

A warm welcome to our winter newsletter! Thank you for reading our newsletter to stay up to date with new information. We also thank all of our community partners who referred families to us in 2021. We encourage you to continue to refer all pregnant or new parents to us. Check out our talking points on page 3!

Parents now, more than ever, need these connections, supports, skills, and education. Along with home visiting, public health continues to offer a variety of programs and resources for our communities including car seat distribution & education, immunization clinics, the Follow Along Program, WIC, and more! Our nurses are knowledgeable about community resources and will connect families to those resource that might be helpful to them.

In 2022, we will have a greater focus on outreach to our community partners. We hope to surpass our monthly referral numbers from years past. This includes maintaining our relationships with past referral sources, as well as building new connections, to serve more families in need. We are happy to schedule a time with you to learn how we can partner and better support families in Central MN. During the past few months, our teams have grown. Our newest home visiting nurses are eager to be trained in MECOSH and take on their own caseloads. Our seasoned nurses continue to grow their caseloads. Also, in late Spring 2022, we will be applying for the next round of grant funds to support our collaborative family home visiting work in central MN.

You can make a referral to us by downloading and completing our referral form from our website then faxing it in to 763-765-4250. Or you can give us a call at 763-276-0441 to relay the referral information. Home visits with a personal nurse are provided at no cost to families and are always voluntary. Our MECOSH (pronounced 'mesh') home visits continue in-person, but do have both phone and telehealth options available as well.



FIRST STEPS CENTRAL MN

is a team of Registered Nurses from Benton, Sherburne, Stearns, and Wright County Public Health who offer free support, advice and information to have a healthy pregnancy, a healthy baby, and be a great parent by providing free, voluntary in-home family home visiting services utilizing evidence-based programming to eligible families.

Our Nurses help promote healthy birth outcomes and positive parent-infant relationships, encourage healthy growth and development for infants and young children, prevent complications of illness and chronic disease conditions, promote healthy and safe environments, and encourage family self-sufficiency and linkage to community resources.

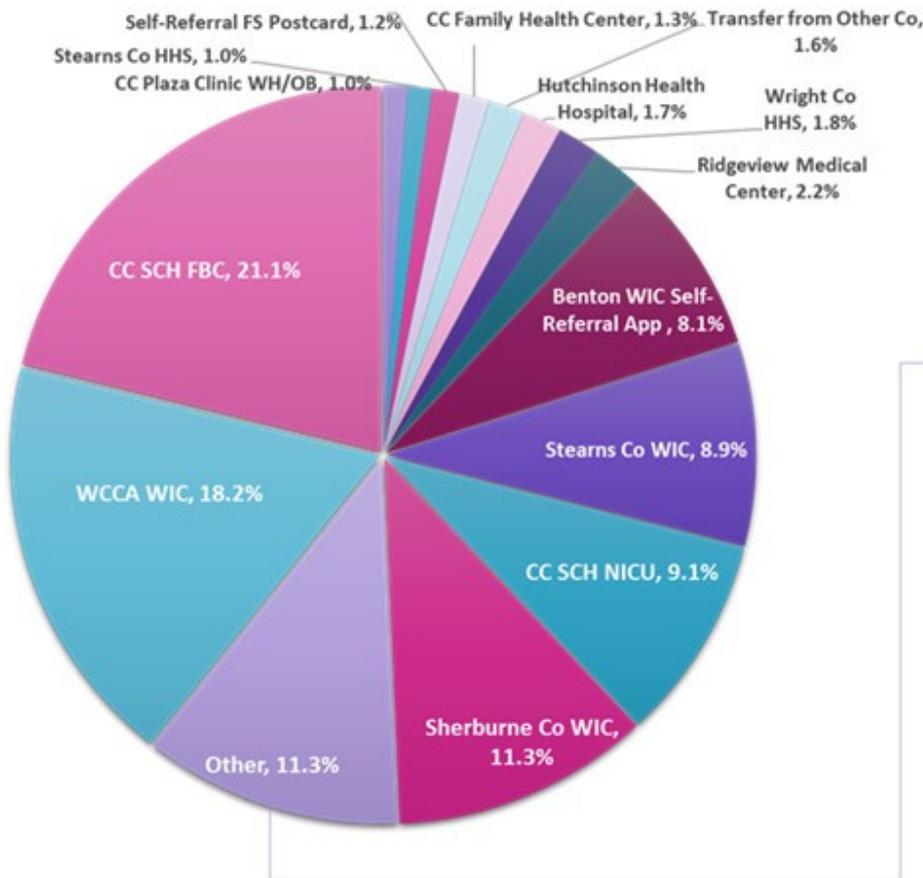
FOCUS POPULATION

- Pregnant or newly postpartum
- Low income (WIC or MA eligible)
- Live in Benton, Sherburne, Stearns or Wright County

We also want to connect with families who may have:

- Financial or housing insecurities
- Interest in infant feeding or breastfeeding support
- Limited support system
- Limited parenting skills
- Received late prenatal care or have been inconsistent with attending appointments
- Have a history of or current abuse, safety concerns, violence, mental health concerns, chemical or tobacco use or abuse

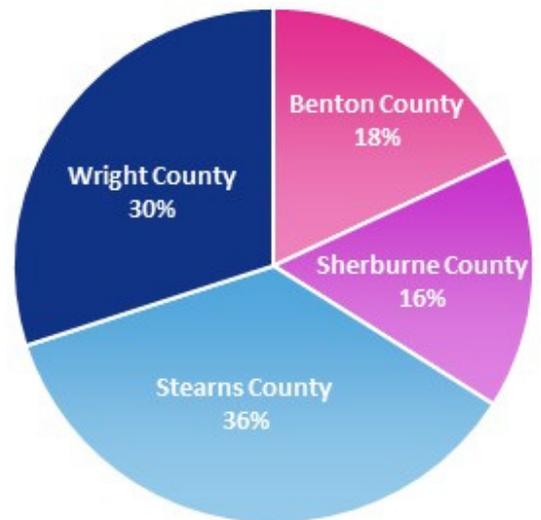
FS CENTRALIZED INTAKE REFERRAL SOURCES 2021



Other Referral Agencies	
CC Monticello Hospital	0.9%
CC Plaza Clinic Pediatrics	0.7%
Health Partners Preg Program	0.7%
Self-Referral Other	0.7%
Sherburne Co HHS	0.7%
Allina Buffalo Hospital	0.5%
Allina Health Specialty OB	0.4%
Broadway Family Medicine Clinic	0.4%
Catholic Health Initiatives Clinic	0.4%
Childrens Hospital NICU	0.4%
CMMHC	0.4%
Glencoe Regional Health Services	0.4%
HCMC Family Birthing Center	0.4%
North Memorial Health Hospital	0.4%
Stellis Health Monticello	0.4%
Alomere Health	0.3%
Benton Co HS	0.3%
Carris Health Hospital	0.3%
CC Melrose Clinic	0.3%
Fairview Northland Hospital	0.3%
Park Nicollet Homecare	0.3%
Anna Marie's Alliance	0.1%
Cambridge-Isanti Riverside ALC	0.1%
CC OB & Women's Health Clinic SW	0.1%
CC Sartell Clinic	0.1%
CC SCH Pediatric	0.1%
Childrens Hospital Med Surg	0.1%
Glenwood Medical Center	0.1%
HCMC NICU	0.1%
HCMC OBGYN Brooklyn Park Clinic	0.1%
Hennepin Healthcare NICU	0.1%
Kimball ECFE	0.1%
Lakewood Health System-OB Expectations	0.1%
McKinley ALC	0.1%
North Memorial Health Clinic	0.1%
Park Nicollet Case Manager	0.1%
United Hospital	0.1%

FS centralized intake process has been in place for 2 years and over 1400 referrals have come through for the region. FS Personal Nurses reach out to all referrals to offer family home visiting and connect families to resources. Over 70% of these referrals reached are interested in family home visiting. FS Personal Nurses are also available to answer immediate questions or provide referrals to other services as needed.

FS - % OF REFERRALS BY COUNTY OF RESIDENCE





Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

We are in the middle of a CQI project focused on client engagement and initial referral calls. In December 2021, we provided a staff survey to compile baseline data. Based on survey results, we have been developing various tools and other plans to best support staff needs when it comes to engaging families and doing outreach with partners. This has also helped with communication and transparency across the collaborative.

Our first project focus was to develop a Best Practice Guide which includes best practice tips and sample scripts for staff to reference. Topics covered in the Best Practice Guide include: initial engagement of referrals, continuous engagement of enrolled families, working with interpreters and non-English speaking families, outreach to community partners, and use of our branded materials and logo. This is a helpful tool for not only new staff, but also our more experienced nurses.

Next, we will begin planning a Community of Practice, or other learning/training opportunity for staff team-building and expanding learning across the region. Then, a follow-up survey will be provided to staff in late spring/early summer to gather additional data and will create potential for follow-up collaborative projects.

Community Partner Best Practice Tips & Talking Points

Word Choice

- Use the phrase “personal nurse” instead of “public health nurse” or “county nurse.”
- Use “First Steps” instead of “Benton, Sherburne, Stearns, Wright, or the County.”
- Normalize the referral by saying “I refer all families to First Steps.”

Reminders

- A nurse will follow up with a phone call to the family within a few days to share more information.
- We are a voluntary support for families. Please ask the family for permission to refer.
- There is no fee to families to participate.

Sample Script:

“I would like to connect you to a personal nurse through First Steps. I like to refer all of my patients to them. They are a team of nurses who work with families during pregnancy and after baby is born. They can provide additional support and connection to resources as you go through your pregnancy and bring baby home. Are you okay if I ask for a nurse to give you a call in the next couple of days to talk more?”



RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

- **Everyday Miracles Doula Support** <https://www.everyday-miracles.org/>
 - Everyday Miracles is committed to improving maternal health, and specifically reducing health disparities in communities at risk for poor outcomes. They strive to provide compassionate, culturally aware support and a nonjudgmental, welcoming community.
 - They offer a Doula Support Program for pregnant people. Most services are 100% covered by families on MA with zero out of pocket fees. For those with private insurance plans, they focus on accessible pricing. To request a doula, complete their online request form.
 - They recently added 4 BIPOC doulas out of St. Cloud. Learn more about these doulas at: <https://www.everyday-miracles.org/st-cloud-doulas-1>
 - Contact them for additional Doula training opportunities
- **Ellison Center** <https://www.ellisoncenter.org/>
 - Vision: fostering growth, development and reflection in relationships
 - Services: therapy with caregiver and child, comprehensive diagnostic assessments, other therapeutic services, child care consultation, reflective consultation, lunch & learn trainings & tools.
 - Early Childhood Resilience Toolkit <https://tinyurl.com/mr2y72zp>
- **African Women's Alliance** <http://awaonline.us/>
 - Empowering African women immigrants and refugees through advocacy, hands-on education, holistic support and the provision and facilitation of resources.
 - Basic health education, gardening, nutrition classes and connection to local resources
 - Sewing Program
 - Welcome Baby Program
- **Sherburne County's Stronger Together Inspiring Resilience (STIR)** <https://www.stirmn.org/>
 - STIR promotes healing, inspires resilience, shares social connections and celebrates the whole person through mind, body and spirit
 - Focus on 5 pillars of resilience: Self Awareness, Self-Care, Mindfulness, Relationships & Purpose.
 - Has a robust resource page focused on [Parenting Resources](#), [Resiliency Tools](#), [Multi-faith Network](#), [Trauma-Informed Resources](#), and [Community Mental Health Resources](#).
- **Child Passenger Safety**-It is every caregiver's responsibility to ensure their child's car seat fits the child and vehicle and is used correctly during every ride. There are several resources for families in central MN to learn more about using a car seat correctly. Families with certain income guidelines or on specific healthcare plans may be eligible to receive a car seat at no cost.
 - **Benton County:** Call 320-968-5087 or visit: <https://tinyurl.com/4du98ayy>
 - Flyer attached on page 5
 - **Sherburne County:** Call 763-765-4112 or visit: <https://tinyurl.com/mrx9n93x>
 - Flyer attached on page 6
 - **Stearns County:** Contact Milestones at 320-251-5081 for more information.
 - **Wright County:** Call 763-335-0280 or visit: <https://tinyurl.com/4nyzmkw8>
 - Flyer attached on page 7
 - **Milestones (located in Waite Park, MN):** Call 320-251-5081 for more information about eligibility

FIRST STEPS CENTRAL MN
OUTREACH MATERIALS ARE
AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH,
SOMALI & SPANISH

Self-Referral Cards



Brochures



Supporting Benton, Sherburne, Stearns
and Wright Counties

WWW.FIRSTSTEPSCENTRALMN.ORG



Benton County

2022 Child Passenger Safety Program

(320) 968-5087

Car Seat Checks

(available to any Benton County residents, by appt only)

THE RIGHT SEAT. THE RIGHT SIZE. THE RIGHT USE.

Find out if yours is right...Child Passenger Safety Specialists can answer questions regarding child safety seats and check your car seats. At a check, seats are evaluated for: defects, recall listings, suitability for the age of the child, and fit with the safety belt system in the vehicle. To get your child safety seats checked, call the number above to set up an appointment with a Benton County CPS technician. Please allow 30 minutes for EACH seat to be checked.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Benton County Human Services

Car Seat Distribution

Eligibility Requirements:

- ✓ Must be a Benton County resident.
- ✓ Specific state health plan enrolled families are eligible to receive a car seat at no cost. (families who are on WIC or children on Medical Assistance are automatically eligible).
 - If your child has BluePlus or Health Partners insurance, you will need to call Milestones at 320-251-5081 to schedule an appointment.
 - If your child has a health plan different from the ones listed above or is uninsured, please call Benton County at 320-968-5087 to schedule an appointment.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

CAR SEAT DISTRIBUTION



WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children age 1 through 12 years old.

Child Passenger Safety Program

Sherburne County Health & Human Services
763-765-4112 or 800-433-5239

MONTHLY CAR SEAT DISTRIBUTION

Attend one of our classes to receive a new child safety seat and instruction on proper use and installation.

Eligibility:

- Sherburne County families can receive a car seat for a \$20 donation. Call to find out income guidelines. Families receiving WIC or Medical Assistance are automatically eligible.
- Minnesota Health Care Program – Health Partners and Blue Plus members can receive a car seat at no cost. Call for age guidelines.

Day and evening classes are available, call the number above to sign up for class!



(Pictures may not represent actual seats, call for more information)

Funding provided by Sherburne County Health & Human Services, Health Partners, MN Dept. of Public Safety, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota.

CHILD CAR SEAT CHECKS

In Minnesota, 85% of child safety seats are installed or used incorrectly!



You may qualify for a free seat!

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

CALL 763.682.7354

\$10 SUGGESTED DONATION

Need help transporting a child with special needs? Call 763.682.7354 to set up an appointment.



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PUBLIC HEALTH

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