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By JAMES W. WADE III

Douglas Bennett is back in Cleveland and serving as director of Community Outreach for Medical Mutual. In this position, he is responsible for leading the development and implementation of the company's community relations efforts.

Bennett works with the senior management team in strategic planning of activities and programs to strengthen Medical Mutual's corporate image. He also extends Community Relations efforts by developing closer, grassroots relationships with local elected officials.

A Cleveland native, Bennett returned from Washington, D.C. in 2011 where he served as executive director of Leadership 18, an organization consisting of 23 chief executive officers of the largest health and human service organizations in the United States.

Medical Mutual of Ohio is a health insurance company that serves its customers through high-quality, affordable group and personal health insurance plans, and third-party administrative services to self-insured group customers.

At Medical Mutual, customer service is important and they take pride of all their hard work in the community. Bennett's focus is just not on Cleveland but he is responsible for other markets too including such places like Atlanta.

"We put people ahead of profit because, just like our customers, we're a local employer with local employees who live and work in the same communities we serve. We think that's the best investment we can make," said Bennett.

Bennett replaced Debra Green, who worked hard in the community and was known for her tireless efforts with Breast Cancer. Recently, in her honor, they named a Breast Cancer event after her.

It's now called The Debra Green Annual Pink Ribbon Celebration.

Green had been with Medical Mutual since 1984 and realized the biggest change came with more involvement in the community. This was one of the late Kent Clapp's biggest missions.

Bennett also realizes the long standing commitment to provide community support.

"We serve our community through volunteerism, philanthropy and community partnerships," said Bennett.

Bennett, who didn't think he would be back home as soon, stated his heart has always been with Cleveland. "It seems to me that this particular reason might be a good time to examine where I was in my life and come back to Cleveland to do a great service for Medical Mutual and my community."

One might consider the concept of virtue as an idea in opposition to the doctrine of the primacy of the individual. Bennett, who displayed a genuine love for his family, said that was another reason to move back.

The loss of one great woman, Green, who kept the pulse of Medical Mutual in the community, has been passed over to a good man. Bennett is both a symptom and a result of a culture where the foundation of the culture is increasingly becoming the cult of the individual.

Each year, Medical Mutual gives to more than 500 civic, educational, and cultural organizations and a variety of health and human services programs. Their policyholders, members, brokers, benefit consultants and group benefit managers are their customers.

They recognize that each employee who has direct contact with customers is the key and will receive prompt and adequate support from the entire organization to meet the customers' needs.

"I will continue to do work in the community and maintain and build upon our tradition supporting

our community," said Bennett.

Before leaving for Washington, Bennett served as the director of External Affairs for AT&T in Cleveland where he was the primary community and legislative contact for 10 years. Prior to his years with AT&T, he served in a number of positions with National City Bank.

Over the years, he has established many important contacts with his involvement on many community boards and committees, which include the City Club of Cleveland, The United Black Fund, the Cleveland Leadership Center and serving as president of the Beachwood Chamber of Commerce.

Bennett is a graduate of Hampton University in Virginia, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business and Marketing. He also holds a certification in Community Relations from Boston College.