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<https://www.bizjournals.com/seattle/news/2020/12/29/first-choice-health-changes-business-model.html>

First Choice Health will pivot toward 'hospital-centric' model in 2021

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Seattle-based First Choice Health will shift its focus to direct-to-employer health care offerings in 2021, the company announced Tuesday.

First Choice Health plans to expand its “hospital-centric” model of health care by partnering directly with different health systems and offering plans through them. This model provides a “simplified means” for the patient to figure out their health care, said [Jaja Okigwe](#), president and CEO of First Choice Health.

“It’s a key difference. With your standard program, you’ve got all kinds of providers you can go to, and it’s really up to you, the patient, to try to figure out how to navigate all of that,” Okigwe said. “So, in partnering with the health system, what we’re trying to do is make things a lot simpler and easier for the patient to figure out how to get care.”

Okigwe said First Choice Health has been moving in this direction for the past 12 to 18 months and plans to expand the program in 2021.

“I think what’s different about this and other things people have tried is that it’s not meant to be restrictive in the way that people



ANTHONY BOLANTE | PSBJ

First Choice Health President and CEO Jaja Okigwe says the company plans to expand its “hospital-centric” model of health care in 2021.

think about HMOs,” Okigwe said.

Through this program, First Choice Health has partnered with six health systems. In the Seattle area, the company has partnerships with Embright, a provider network including UW Medicine, MultiCare and LifePoint Health, and the Eastside Health Network, which includes Overlake Medical Center and EvergreenHealth.

During the pandemic, First Choice Health expanded options for virtual care by integrating on-demand primary care service 98point6. First Choice Health also partnered with Rightway Healthcare, a health and benefits navigation platform.

“We believe the future of health care is in minimizing the friction between a patient and provider,” Okigwe said in a news release. “Helping employers rediscover the excellent care available to them locally is a great way for (First Choice Health) to have an impact on the health of our communities.”