Health First
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The answer to skin cancer is simple: get checked annually. By getting an annual skin exam, you are able to catch skin cancer at an earlier stage when it is easier to treat. Regular skin exams are especially important for people who are at higher risk of skin cancer, such as people with reduced immunity, people who have had skin cancer before and people with a strong family history of skin cancer.

Did you know?

An estimated 161,790 new cases of melanoma will be diagnosed in the U.S. this year. Don’t be a part of the statistic, call Health First Dermatology today to schedule your annual exam.

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Since the Affordable Care Act was passed in 2010, healthcare reform continues to make national headlines and was a defining issue in the last presidential election. From employers to employees, self-employed to the unemployed, health care reaches across party lines and impacts every demographic.

During this time of transformation, there have been many changes in the industry, including the number of participating insurance companies, penalties for being uninsured and expansion of narrow physician networks.

While health care is being fiercely debated in Washington, D.C., it is important to know how to navigate the current environment and secure the right coverage. Whether signing up for a new health plan or renewing an existing policy, it’s crucial to stay informed and connected to the right resources in the community.

ONE EFFECTIVE DATE

A significant change for 2018 is the rollout of a shortened Open Enrollment Period of just 45 days – November 1 through December 15, 2017.

Every year, the OEP allows people to enroll in individual health insurance (generally for those under the age of 65 without employer-based coverage). Before, enrollment lasted between 90 to 120 days with multiple effective dates available. This is no longer an option – there is only one effective date, which is January 1, 2018.

Outside of the 45-day OEP, customers can only enroll in individual health insurance if they qualify for a “special enrollment period.” Examples of life or circumstantial changes which would qualify include marriage, divorce, relocation or losing employer-based coverage. There are many pieces to the health plan puzzle, including (but not limited to) out-of-pocket-expenses, access to network physicians/hospitals, service of healthcare needs and affordability. In addition to core medical benefits, there are also other health plan options to consider, such as fitness center access, pediatric dental coverage and care coordination.

FINDING THE BEST PLAN

While some choose to research the many options in the marketplace; numerous community and online resources are available to help consumers find the most appropriate plans. These include independent insurance agents, government-appointed navigators and health plan representatives.

As the nation again awaits the potential for significant shifts in the healthcare industry, it can be easy to miss the current requirements to enroll in coverage for 2018. Selecting the right options hinges on having the right information and the right partners – a recipe for successfully making decisions in the healthcare industry waiting room.

To learn more, visit myhfhp.org or call toll-free at 855.443.4735.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jason Alford is director of individual sales and product innovation with Health First Health Plans in Rockledge. Health First Health Plans insures over 20,000 individual insurance members in Brevard, Indian River, Volusia and Flagler counties.
Three Dog Night Drummer Finds His Rhythm Again

Dr. Kenneth Tieu Performs LINX Procedure to Fix Chronic Acid Reflux

Pat Bautz may not be comfortable being called a rock star, but with nearly 25 years touring with the iconic band Three Dog Night, the title seems fitting.

“I guess you could say I grew old touring with the band,” joked Bautz. “We do about 75 shows a year, and it’s a lot of traveling, and that part can be tough on your body.”

An Eau Gallie native who now makes his home in Viera, Bautz found himself in the Emergency Room at Health First’s Viera Hospital. Health First Medical Group surgeon Dr. Kenneth Tieu, whom Bautz was under the care of, determined emergency gallbladder surgery was in order.

“I got to talking to him about my brutal issues with acid reflux. I told him how I was sleeping at a 45-degree angle and still waking up choking and hacking. He said he could fix that easy,” Bautz said. Tieu specializes in the LINX® Reflux Management System. The procedure is a surgical treatment option for Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD), a condition more commonly known as acid reflux. GERD is caused by a weak lower esophageal sphincter (LES), which allows acid and bile to reflux – or flow back – from the stomach into the esophagus.

LINX® is used for treating acid reflux when medication no longer provides adequate symptom control or for patients seeking an alternative to long-term acid suppression medications. LINX® is a bracelet-shaped system of flexible magnetic titanium beads that, when placed around the esophagus, supports a weak or malfunctioning LES, the muscle that opens and closes to allow food to enter and stay in the stomach. Implanting LINX® restores the body’s barrier to reflux. The magnetic attraction of the titanium beads allows the LES to open and close to let food in or out, should it need to.

As a drummer who also sings with the band, Bautz’s symptoms were also taking a toll on his craft.

“It affected my voice,” Bautz said. “The symptoms were gone, “ Bautz said. “The symptoms were don’t know how bad it was until it’s gone,“ Bautz said. “The symptoms were completely gone after the surgery.”

LESS-INVASIVE SURGERY

LINX® placement is a less-invasive surgery, performed laparoscopically under general anesthesia. Unlike other procedures that treat reflux, LINX® requires no changes to the stomach. Patients usually go home the same or next day and are able to eat a normal diet after surgery.

LINX® starts working as soon as the device is implanted and is designed to last throughout the patient’s lifetime. Additionally, LINX® won’t affect trips through TSA checkpoints, and the device will still allow patients to safely undergo a wide range of diagnostic imaging tests, including X-rays, ultrasound, PET scans, CT scans or MRIs.

“With the band’s touring schedule, I am at the airport often and I breathe right through security,” said Bautz. “It hasn’t slowed me down one bit. And with all the terrible choices for food on the run, I used to get a bad bout of heartburn and acid reflux. That’s all in the past. I have zero symptoms now and feel better than ever.”

Dr. Tieu says, “Many people don’t realize there’s a pretty simple fix for their problems and that medicines only mask the symptoms and can be detrimental in the long run.”

Research has shown that chronic untreated reflux can significantly increase the risk of esophageal cancer. Additionally, there has been a 600 percent increase in esophageal cancer in the past 25 years. Dr. Tieu believes this procedure is revolutionary. In fact, he and Drs. Nathan Allison and Peter Walker, also of Health First Medical Group, are the only surgeons in Brevard County offering this less-invasive option. They are also preceptors for the procedure, teaching other surgeons from across the country how to perform the surgery. Since LINX® was introduced in Brevard County about two years ago, Drs. Tieu and Allison have performed more than 75 cases. With over 90 percent patient satisfaction rate, Dr. Tieu believes there are more fans to come.

“Dr. Tieu was so great. He has to ask me a million times how I’m doing. He’s super smart and just an all-around great and caring doctor,” said Bautz.

As to whether the surgery helped restore his voice back to a pre-GERD time, Bautz chuckled.

“Well, you might have to ask the people at our concerts,” he said with a laugh.

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Tieu, please call 321.434.9230
Health First’s Holmes Regional Medical Center Debuts Hybrid Operating Room

Made Possible By the Generosity of Brevard Residents Through the Health First Foundation

Health First is welcoming a new era of advanced health technology made possible by the generosity of Brevard residents through the Health First Foundation. July saw the opening of Brevard’s first Hybrid Operating Room (OR) at Health First’s Holmes Regional Medical Center. A Hybrid OR will dramatically enhance surgical treatment and this result is all thanks to years of hard work and more than $2 million in donations and community support.

Unlike a typical operating room, a hybrid OR combines a traditional operating room with advanced imaging technology for instant accessibility to the surgical team. “The Hybrid OR provides the capabilities for physicians of different specialties to work side-by-side at the same time,” said Dr. Tamim Antaki, a cardiothoracic surgeon at Health First. “Brevard County residents will have advanced technology and state-of-the-art care close to home.”

Aaron Robinson, CEO, community hospitals, and service line executive for heart and vascular at Health First, assisted in bringing this technology for the residents of Brevard. “Before Health First opened the Hybrid OR we would have to travel hours for this type of technology. For those seeking help, it would cause additional stress and financial strain on the families with hotel stays and other expenses. With the Hybrid OR here, families can rest easier knowing their loved ones are receiving high-quality, safe care down the street from where they live,” Robinson said.

But this is much more than just giving a doctor a leading-edge room to perform surgeries, it is a team effort to develop and assemble experts to apply multiple technologies for the betterment of their patients. The imaging allows surgeons and cardiologists to perform procedures with advanced precision using 3D technology. Computed Tomography (CT)-level imaging enables physicians to evaluate procedure results before leaving the Hybrid OR and potentially eliminates the need for additional diagnostic testing after surgery. Combining advanced imaging with a sterile surgical setting means surgeons, cardiologists and interventional radiologists can collaborate in real-time to provide comprehensive surgical and imaging care in one place. The goal is more minimally-invasive surgeries and for patients, it could mean less pain, shorter recovery time and smaller wounds.

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Creating an environment of cooperation is essential to improving the health of a community. Physicians, surgeons, technicians and administration all with the singular focus of improving Brevard County is what makes this technology possible. “This Hybrid OR will allow us to elevate cardiovascular care in Brevard County to a higher level, and will assist cardiovascular surgeons and other providers streamline their advanced, state-of-the-art treatments by allowing multiple disciplines to work simultaneously,” Antaki said.

Antaki says to prepare for using the hybrid OR, teams train and perform simulation surgeries together. Cath lab technologists will scrub in next to surgical technologists, while cardiologists are scrubbing in next to cardiothoracic surgeons. It’s all a truly collaborative approach. “Our vascular surgeons, cardiologists, cardiac surgeons, operating room associates, cath lab associates, radiology technologists and more – all worked together on the development of the hybrid OR,” Antaki added. “This was a highly collaborative effort.”

Ultimately, this will improve care outcomes and benefit the community of patients, and will make Brevard County a destination for receiving national leading treatment. “The Hybrid OR offers flexibility around converting cases when necessary and will benefit the community by providing the most cutting-edge technology and advanced procedures in the region,” continued Robinson. The Hybrid OR is versatile and has the capacity to also be used in thoracic and neurosurgery procedures. The imaging capabilities provide information to perform any complex surgery that will benefit from 3D imaging.

“The future of surgery is all minimally invasive,” concluded Antaki. “The combination of imaging and surgical setting found in Health First’s Hybrid OR will provide physicians the capability to provide complex surgeries in a minimally invasive fashion.”

THANKS TO THE HEALTH FIRST FOUNDATION, Brevard’s first Hybrid Operating Room at Health First’s Holmes Regional Medical Center opened in July. A Hybrid OR dramatically enhances surgical treatment and is a result due to years of hard work and more than $2 million in donations and community support.
Bell’s Chimes Signal Chemo’s End

CHEMO PATIENTS such as Julie Osborne, right, with Dr. Asish Dalal, look forward to their chance to ring the bell behind the nurses’ station at Health First’s Cancer Institute in Titusville. It’s become a symbol of hope for cancer patients. Osborne had her moment to shine in August, when she celebrated finishing her final aggressive chemotherapy session for breast cancer.

Health First Cancer Institute Patient Julie Osborne Among Patients Proud to Mark and Celebrate Critical Stage

If you're a patient on the second floor of Health First’s Cancer Institute in Titusville, you know about the bell.

Anchored to the wall behind the nurses’ station, the metal fixture may be small in stature, but it’s big in meaning – a symbol of hope and healing. This time around, Julie Osborne of Titusville got to pull the rope, the clang of metal piercing the air.

“I made it through chemo!” exclaimed Julie, 69, pumping her fist. “Good luck, everybody – you will, too.”

Ringing the bell has become a rite of passage for oncology patients who have completed chemotherapy. An emotional Julie did so minutes after finishing her final aggressive treatment for Stage 2 breast cancer.

The Health First Medical Group care team who has helped Julie in her journey were among the onlookers to cheer her on, as well as her husband, Bob, and friend Jeanette Cullen. “You graduated,” whispered Jeanette, who would sit with Julie during afternoon treatments.

Julie wasn’t alone in the juxtaposition of emotions that day. Battling cancer isn’t a solo fight. In addition to her loved ones, her care providers at Health First have provided critical emotional support.

“They’re really great, great compassionate people,” said Julie, who is under the care of Health First Medical Group Hematology/Medical Oncologist Dr. Asish Dalal. “Whether it be breast cancer or a brain tumor, I think you’ve really got to have a special skill set in order to handle that.”

HIGH RATE OF CANCER DEATHS

According to the nonprofit breastcancer.org, one in eight U.S. women will develop breast cancer in her lifetime. It’s the second highest rate of cancer deaths in women, behind lung cancer.

While a lumpectomy and other treatments await Julie to help prevent a recurrence of the disease, the most grueling of chemo appears to be behind her.

It was during a shopping trip in March with Jeanette when Julie discovered the lump while trying on a blouse. She visited her doctor the very next day and soon had a diagnosis – Stage 2 breast cancer.

After the initial shock, Julie’s mind went straight to her daughter.

“My first thought was, ‘She is not going to have another parent die of cancer,’ ” she insisted, explaining Mandi, 41, was a child when she lost both her father and stepfather to cancer.

“She is my motivation,” Julie said. “I told her, ‘Eventually, I’m going to die of old age or something like that. But it’s not going to be of cancer.’ ”

With Julie’s cancer identified as HER2-positive (which is described by breastcancer.org as one that typically grows faster and is more likely to spread and recur), an aggressive, four-drug chemo cocktail was chosen to shrink the tumor prior to September’s scheduled lumpectomy.

Chemotherapy was administered every three weeks, a daylong, exhaustive process.

“It’s pretty debilitating for about
a week,” Julie said of her body’s response. “If I had to explain it to somebody, it’s like the worst flu you ever had.”

Husband Bob, 73, a retired director of engineering from the space shuttle era, has remained a constant source of support.

“There’s been so much research and stuff on breast cancer, I felt pretty confident it was something we could conquer,” said Bob, who dons a pink golf shirt weekly on the course. “We felt like this was something we could deal with and handle.”

Julie said she had no qualms over losing her hair, opting for a buzz cut as chunks began falling out.

“I was really cool with it,” she said. “I thought, ‘I look like GI Jane.’”

While the couple have remained upbeat, treatment has shifted their sense of normalcy. They don’t go riding very much these days on their Harley Davidson trike, with Julie feeling awful much of the time.

CLOSING A CHAPTER

Back in August, as the last bag of chemo coursed into her veins, Julie was eager to boast about her care team. As Health First Medical Group certified medical assistant Shanon Sprague stopped by to visit, Julie explained Shanon administers her bloodwork, adding, “She’s great moral support.”

Julie quizzed Shanon about how to make her “graduation day” exit.

“I’m not really sure if I’m supposed to say something,” Julie debated before joking, “I’m not going to go, ‘Good riddance,’ or something.”

Pausing to laugh, Shanon told her: “We wouldn’t blame you if you did.”

Shanon admits she gets attached to some patients, such as Julie.

“Just being able to help them when they’re in a really rough spot is what makes me feel good as a person,” Shanon explained.

A visit by Courtney Bisbing, a Health First Medical Group Patient Services Representative who works checkout, also fueled an outpouring of emotion. Julie recalled once bringing another friend for support, whom she introduced as her best friend. Courtney quickly countered, “I thought I was your best friend.” It still brings laughs.

Courtney said if she can make a patient smile, it makes her day. She often finds herself bonding with patients – which is why she made sure she’d be called up for Julie’s bell-ringing ceremony.

“I always look forward to seeing her name, because I always look forward to seeing her,” an emotional Courtney said. “She’s always positive, even with everything going on. She’s always got a smile on her face, something nice to say, so it’s just been great… She’s one of those patients you’re really drawn to.”

Before the emotional goodbye – and Bob telling his wife if she’s really sad over leaving, she can still come visit every few weeks – Julie expressed relief.

“I’m grateful to have gotten through it,” Julie said. “My feeling is anybody who can get through that kind of chemo can handle anything, absolutely anything.”

LEARN MORE

For more information on Health First’s Cancer Institute, which has locations in Titusville, Melbourne, Merritt Island and Viera, visit hfcan.org or call 855.894.HOPE (4673).
Health First’s Palm Bay Hospital Adds New Physician – and High-Tech Surgical Method

Dr. Peter Walker Newest Member of the Health First Team at Palm Bay and Viera Hospitals

Health First’s Palm Bay Hospital is welcoming a bariatric and general surgeon to the team – which also means bringing a technologically advanced, less-invasive surgery method to the operating table.

With the addition of bariatric and general surgeon Peter A. Walker, MD, comes da Vinci robotic-assisted surgeries for these patients. The newest member of the Health First Medical Group’s team at Palm Bay and Viera Hospitals, Dr. Walker offers general surgery and more. His specialties include weight loss/bariatric, reflux, hernia, gallbladder, colon, endocrine, endoscopy surgeries.

Robotics-assisted surgery allows expertly trained surgeons to use a less-invasive system to perform complex operations that were, until recently, impossible without major invasive procedures. Like other minimally invasive procedures, robotics-assisted surgery is performed through a few tiny incisions. This system offers surgeons higher magnification, better flexibility and more precision than conventional laparoscopic surgery. These surgeries also produce significant improvements for patients, including reducing the amount of time spent in the hospital and in recovery.

HIGHLY QUALIFIED

Before joining Health First, Dr. Walker was the Chief of Surgery at Memorial Hermann Katy Hospital in Katy, Texas, where he also was Director of both Robotics and Bariatics. He has also served as Assistant Professor of Surgery and Associate Program Director of Minimally Invasive Surgery Fellowships at the University of Texas Medical School at Houston. He earned his Doctor of Medicine from St. Louis University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri, and his Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering at the University of Missouri in Columbia, Missouri.

Dr. Walker completed a General Surgery residency, a research fellowship sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, and a Minimally Invasive/Robotic Surgery fellowship at the University of Texas Medical School at Houston. He has been widely published and has presented multiple research and educational topics at both local and national meetings.

Dr. Walker’s offices are located at Palm Bay Hospital, 1421 Malabar Road N.E., Suite 220, and at 8725 N. Wickham Road, Suite 200, Viera.

For more information, please visit myHFMG.org. To make an appointment with Dr. Walker, call 321.434.8228 for the Palm Bay office or 321.434.9230 for the Viera office.
Breast Center
Girls’ night out *mammo parties*

Get your digital screening mammogram, enjoy the company of your friends and an opportunity to win a plush robe. Event dates and locations are listed below.

2017
Health First Girls’ Night Out
Mammo Parties are held 4:30 pm to 7 pm. Refreshments and wine will be served.
Call today 321.434.6100.
Appointment times are limited and will go fast. For more information, please visit HFbreasthealth.org

The Breast Center
1223 Gateway Drive, Melbourne
November 14 • December 5

Health First Imaging
603 N. Washington Avenue, Titusville
December 14
Physician Finds General Surgery a Perfect Fit

Robarts Enjoys Helping Patients in Various Ways – and Continuing to Learn

Dr. Tim Robarts knew early on he wanted to become a doctor. It was narrowing down his specialty that took some trial and error. A student with a lifelong love of learning, Dr. Robarts was driven by the challenge of school and became laser-focused on becoming a neurosurgeon. But medical school made him rethink that plan.

“I found that neurosurgeons did most of their work on backs, and I had zero interest in backs,” Robarts admits, who began focusing on cardiothoracic surgery until he did his rotation in the specialty. “I did some heart stuff and I realized they only did four operations, and I didn’t want to do that either. So I really liked being a general surgeon... I did a laparotomy, it was great.”

A mentor at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine allowed Dr. Robarts to open an abdomen, which was a bit atypical. Normally, he said, medical students were stuck behind an intern, staring at the back of his or her neck. But he dove in – and continues to perform general surgery to this day. It’s the variety – and the talented physicians he learned from in the field – that led him to craft his career in general surgery.

“It doesn’t matter how much experience you have – there’s always something new or different or twist of what you do,” Dr. Robarts said.

Every patient, whether in general or specialized surgery, offers an opportunity to learn.

“It always requires analysis and thought,” he said. “It’s not just all rote. You can’t use cookbooks in surgery and medicine.”

Based at Health First’s Cape Canaveral Hospital Medical Plaza in Cocoa Beach, Dr. Robarts performs surgeries on the skin, the gastrointestinal (GI) tract, biliary tract and the lymphatic system. He also performs upper and lower endoscopies.

Robarts, who has two grown children and a granddaughter, grew up in Indianapolis before moving to Memphis as a sophomore in high school. He did his residency at Marshall University in Huntington, W. Va.

As for having a procedure he enjoys performing the most, Dr. Robarts is fond of colon resections, most commonly performed on colon cancer patients.

“They essentially become your patients for life,” Dr. Robarts said. “So you just develop relationships with those people.”

FIRSTHAND KNOWLEDGE OF CANCER’S EFFECTS

Robarts knows what it’s like to see cancer cut someone’s lifespan prematurely. His wife, Dana, was 39 when she died of breast cancer in 2011.

“She was an exceptional person, and she didn’t complain about anything,” Dr. Robarts said. “Most people are not like that. She just wasn’t the usual patient.”

He remembers how Dana, despite her terminal diagnosis, would get on the treadmill every day and run.

“She did better because she didn’t let it stop her,” Robarts said. “She knew she was going to die. (She would) work and enjoyed life until she couldn’t.”

The reality of losing his wife would stick with him as he cared for others with cancer.

“There was a period of time it was very hard, very difficult,” Dr. Robarts said. “I would have to be very careful not to lose control with my emotions. But time does help.”

His late wife was one of the reasons Dr. Robarts ended up on the Space Coast – she wanted to leave Huntington, and he soon learned of the opportunity at Health First. Plus, it was “smack dab in the middle of four racetracks,” he said.

And, no, he’s not a NASCAR fan, despite growing up near the birthplace of the Indy 500.

“I don’t race,” he explains. “I do high-performance, Driver’s Ed events – which is being on the racetrack with a bunch of other people driving fast – but with rules.”

His interest sparked in about 2000, when an orthopedic surgeon Dr. Robarts knew spied his Audi TT.

“That’s your car? You ought to take that to the racetrack,” he recalled of the conversation. “He actually hauled me to the Mid-Ohio Sports Car (Course). And that was all she wrote.”

PREVENTATIVE SCREENINGS CRITICAL TO GOOD HEALTH

Besides his passion for racing, Dr. Robarts is also passionate about helping patients be proactive about their health.

With more and more Americans packing on extra pounds (the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports 70.7 percent of Americans are overweight and/or obese), healthy living is the best advice Dr. Robarts said he can offer patients. Keeping weight under control is a must – as are preventive screenings.

“Get your colonoscopies – and I’m happy to do them,” Dr. Robarts said. “You don’t have to just go to the GI doctor. Colon cancer, for the most part, is a preventable disease. If you get colonoscopies like you’re supposed to, you can stay out of my hands.”

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Robarts, call 321.868.8374.
Providing Continuous Care to the Community for 80 Years

It's a banner year for Health First with three of its four hospitals celebrating major milestones. As the very first hospital to open its doors in Brevard County, Brevard Hospital began seeing patients on June 8, 1937. Now known as Health First's Holmes Regional Medical Center, the hospital has grown from its roots, providing continuous care to the community for 80 years. As the community sustained substantial growth, the hospital grew right along with it, going from a 27-bed hospital to its current capacity of 514 beds. Health First's Holmes Regional Medical Center also features the area's only Level II Trauma Center and a state-of-the-art Heart Center, performing more cardiac procedures than all other hospitals in Brevard.

Rich 55-Year History of Providing Quality Care, Picturesque Views

Also celebrating a special anniversary is Health First's Cape Canaveral Hospital, with a rich 55-year history of providing quality care. The 150-bed hospital is situated on the Banana River, with picturesque views from every patient room window. Health First's Cape Canaveral Hospital was the first and is still the only hospital serving the beach and barrier island communities of central Brevard County. The hospital offers a wide-spectrum of outpatient and inpatient services, including a six-story Medical Plaza building adjacent to the hospital with physician offices, pre-operative testing and education, Outpatient Surgery Center, laboratory services, patient registration and a Health Resource Center for the community with meeting rooms and a conference center.

Silver Anniversary of Serving Brevard's Largest City

The third milestone anniversary is Health First's Palm Bay Hospital, celebrating 25 years of service to Brevard County's largest city. This 138-bed hospital offers residents of Palm Bay convenient access to more than 38 specialties and quality care, including the recently opened and first of its kind Senior Behavioral Wellness unit that holds 18 beds and specializes in older adults requiring inpatient psychiatric stabilization.

Health First is proud of its rich history in Brevard and plans to continue its tradition of growing to meet its needs by providing the highest quality care to every person, every time.
Investing in a Healthier Brevard Past 5 Years: By the Numbers

- **8,800+ Health First Associates**
- **25% Job Growth**
- **22.7% Average Wage Increase**

**Capital Investment**: $366 million invested in technology and facility improvements.

**Charitable Investment**: $637 million given back to Brevard.

**Health First National Quality Outcomes Improved by**: 65% in the past 5 years.