+ decades experience at her organization, the significance of diversification, advice for evolving leaders, and more.

### Fierce Healthcare: Highmark unites diversified business solutions under Allied Works umbrella, February 2024

<https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/payers/highmark-unites-diversified-business-solutions-under-allied-works-umbrella> The Pittsburgh-based insurer said that the businesses included under the Allied Works umbrella were key to helping it grow from a plan with about 1 million members and \$2.3 billion in annual revenue in the 1990s to having 7 million members and an enterprise value of \$26 billion.

### Pittsburgh Business Times: Inside Highmark Health's rebranding of its noninsurance services to bring further growth, February 2024

<https://www.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/news/2024/02/28/highmark-health-allied-works-rebranding.html> "What we wanted to do was organize how we take these capabilities into the market, so that if we're partnering with another Blue plan, or another health care organization, we can talk about it in a way we can help them."

### Modern Healthcare: Top 25 Women Leaders, February 2022

<https://www.modernhealthcare.com/awards/top-25-women-leaders-2022> Recognized for guiding healthcare delivery improvement across the country.

### Forbes, March 2021: Highmark Completes Deal With HealthNow To Become Fourth-Largest Blue Cross Plan

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/brucejapsen/2021/03/01/highmark-completes-deal-with-healthnow-to-become-fourth-largest-blue-cross-plan/?sh=73def84d4df5> "We look forward to bringing our resources, tools and advanced technologies to Western and Northeastern New York. With this affiliation, we begin our path forward to enhance customer and clinician engagement, create better health outcomes, control costs and improve affordability for members in Western and Northeastern New York."