

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **First Choice Health Closes Out 2018 on a High Note, Builds Momentum Entering 2019**

*The company's growth includes expansion in areas like Alaska, North Dakota and South Dakota, and a 12 percent increase in its employee assistance program*

**Seattle – January 24, 2019** – [First Choice Health](#), a forward-thinking provider-owned and provider-driven healthcare system, is entering into the new year on the heels of a momentous 2018, which included a notable growth in members and employee assistance program (EAP) usage, and a strategic expansion of its presence in Alaska, North Dakota and South Dakota. This growth and strategic path forward is being led by healthcare industry leader and First Choice Health (FCH) CEO, Jaja Okigwe, who joined the company in April 2018.

Built by hospitals and physicians from the ground up, the provider-owned FCH continues to focus on flexible healthcare administration and cost containment, giving employers of all sizes the opportunity to build a care management plan that suits each of their unique healthcare needs.

### **A Focus on Smarter Data and Healthier Employers**

FCH has ramped up its focus on smart, practical data and advanced population health metrics to supply employers with the tools and metrics they need to inform decision-making (as discussed in recent [BenefitsPRO](#) and [Seattle Business](#) guest bylines by Okigwe), while its growing provider network delivers the medical resources needed to take action.

One new initiative tackled by FCH in 2018 included the implementation of its Opioid Prescribing Metrics program using the guidelines developed by the Bree Collaborative to help employers determine, prevent and tackle potential opioid problems among their staff in a discreet way. Okigwe and FCH have made practical data application like this, which can be leveraged on a variety of other chronic health issues or ailments affecting today's workforce, a top priority as it continues to expand in 2019.

"2018 marked the beginning of a new era for First Choice Health, and our continued growth and expansion paired with our increased focus on innovative healthcare programs that utilize smart data speaks volumes about where we stand as an organization, along with the unambiguous success of these programs in the eyes of the individuals and organizations benefiting from them," said Okigwe. "With more exciting programs, partnerships and hires on deck, we are on track for an even bigger 2019, and look forward to working towards an improved health outlook for all of our members in the new year."

Notable areas of 2018 growth include:

- 12 percent growth for FCH’s employee assistance program, with nearly 12,000 new members in Washington alone
- 5,000 new members of FCH’s Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) network in Alaska
- 1,550 new members of FCH’s third-party health plan administration (HPA) in the Seattle/Bellevue area, and 850 in Central Oregon
- More than 20,000 new members in the fourth quarter of 2018 alone
- Recognition of the multistate PPO as the largest independent network in an eight-state region contracting with more than 100,000 providers, 2,400 facilities, and 362 hospitals throughout Washington, Oregon, Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota and South Dakota, covering more than 600,000 people
- The strategic senior hires of Ron Cornell as director of product innovation and James Cassel as director of Oregon sales

“Along with the tangible growth numbers that we’ve been able to identify, we’ve all noticed an expanded sense of awareness of the work that our organization is doing, from the providers to the members – particularly involving our use of practical data and promotion of healthy behavior – and that focus will only increase in 2019,” Okigwe said.

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### **About First Choice Health**

**First Choice Health** is a forward-thinking alternative to traditional healthcare, offering unparalleled access to providers, expert benefits administration, and an Employee Assistance Program, supporting members in every step of their healthcare journeys. Built by hospitals and physicians from the ground up, the provider-owned FCH focuses on flexible healthcare administration and cost containment, giving employers of all sizes the opportunity to build a care management plan to suit their unique healthcare needs. FCH’s advanced population health metrics provide employers with practical data that inform decision-making, while its growing provider network delivers the medical resources needed to take action. Originating as a provider network in 1985, First Choice Health has grown to serve all of Washington and the Northwestern U.S., including Oregon, Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota and South Dakota. As part of that growth, FCH (headquartered in Seattle, Wash.) began offering health plan administration, medical management and employee assistance program services. For more information, visit First Choice online at [www.fchn.com](http://www.fchn.com).

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