



An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and  
Blue Shield Association

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100 4th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309

Dear Women of Influence Selection Committee:

I am honored to write a letter of recommendation for a member of Wellmark's senior team, Laura Jackson, Executive Vice President, for consideration for the Women of Influence Award.

When Laura joined Wellmark in 2002, she served as Senior Vice President of Human Resources. In August, 2009 she was promoted to Group Vice President, Provider Relations and Health Management, overseeing the areas of provider network and engagement, pharmacy, health and care management, including wellness and health care sustainability. In March of 2010, following her leadership in the development of a strategy to collaboratively build a sustainable health care system in Iowa and South Dakota, she was promoted to the position of Executive Vice President, Health Care Strategy and Policy.

In January 2013, Laura accepted the responsibility of overseeing the Sales and Marketing Division in addition to her current responsibilities. Her willingness to do so provided Wellmark with the opportunity to uniquely integrate several departments in order to further assimilate Wellmark's products, networks and services with sales, marketing and communication efforts. In a short time, Laura has led and inspired these teams to bring the concept of integration to life. This integration will become increasingly important as the landscape of the health insurance industry continues to change with the implementation of health care reform.

An example of a significant accomplishment achieved under Laura's leadership is the successful launch of the Blue Zones Project™, a cornerstone of Iowa's Healthiest State Initiative. The Healthiest State Initiative is a community and business-led, government-endorsed, statewide effort to engage citizens throughout the state to improve their overall health and well-being. The Blue Zones Project™ seeks to help all Iowans live longer, happier lives with lower rates of chronic disease and higher quality of life by applying the learnings from the New York Times bestselling book, "The Blue Zones — Lessons for Living Longer, From the People Who've Lived the Longest". This project brings common elements into our everyday environment through a series of small, evidence-based changes that make the healthy choice the easy choice.

Laura has also made a positive mark in the Des Moines civic community, serving as a current board member of the Iowa Healthcare Collaborative, the YMCA of Greater Des Moines Corporate Board, and the Healthiest State Initiative Board. In addition, she is the 2013 chair of the Wellness Council of Iowa and co-chair of the Capital Crossroads Wellness Capital.

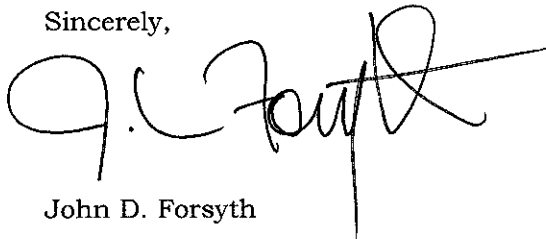
Despite running at full intensity with her career and community involvement, Laura's first priority remains as it should, on her family. She and her husband, Neal, have a five-year old son, Zachary. She knows that the people closest to her have had tremendous impact on shaping her into who she is and who she continues to become. Accordingly, she focuses on maintaining those relationships and giving her devoted attention to what truly matters.

I am very proud of Laura's accomplishments. Her work ethic, commitment to doing what is in the best interest of our members and our communities, and resounding business acumen are undeniably evident as we have made great strides in our efforts to improve the quality of health care in Iowa and South Dakota due, in large part, to her leadership. Her personal accomplishments pledge to put family first, and commitment to giving back and investing in her community touches the lives of many, while also enriching hers.

What I believe makes Laura a true woman of influence is her commitment to leadership in every sense of the word. She has an unwavering conviction that each one should teach one, and she demonstrates it without fail by effectively mentoring many around her, personally and professionally. She uses her exceptional passion for people to nurture and help them develop --- from the home base to the community to the state of Iowa and beyond. She influences others every day by what she says and does and she understands that by consistently striving for excellence she is motivating others to do the same.

Wellmark is fortunate to have such a dynamic business leader and I thank you for your consideration of her as a Des Moines Business Record Woman of Influence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J.D. Forsyth", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

John D. Forsyth