

# HealthFirst

## Health Plans

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### A Florida Healthcare Leader With a Unique Approach to Customer Service

Most company president's and CEOs spend a majority of their time behind a desk in the office leading meetings or managing their teams.

Matt Gerrell, president of Brevard County-based [Health First Health Plans](https://www.healthfirst.org/health-plans) spends a lot of his time meeting plan members and handing out his personal phone number.



He may be at a local zoo this morning, welcoming and chatting with Medicare Advantage members, as they arrive for a special members-only day at the zoo event with hundreds of fellow members looking for fun, friendship and to talk a little (*not always*) health plan business.

He could be speaking at a recent senior safety describing a personal story about his mom becoming a scam victim ... while relaying cyber safety tips and safeguards to

a room packed with hundreds of members ... retreating from the stage to the back of the ballroom to later address questions during a break.

He may be at a holiday toy donation drive benefitting kids in need.

In a nutshell, in a time when health insurance companies aren't exactly moving the news media net sentiment needle into happy green territory (okay ... it's pretty lousy these days) and leaders avoid the public and media spotlight as much as possible, Gerrell has taken a much different tact – and he expects the same transparency of his leadership team.



Matt Gerrell, Health First Health Plans President

“Here’s my card and personal cell number. Call me any time with questions.”

“You know where to find me. Let’s talk later tonight.”

Nearing its 30<sup>th</sup> year in business, Gerrell has grown Health First Health Plans from a small, regional health plan into one that will soon reach 100,000 members with an expanded presence into 14 Florida counties.

How does he do it? Playing small ball.

“Personal connection. We started as a small customer-centric organization 30 years ago and, quite honestly, we’ve never lost sight of what got us here,” said Gerrell.

“I simply mirror the leadership style and culture of our parent organization Health First in terms of my commitment to our community. I don’t spend a lot of time in my office.

We employ associates and customer service specialists who are local – not from another state or country. Who knows the state, our territory, our landscape, our customer. I’m certain you will never experience another customer service engagement where the person on the other line was so committed to you and probably knows what you’re going to ask next before you can ask it. It’s probably our ‘secret sauce’ if we had a secret sauce. Health insurance and personal health care can be scary, complicated and at times frustrating. We get it. We don’t have shareholders, massive stock bonuses or billion-dollar portfolios to grow and protect. We report to our customers – our members. And if sharing my cell number or making sure our associates go the extra mile for our member helps give them relief ... that’s our – that’s *MY* ‘why.’

Being able to contact the leader of a health insurance company directly is pretty much unheard of these days. This unique approach or ‘secret sauce’ may be why HFHP continues to grow throughout Central Florida with plans available now in 15 counties and expanding to other counties over the next few years.

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