



Kamilah Williams-Kemp

EDITORS' NOTE In February of 2015, Kamilah Williams-Kemp assumed her current post and was also recently promoted to President and CEO of Northwestern Long-Term Care. Williams-Kemp joined Northwestern Mutual in 1999 as an underwriter in the Disability Income department. She has held multiple leadership positions at the company, with her experience spanning the New Business, Human Resources, and Agencies departments. Most recently, she served as Director – Specialty Life Underwriting. In 2010, she spent six months in Northwestern Mutual's Kentucky/Southern Indiana network office, working closely with Northwestern Mutual financial representatives and leaders on projects related to recruiting, operations, sales and marketing, and leadership development.

COMPANY BRIEF Northwestern Mutual (northwesternmutual.com) has been helping families and businesses achieve financial security for nearly 160 years. Its financial representatives build relationships with clients through a distinctive planning approach that integrates risk management with wealth accumulation, preservation, and distribution. With more than \$230 billion in assets, \$27 billion in revenues, nearly \$90 billion in assets under management in its investment products and services, and more than \$1.5 trillion worth of life insurance protection in force, Northwestern Mutual delivers financial security to 4.3 million people who rely on it for insurance and investment solutions, including life, disability income and long-term care insurance, annuities, trust services, mutual funds, and investment advisory products and services. Northwestern Mutual is the marketing name for The Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and its subsidiaries, which offer a comprehensive approach to financial security solutions including life insurance, long-term care insurance, disability income insurance, annuities, life insurance with long-term benefits, investment products, and advisory products and services.

Addressing Longevity Risk

An Interview with
Kamilah Williams-Kemp, Executive Officer, Northwestern Mutual

Would you provide an overview of Northwestern Mutual's long-term care business?

In my role, I oversee all aspects of the product line. This includes product innovation, engaging and educating our field force, navigating through industry issues, as well as all of our operations – underwriting, claims, and servicing.

We are having a great year, which speaks to the strength of our long-term care product line and Northwestern Mutual's overall history of financial strength and product value. With our career distribution of advisors who are focused on developing long-term client relationships, we integrate long-term care into comprehensive planning. Stepping into this role, it is gratifying to see how well we have been positioned in the industry to date.

Where is the most significant innovation taking place in your area of the industry and is most of that occurring on the product side?

Long-term care has gone through significant consolidation over the past decade or so, but the consumer need is still there to address the longevity risk and the challenges that come along with aging. This has challenged carriers to think differently about both how to meet the needs of consumers and how to manage product lines for the long term.

In addition to the traditional stand-alone policy, hybrid or linked benefit products have been hot in the marketplace. Northwestern Mutual recently launched the new Accelerated Care Benefit (ACB) rider that is attached to our permanent life insurance. In the case of long-term care, we have proven we can step up and be innovative to meet our clients' needs.

How do you make sure you can keep up with the innovation and how important is it that Northwestern Mutual maintains an adaptable culture?

It is extraordinarily important. The relationship that our home office builds with our field force has been really critical to that innovation. Our advisors have unique relationships with our clients, so we hear the questions and concerns that people have about their financial future. This gives us the insights needed to develop products to help manage our clients' financial risks.

What's also unique about Northwestern Mutual is that we are a mutual company, which allows us to have a longer time horizon for delivering value and enables us to focus on what's

in the best interest of our 4.3 million policyowners for the future.

What makes a successful advisor today?

We're looking for people who are focused on building life-long relationships with their clients, from the time they are young professionals to long after they've retired. We invest in training for our field force to educate them on what they need to know from a product perspective and how to create comprehensive plans. We pride ourselves on not being transactional in focus.

How well understood is long-term care?

Consumers recognize that people are living longer and that there will be some challenges associated with the aging process. However, this consumer awareness doesn't necessarily translate into a deep understanding of how these issues impact their financial plan.

That's where our financial representatives come in – to help educate clients and create a plan that addresses both lifestyle protection and asset protection. This involves not just long-term care but also evaluating the role that life and disability insurance play in protecting against some of those risks.

How critical is diversity and inclusion to the success of a company today?

The commitment to diversity and inclusion and serving multicultural markets is not only the right thing to do but provides a huge spark of innovation and growth for the company.

Having a diverse staff working in an inclusive environment can stimulate creative thinking on how to best connect our great products and planning philosophy with broader groups of consumers. Tapping into some of those markets can really help fuel corporate growth, creating a win-win for consumers and the organization.

As you become more senior in the company, does the role become more about vision, strategy, and coaching?

I am fortunate to have a strong team of people who are just as committed and engaged as I am in this business. I have a high degree of trust in their capabilities to make good decisions. It's my role to make sure they feel empowered within their area or span of control to be able to move this product line forward. This, in turn, allows me to focus on the vision and where we're headed. I also recognize there are times as a leader when I have to dig in deeply, and determine what the trends are telling me about where we need to take the organization. ●