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Bellevue-based Symetra appoints its first female CEO



Symetra CFO Margaret Meister will take the helm next year.

COURTESY OF SYMETRA

Margaret Meister has worked her way up at the company since starting as an actuarial student 29 years ago.

BY MIKE ROSENBERG
Seattle Times business reporter

Bellevue-based Symetra Financial on Thursday announced it has promoted Chief Financial Officer Margaret Meister to become its new president and CEO.

In February, she will replace current president and CEO Tom Marra, who has led the company since 2010. Marra, the company's board chairman, will stay on as executive chairman.

Meister has been with Symetra for three decades. In 1988, she joined the company as an actuarial student, and worked her way up to CFO in 2006. She's led the firm's financial strategy, IT department and communications efforts.

She will become the first female CEO in the company's 60-year history. Only 4 percent of local publicly traded companies in the Northwest have female CEOs. And among all companies in the

Puget Sound region, just 18 percent of CEOs hired last year were women, according to the Puget Sound Business Journal.

Symetra is a financial services company that provides employee benefits, annuities and life insurance. It has \$40 billion in assets, 2 million customers and 1,500 employees nationwide. It's owned by Sumitomo Life Insurance.

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