

## **Tangela Q. Parker on Why Sponsorship, Not Mentorship, Drives Leadership Advancement**



**Atlanta, Georgia Apr 27, 2026 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.IssueWire.com))** - Tangela Q. Parker, a healthcare executive with more than 25 years of leadership across Fortune 500 organizations, is drawing attention to a gap that continues to shape career advancement at the senior level: the difference between mentorship and sponsorship.

While mentorship offers guidance, Parker emphasizes that it is sponsorship that determines who advances.

“Mentorship develops potential,” she said. “Sponsorship decides who advances.”

Drawing from her experience leading marketing and external affairs functions across organizations, including CVS Health, Centene Corporation, UnitedHealthcare, and Humana, Parker has observed that access to advice alone rarely translates into advancement.

“Advancement doesn’t happen through access to guidance,” she said. “It happens when someone is willing to attach their name, their judgment, and their credibility to your work when decisions are being made.”

Her perspective is grounded in years of operating in environments where leadership decisions are made quickly, under scrutiny, and often behind closed doors. In these settings, sponsorship is not a formal designation. It is a decision rooted in trust.

“Sponsorship is a risk decision,” Parker said. “Leaders extend it when they are confident the work will hold under pressure.”

Parker notes that many high-performing professionals stall not because of capability, but because their work is not consistently visible in the environments where advancement decisions are made.

“You can be well-prepared and still be overlooked,” she said. “If your work is not understood, documented, and represented in the right rooms, it will not translate into movement.”

She also cautions against treating sponsorship as something that can be requested prematurely.

“Sponsorship is earned,” she said. “It comes from consistent execution, sound judgment, and work that holds over time.”

As organizations face increased scrutiny and faster decision cycles, Parker believes the distinction between mentorship and sponsorship will become more important, particularly in industries where accountability and public trust are central to performance.

“At senior levels, advancement is not based on potential,” she said. “It is based on who is trusted to deliver when it matters.”

### **About Tangela Q. Parker**

Tangela Q. Parker is an Atlanta-based healthcare executive specializing in marketing, external affairs, and growth strategy. With more than 25 years of leadership across Fortune 500 organizations, including CVS Health, Centene Corporation, UnitedHealthcare, and Humana, she has led enterprise strategies that drive market growth, strengthen stakeholder alignment, and protect institutional credibility.

She advises executive leadership on reputation, positioning, and stakeholder engagement in complex, highly regulated environments. Parker serves on the board of the YMCA, CMO Council, and CHOICES (Center Helping Obesity in Children End). She is also an active member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, the Junior League of Atlanta, the National Association of Female Executives, and the American College of Healthcare Executives.

She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Pre-Law from Alcorn State University and completed executive education at Harvard Business School.

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