

# Highmark chief keynotes Chamber business luncheon

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**YOU'RE WELCOME**—Business Luncheon keynote speaker Dr. William Winkenwerder poses with a gift presented to him by African American Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Doris Carson Williams and Board Chairman Sam Stephenson. (Photos by J.L. Martello.)

African American Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Doris Carson Williams welcomed a packed ballroom of members, friends and partners to the annual Business Luncheon at the Omni William Penn with “cautious optimism” on economic prospects for the coming year. “For small businesses, it’s still a mixed story,” she said. “Our membership is up, we’re seeing growth in every category, and businesses are finding our members. But small minority businesses are still struggling to meet their bottom lines.” One of the businesses that is a success story, she noted, is KBK Enterprises, whose founder Keith B. Key grew up in the Hill District and who is back managing the redevelopment of Addison Terrace. His company is the chamber’s newest Chairman’s Circle member. Williams also highlighted some of the chamber’s successful initiatives

from the previous year including its Marcellus Shale forum, its diabetes series and its partnership with the University of Pittsburgh on the Institute for Entrepreneurial Excellence. She then introduced Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, who gave some brief congratulatory remarks before heading to another engagement. Following Rev. Kevin Cooper's invocation and lunch, Williams introduced Highmark Inc. President and CEO Dr. William Winkenwerder. He noted Williams' apparent magic touch in that, though scheduled months ago, his appearance came two days after regulators approved Highmark's ownership of the former West Penn Allegheny Health System. Winkenwerder, a North Carolina native, has been a practicing physician, an entrepreneur, head of a health insurance trade group and U.S. assistant secretary of defense for health affairs. "The first thing I want to do is to say thank you to all the business leaders, policy makers, unions and supporters whose voices were heard in Harrisburg," he said. "Choice in healthcare is very important. Affordable choices only come when strong entities can compete." He said the new regional company had been formed under Highmark Health will be called Allegheny Health Network and will operate as a nonprofit. Because though its health plans, vision plans, dental plans and even manufacturing, Highmark covers 34 million Americans in some fashion, the new network will bring healthcare delivery and financing together in a cost effective manner. "We are a national company but we intend our flag to be planted here in Pittsburgh," he said. Winkenwerder noted that with the Affordable Healthcare Act set to be implemented in the fall--if all goes as planned--the new network would offer bronze, silver and gold insurance plans. "While it may cover more people, it is driving costs even higher," he said. "But we still have Community Blue. And while it offers a limited network and fewer choices, it has 2<sup>a</sup> percent lower premiums." As for the "battle" between Highmark and UPMC, Winkenwerder said there needn't be one. "We want us to work together," he said. "We have a big impact on the region. I think our members should be able to go to their facilities, and theirs to ours. We want to be part of the solution, and we look forward to working with all of you." Following his remarks, Williams and chamber Board Chairman Sam Stephenson gave him their traditional pin and cufflinks. Stephenson welcomed new members and thanked the chamber staff for an excellent job during the past year.

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