



## COMMUNITY PARTNER NEWSLETTER

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



Our nurses are currently serving 363 families in our family home visiting program regionally!



Annual Family Feedback results are in! Learn more about what enrolled families say about our program on pages 2 & 3.



2024 year end referral data has been compiled; see page 5 to learn more.

**Our team has a combined total numbers of over 318 years experience working in Public Health!**



**Our electronic referral form is the preferred method to refer. It features smart logic, whether you are self-referring or referring someone else to save you time.**



<https://firststepscentralmn.org/make-a-referral>

### FIRST STEPS

is a team of Registered Nurses who offer support and information to families during pregnancy through the early years of their child's life.



Visits with a nurse are voluntary and free. Available in Benton, Sherburne, Stearns & Wright Counties.

We support caregivers by connecting them to resources, providing education on topics such as pregnancy, childbirth, parenting, infant feeding, bonding, and their child's growth and development.

Our primary focus is prenatal through age 5.



### NEW PHNS

Sherburne County's hired Public Health Nurse, Kieran Lekatz, in January

Stearns County hired Public Health Nurse, Brooke Larson, in February

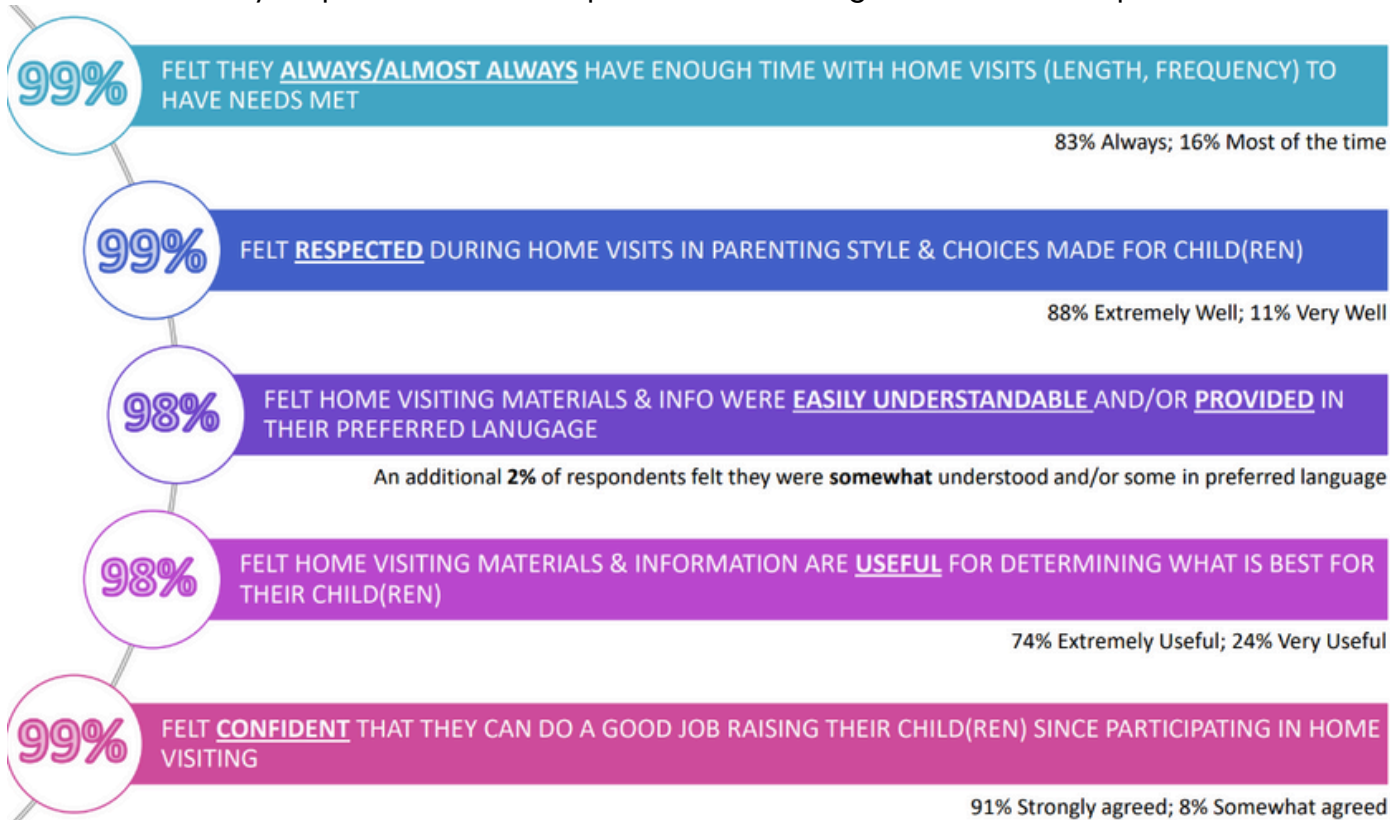
Benton County is in active recruitment for a Public Health Nurse





## FAMILY FEEDBACK SURVEY RESULTS

Our annual Family Feedback Survey is distributed to all families currently enrolled in our home visiting program across our four counties. Responses are voluntary and anonymous. This year, we received 132 family responses. 87% of responses were in English, 13% were in Spanish.

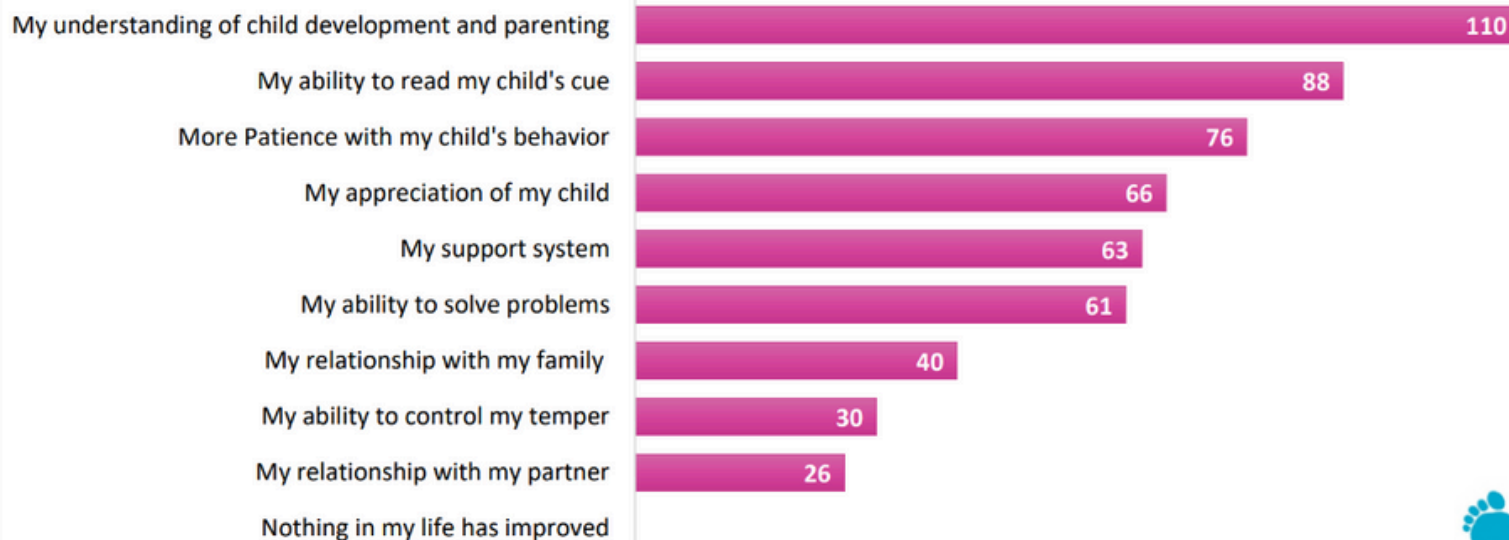


**92% of respondents reported high likelihood to recommend family home visiting to other families.**



**100% of families expressed improvement in one or more areas of life since beginning home visiting.**

### FS FAMILY AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT





**FAMILY FEEDBACK SURVEY RESULTS**

**How has our family home visiting and/or your nurse impacted your life?**

Honestly, I have no idea what I would have done without my home [visiting] nurse. Being a young mom for the first time was very scary and [my nurse] held my hand and made me feel supported every step from pregnancy, to labor, breastfeeding, navigating motherhood, toddler behavior and so on.

[My Home Visitor] has done a great job with providing our family with additional support and resources as we navigate being new parents. She has been very helpful in all aspects.

As a soon-to-be first-time mom with no experience with children/babies, I feel like I better understand the process and have been made aware of things I've never thought about before.

Helped me feel more confident and comfortable being a parent.

It gets me emotional to think about the journey I have been on with my nurse as I truly can't imagine going through everything as a young single mom for the first time without her.

We highly recommend this to other families as it is hard being new parents it's nice to have the tools and guides to being the best parent possible for your child.

[This program] made me feel supported and seen. It made me a better mom and [be] more confident in what I am doing. Home visits were such a saving grace for my family."

It's scary to think about what my life would have felt like during my hardest times, pregnancy and newborn period, without my home visits and support I felt from them. I think programs and resources like this are so important and life changing. I am so grateful for this.

I have a great and amazing nurse. Thank you for always listening and the kindness you always show my family and I.







## OUTREACH & EVENTS

Together we do more! Here are a few ways our teams have built connections in our communities this past quarter and got the word out about family home visiting (FHV):

- Staff presented about FHV at a Wright County Early Head Start's Family Socialization event.
- First Steps Program Manager was appointed to the statewide Maternal Child Health Task Force's FHV Subcommittee for a four year term.
- Staff participated with MN Legal Aid and Project Care in a Healthcare For All event in Elk River to connect underserved individuals and families with health insurance and resources.
- Staff participated at CentraCare's Community Baby Shower event in St. Cloud.
- Staff continued work with local health systems to educate staff, reduce barriers, and create efficiencies in referral workflow in order to connect more families to FHV.
- Staff assist at some of the weekly drop-in infant feeding support groups in central MN (see blue box below for details about days and times).
- Staff attend monthly **THRIVE** Central MN meetings with other early childhood professionals to promote healthy relationships and secure connections for our youngest children in Central MN.



*(Pictured) With a presentation titled "Strengthening Community Partnerships & Collective Impact Through Collaboration" First Steps Managers, Kelly Ball & Leah Krotzer, were chosen for breakout sessions at both the 2024 Local Public Health Association Conference & Association of MN Counties Conference last fall. Over 100 individuals attended their sessions!*

## LET'S CONNECT

- Presentation at a Team Meeting
- Station at a Staff Training Event
- New Staff Orientation Video
- Lunch-N-Learn
- Outreach at a Community Event



Schedule outreach with us to stay up-to-date about programming and resources. We recommend annual outreach to your team.



## Drop-In Infant Feeding Support

### Mondays

- 10a-12p, Monticello Community Center

### Tuesdays

- 9a-11a, Princeton ECFE Family Center
- 9:30a-11:30a, St. Cloud YMCA



### Wednesdays

- 9:30a-11:30a, Wright County Historical Society, Buffalo
- 1:30p-3p, Maple Grove Hospital



### Fridays

- 10a-12p, Options for Women -Cornerstone, St. Michael



**=First Steps  
staff present**

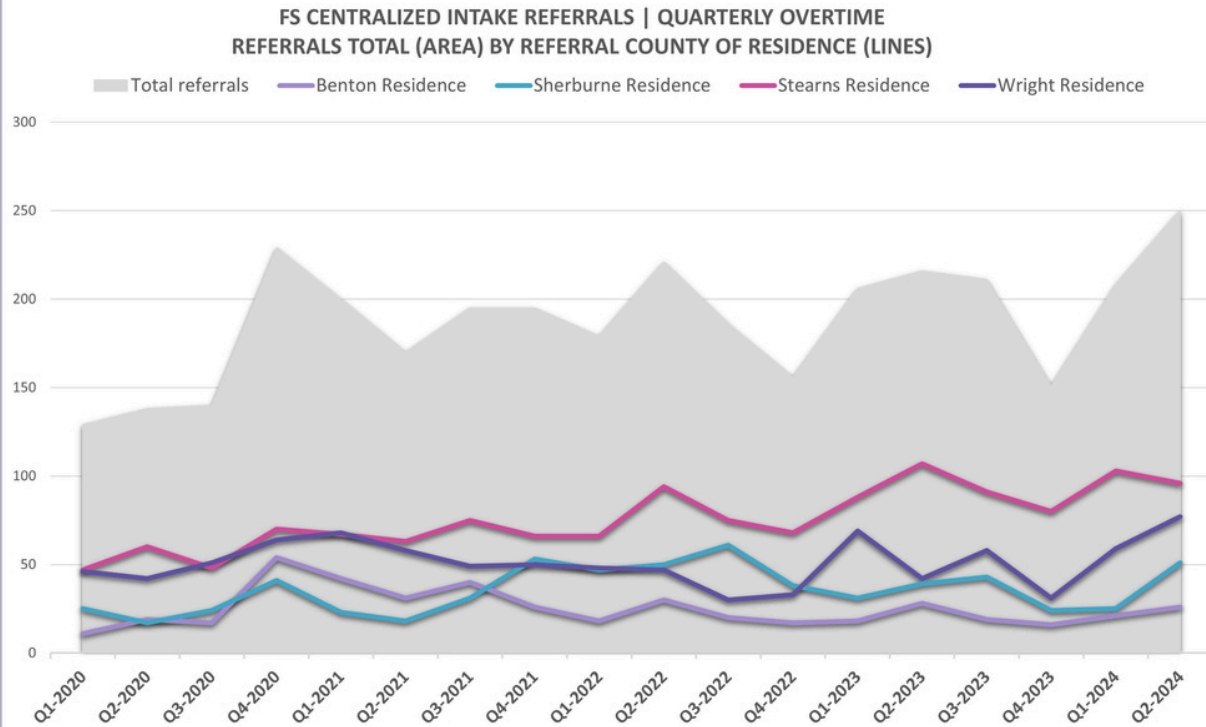




## 2024 YEAR END DATA

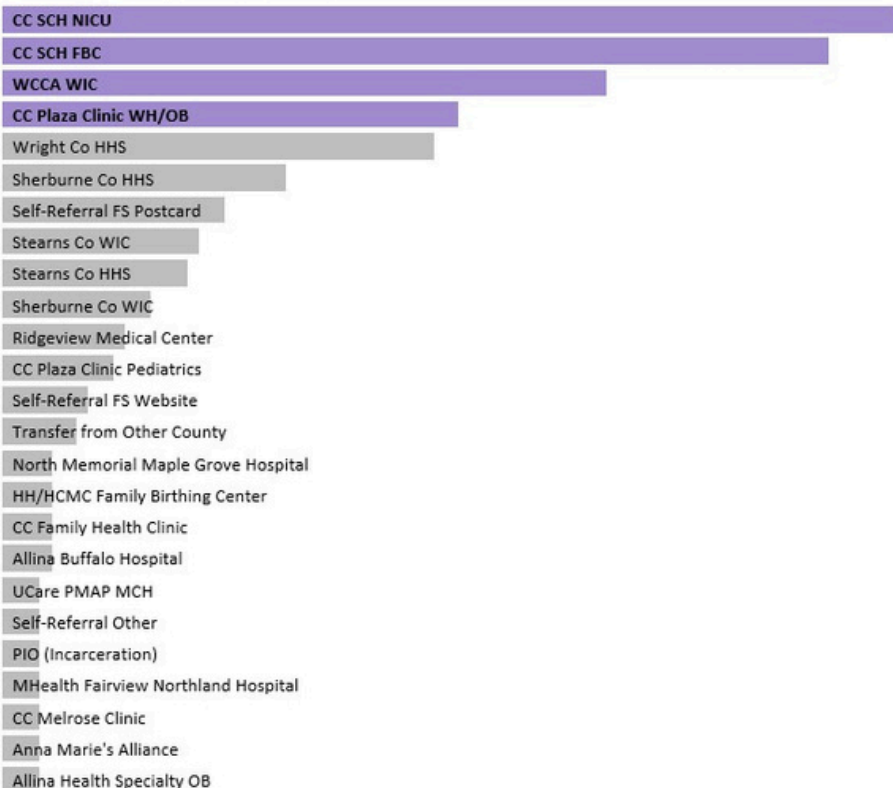
Thank you for taking the time to connect families you serve to family home visiting! We had a 20% increase of referrals received in 2024 compared to 2023. We hope to increase our prenatal referral numbers in 2025.

*"I offer all families a referral to a home visiting nurse. I explain that their nurse will reach out as they transition home with their newborn. Their nurse can help with any questions that come up and connect them to local resources. They can continue to meet for as long as they'd like the support and can change their mind at any time."*  
-quote from local family birthing center staff



### FHV CENTRALIZED INTAKE REFERRAL SOURCES

#### 2024 Community Partner Referrals



#### FS Referral Sources

59 in 2024 YTD (119 Total)

**50% of referrals come from top 4 sources highlighted**

Additional 34 Community Partners sent 1-2 referrals

*If you would like more information about your agency's referral data to us, please contact us at 763-276-0441 or email [referrals@firststepscentralmn.org](mailto:referrals@firststepscentralmn.org).*



# The Supporting Steps Program is currently being piloted for Wright County families only



## What is it?

This free home visiting program provides a nurse and licensed alcohol and drug counselor (LADC) to support pregnant and postpartum people, caregivers, and families who have concerns about substance use, currently use substances, or have a history of substance use.

Participation is voluntary. The nurse and LADC will support you to reach your goals and design the life you want for yourself and your family.

## What should I expect?

The nurse and LADC will meet with you separately in a mutually agreed upon setting- it could be your home or a different location in the community. Telehealth options are also available.

The counselor will meet with you at least once per month while the nurse may meet with you more frequently. Visit discussion is led by you and may include:

- Your and your family's health
- Your goals
- Child growth and development
- Parenting skills
- Tools to help reduce substance use and avoid recurrence
- Local resources and supports

## Who is eligible to participate?

Pregnant/expecting parents or parents/caregivers who have a history of or are actively using a substance, or are receiving Medication-Assisted Treatment. Participant must live in Wright County.

Sign up or refer by calling  
763-276-0441, visiting  
[www.firststepscentralmn.org](http://www.firststepscentralmn.org)  
or using the code.

