

## PARTNERSHIP THAT BUILDS VALUE



Terence L. Byrd is the Vice President, Executive Director, of Healthfirst NJ. He joined Healthfirst NJ in August of 2009 and has over 30 years of experience in the healthcare industry. Terence has extensive experience in the New Jersey healthcare market with organizations that serve low-income populations.

**TPC:** How would you introduce Healthfirst NJ to *The Positive Community* readers?

**TB:** I am proud to introduce Healthfirst NJ to *The Positive Community* and share my enthusiasm about opportunities for us to change healthcare in New Jersey. At Healthfirst NJ, our mission to improve the health and wellbeing of low-income communities drives us to partner with hospitals, doctors, and local organizations that share a common goal of improving the lives of these communities.

**TPC:** How did Healthfirst NJ get its start?

**TB:** In 2007, Healthfirst NJ opened its doors as a not-for-profit, hospital-sponsored managed care organization offering Medicare Plans in Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Passaic, and Union counties. Additionally, in August of 2009, we received the license to offer NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid as an addition to our line of products and services. Since then, Healthfirst NJ has grown considerably and has established itself as a community-based organization dedicated toward improving the quality of care in our service areas.

**TPC:** Does Healthfirst NJ have plans for statewide growth?

**TB:** Yes, an expansion that will offer our products and services throughout the state is targeted for completion in 2011.

**TPC:** What do you believe sets Healthfirst NJ apart from other health insurance companies?

**TB:** One of the things that sets Healthfirst NJ apart from other organizations is our effective collaboration with our hospitals, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), provider network, and community organizations. Our outreach efforts and partnerships are extensive.

## Common Foot Problems

By Dr. Sharon Barlizo, Director, Wound Care Clinic  
Foot Center of New York

A number of foot conditions are called “common” because they can affect anyone at any age. However, people with certain conditions—such as diabetes and hypertension—are at higher risk of being more severely affected by some of these conditions, or exposed to complications. It is important to be aware of their symptoms, so that you can take the necessary steps to remedy them as soon as they appear.

**Fungus:** Inside your shoes where it is warm, dark, and moist, fungi can easily grow on your feet. Dry skin, redness, blisters, itching, and peeling can result. Over-the-counter anti-fungal powders or creams can help. If the condition does not improve within 2-4 weeks, see your foot doctor.

**Corns and calluses:** Caused by pressure when the bony parts of your feet rub against your shoes. Over-the-counter medications are not indicated for people with diabetes or circulation problems. See your doctor.

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These commitments have helped us tremendously to cultivate and offer healthcare programs and services in the communities that need it most.

**TPC:** Can you share some examples of partnerships you’ve established?

**TB:** Healthfirst NJ values the partnerships it’s established in the community. For us, it’s all about developing outreach programs that help to improve the health and well-being of our members and reinforce our commitment to the communities we serve.

To support our mission, Healthfirst NJ formed a partnership with Reach Out and Read, a not-for-profit organization with a focus on promoting early childhood literacy. This program provides reading books at enrolled medical facilities to children under the age of five years old that live in low-income areas.

Healthfirst NJ continues to sponsor the Newark Bears. Our sponsorship supports the Newark Bears’ endeavors in the community such as their Youth Clinics that encourage children ages 8-16 to exercise, develop leadership and team building skills. In addition, our relationship with the Newark Bears has allowed Healthfirst NJ to sponsor our first Little League team in East Orange, NJ.

These partnerships help us to exercise our mission and positively impact our communities. ■