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Local First Partners with Peak Health Alliance to Bring
New Health Insurance Carrier to Southwest Colorado

Durango, CO – Local First joined Peak Health Alliance in announcing the selection of Denver Health Medical Plan (DHMP) to offer individual health insurance plans, compliant with the Affordable Care Act and Colorado Option, in southwest Colorado beginning January 1, 2024. The new plans will be marketed using the name Elevate Health Plans.

"We are delighted that our partnership with Peak Health Alliance will bring affordable, high-quality health care plans from a reputable, reliable insurance carrier to serve individuals and families in our communities," said Doug McCarthy, healthcare advocate for Local First. "Many local businesses will also benefit from the choice these plans will offer to their employees through individual coverage health reimbursement arrangements, which are an attractive option for many small employer groups."

DHMP brings years of experience and has proven its commitment to operational excellence. With more than 130,000 members in Colorado, DHMP offers a diverse scope of services and plans that accommodate preventive, standard, emergent and urgent care needs, which also includes coverage for mental and behavioral health care.

"It's coverage that is based on 'whole person care,'" said Greg McCarthy, Denver Health Medical Plan CEO. "We do that collaboratively so our members become an active part of the health and wellness process."

"We are eager to begin working with a well-respected and highly trusted Colorado-based partner like Denver Health Medical Plan," said Anne Ladd, Peak Health Alliance CEO. "Denver Health Medical Plan is the only carrier that fully complied with the Colorado Option's premium savings targets in the markets they serve this year, and we believe that speaks volumes about their commitment and aligns with our values and vision to provide affordable healthcare plans."

Responding to the concerns of local businesses, Local First began working to develop a local solution to the high cost of health insurance in 2018. Local civic and business leaders were attracted to the success achieved by Peak Health Alliance in reducing insurance premiums for residents of Summit County, Colorado. The two organizations partnered to deliver similar results for residents of Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma, and San Juan counties, saving $5.5 million for individuals and businesses in the southwest during 2021 and 2022. More affordable options allowed small businesses to offer health care benefits to employees for the first time.

"Local First is grateful for the opportunity to continue our partnership with Peak Health Alliance to offer greater choice and strengthen our local healthcare market," said Lauren Berutich, Local First CEO. "The plans offered by Peak and Denver Health Medical Plan will support our core principles of promoting local self-reliance and a holistic approach to community well-being."

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"As advocates for access to affordable, high-quality health care in rural Colorado, we rely on relationships with local providers who want to see their neighbors get good care at sustainable prices," said Don Dankner, Peak Health Alliance board chair. "We are excited that Denver Health Medical Plan is joining us in the effort to meet the health insurance needs of the communities we serve. We want our Elevate Health Plans to result in a win for all and we are optimistic about the long-term prospects for this new partnership."

The new Elevate Health Plans will be available to individuals and families during the annual Open Enrollment Period starting in November. Employees of businesses that offer Individual Coverage Health Reimbursement Arrangements (ICHRAs) may also choose the plans in 2024. More information about the plans will be available later this year. Local First will work with local health insurance brokers and others to help educate the community on the new options.

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About Local First
Local First works with the local, independent business community in southwest Colorado to create an economy that values people, planet, and prosperity for everyone. Local First's Healthcare Initiative is made possible by the generous financial support of local governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations and is guided by a Steering Committee of local civic and business leaders and healthcare experts. Learn more at www.local-first.org.

About Peak Health Alliance
Peak Health Alliance is a member-led non-profit health insurance purchasing cooperative based in Summit County, Colorado. Serving 8 counties on Colorado's Western Slope, Peak's mission is to leverage the purchasing power of an entire community by negotiating on their behalf for more competitive rates. Peak partners with local providers, hospitals, and carriers to create comprehensive and affordable plans for residents and businesses. More information is available at www.peakhealthalliance.org.

About Elevate Health Plans by DHMP
Elevate Health Plans by Denver Health Medical Plan is a nonprofit health plan created in 1997 to provide quality, accessible and affordable health care services in the Denver area. In partnership with the DHMP provider network, Denver Health Medical Plan seeks to improve the health and wellbeing of its members by promoting wellness and disease prevention, providing access to culturally diverse, comprehensive health services and enabling members to play an active role in their health care. Denver Health Medical Plan provides health insurance for 23,577 members in the Denver area as well as administers benefits for a 113,268 member Medicaid Managed Care Organization (MCO). Denver Health Medical Plan is part of the larger Denver Health and Hospital Authority system, which integrates acute and emergency care with public and community health. Learn more at: www.DenverHealthMedicalPlan.org.