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Service and Relationship Drives South Florida Health Plan Provider

 In today's ever changing healthcare environment, insurance companies are facing greater challenges than ever before. Not only are these affecting insurance companies, but their customers as well.

"Many things are happening in the industry and it's probably the most volatile it's been as far back as I can remember," says Ed Hannum, President and COO of AvMed Health Plans, which provides health insurance coverage for people within the state

of Florida. "There are a lot of economic headwinds impacting the general economy and it impacts our clients, agents, members, and providers as a result."

Probably of greatest interest to health plan companies, like AvMed, is the looming healthcare reform plan, currently being heavily debated in Congress.

"We attempted to get closer to our providers through Provider Advisory Councils and other mechanisms to make sure we are aligned with them on how to best be supportive and address reasonable healthcare reform," says Hannum. "We want to be able to deliver on what's needed and help the country with the uninsured and get the uninsured rolls down, while still providing a cost-effective way of providing for people and having affordable premiums."

Despite what will happen with healthcare reform, AvMed's goal will remain the same—to continue to be a provider of helpful information and to be a trusted source for its members.

"We also facilitate good service to our agents through our agent distribution channel and we facilitate service to the employer groups as well as employees or members," says Hannum. "Our providers are extremely important to us. It's what makes the engine go and without them, the healthcare plan wouldn't exist. We have a lot of reliance on the physician and hospitals."

AvMed has been serving the state of Florida for nearly four decades. It has 815 statewide employees, with half in the Miami and Ft. Lauderdale areas, and serves 265,000 members statewide.

What differentiates the non-profit organization from for-profit, much larger health plan organizations is that its value proposition is based around service and relationship.

"This is a competitive industry and we are daily engaged in competitive fights with the big guys," says Hannum. "But AvMed is special for its service and relationship. When you look at what AvMed does, we want to ensure that our members receive quality care at the appropriate time, in the appropriate

setting. We work with physicians to help them achieve good outcomes and best practices by providing them information and practice patterns, locally and nationally.”

AvMed also works closely with agents, based around service and relationship as well, to make sure their clients’ needs are met.

“We want to meet and exceed their expectations in the way we care for them,” Hannum says. “We have a highly competitive product and a lot of customization in our product for all segments of the market. We provide a lot of information to both members and to providers and employers in a partnering role.”

Community activity is very important to the organization. It tries to stay extremely active in the Florida communities it serves by participating in fundraising efforts for the United Way and Habitat for Humanity. On the business side, it is involved with the chambers in its various markets. It is also active with the American Heart Association throughout the state, investing sponsorship dollars and volunteer hours annually, as well as with the Boys & Girls Club and March of Dimes.

“We take this very seriously,” says Hannum. “We want to be very visible and contributing in the communities where we exist.”

As he looks ahead to the future, Hannum hopes to position AvMed as a key health plan in Florida post-healthcare reform.

“We think strategically that we will further evolve and be more consumer-centric,” he says. “An exciting and emerging trend in the country is to get people more knowledgeable and more informed about healthcare. That plays to our strong suit. Down the road, we will be a force with consumers and still have strong ties to our other stakeholders.”

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