



COMMUNITY PARTNER QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

VOL. 2

SUMMER 2020

FIRSTSTEPSCENTRALMN.ORG

763-276-0441

WELCOME BACK!

June 30, 2020 marked the end of the first fiscal year of our evidence based home visiting expansion grant. This grant provided the platform for four county collaboration as First Steps Central MN.

COVID 19

Several Public Health Nurses and staff were also pulled into the COVID-19 emergency preparedness response. Common themes that have been important during this time include flexibility, patience, learning, and grace. Incoming referrals have remained steady despite COVID-19.

Based on guidance by MDH, our evidence based models, and individual county administration teams, local public health agencies have been providing family home visiting (FHV) in creative ways during COVID-19.

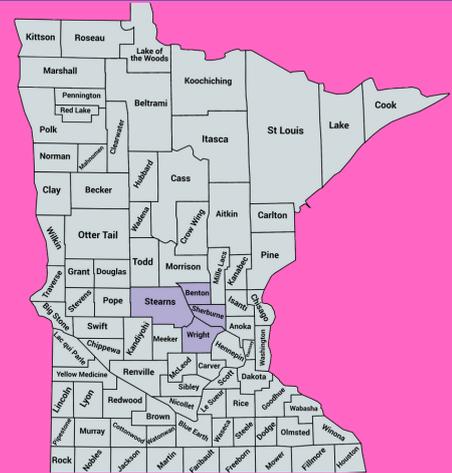
While the Public Health Nurses aren't currently physically going into the homes of enrolled families, they are offering the same support, education, and connection to resources that they always have. Their creativity and commitment to the families in our communities has been exceptional.

Our Nurses continue to have regular contact with families, including phone and video calls, text messages, emails, and door drop-off bags to engage and enroll new families into programming and to help retain families already connected with a Personal Nurse.

Door drop-off bags included a variety of materials, including resource information, educational materials for upcoming home visits, FHV newsletters, and/or family support supplies like board books, self-care encouragement items, or milestone toys.

A weekly newsletter was developed during this season as well. PHNs have used it as an engagement and retention tool for new referrals and enrolled families alike. Beginning in August 2020, these newsletters will shift to monthly publications. You may access them on our [First Steps Central MN website](http://FirstStepsCentralMN.com).

We recognize that times of high stress and uncertainty may actually increase the need for families needing a Personal Nurse. We are still accepting new referrals and enrolling new families. We thank you for connecting families to us!



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. The evidence-based programs we offer are Nurse Family Partnership and Healthy Families America.

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.

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FIRST STEPS
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FAMILY IMPACT STORIES



One of our PHNs is working with a Mom who had two children removed from her custody in the past. During a subsequent pregnancy, Mom started working with an HFA PHN, was connected with a treatment program, and has successfully stayed sober and out of Child Protection Services for 2 years. She often tells her PHN that she credits her commitment to weekly visits with the PHN to helping her get and stay sober. This client has maintained a steady job for over a year and no longer needs the support of public financial assistance. Through COVID, she has continued weekly telehealth visits and continues to succeed.

One of our NFP PHNs started working with client at 16 weeks gestation. Mom has a diagnosis of Dissociative Identity Disorder, Anxiety, and Depression. Mom has had numerous mental health hospitalizations related to suicidal ideations. Mom also has a history of childhood abuse – emotional and sexual. Father of baby was in foster care his whole childhood due to caregiver neglect. Father has a significant criminal history and continue to be monitored by the criminal justice system. Mom was interested in having a Personal Nurse because she wanted to learn information about her pregnancy and parenting. She is a first-time mom and has not experienced any of this before. Her PHN was able to provide education to both Mom and Dad during pregnancy. This education included baby cares and attachment. Both Mom and Dad were engaged in education and asked many questions. Currently, baby is 6 months old and reaching all of her developmental and growth milestones. Mom and Dad have shown to be bonded and attached to baby and report a satisfaction in their life that they have never experienced before. They report this satisfaction is related to baby. According to Dad, baby has given purpose to their life. Mom's PHQ-9 (mental health assessment) and GAD-7 (anxiety assessment) scores are significantly lower now, which she attributes to the joy that baby brings.

One of our NFP PHNs is working with a mom who was hooked on multiple drugs when she found out she was pregnant. During that time, mom had unstable housing and was couch-hopping with friends. Over the course of working with her Personal Nurse in the NFP program, Mom became sober, graduated high school and is enrolled in college for nursing. She lives in a low income apartment with her child. Mom is currently working as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and her child is in daycare. Mom said that she could not have done any of it without NFP and the support, goal setting, and help with resources provided by her Personal Nurse.

FOCUS POPULATIONS

- **Pregnant or within 3 months postpartum**
- **Low income (WIC or MA eligible)**
- **Live in Benton, Sherburne, Stearns or Wright County**

Identified areas of concerns for families may include (but are not limited to):

- financial or housing insecurities
- infant feeding support
- limited support system,
- limited parenting skills
- late prenatal care or poor compliance
- history of or current abuse, safety concerns, violence, mental health concerns, chemical or tobacco use or abuse

Referring partners don't have to decide which program, just refer and our staff will connect families with the program that will best fit their needs.

To make a referral, first talk to families and get their permission. Then either download our referral form online to fax in to 763-765-4250 or give us a call at 763-276-0441.

A family can expect an initial contact within 1-3 business days.

If your agency is interested in learning more about First Steps Central MN, would like a staff in-service or presentation, or are running low on brochures or outreach cards to hand out, please contact us at 763-276-0441.

Data Dive

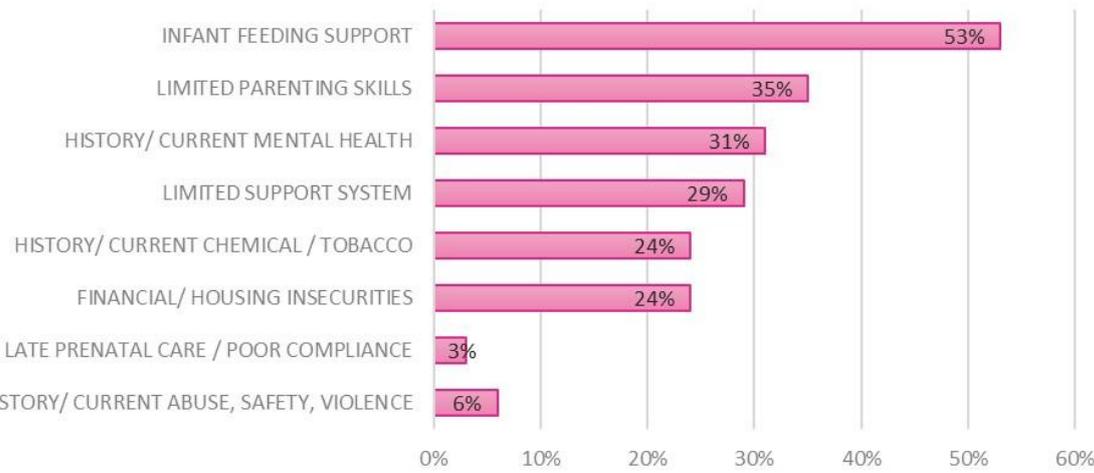
April 1-June 30, 2020

During Q2, we saw the COVID response come into full swing with the Stay At Home and Stay Safe orders, that eliminated in-person outreach and home visiting. Despite these circumstances, centralized intake referrals were maintained at the same rate as the previous quarter.

FIRST STEPS CENTRAL MN - REFERRALS BY FAMILY RESIDENCY 2020-Q2

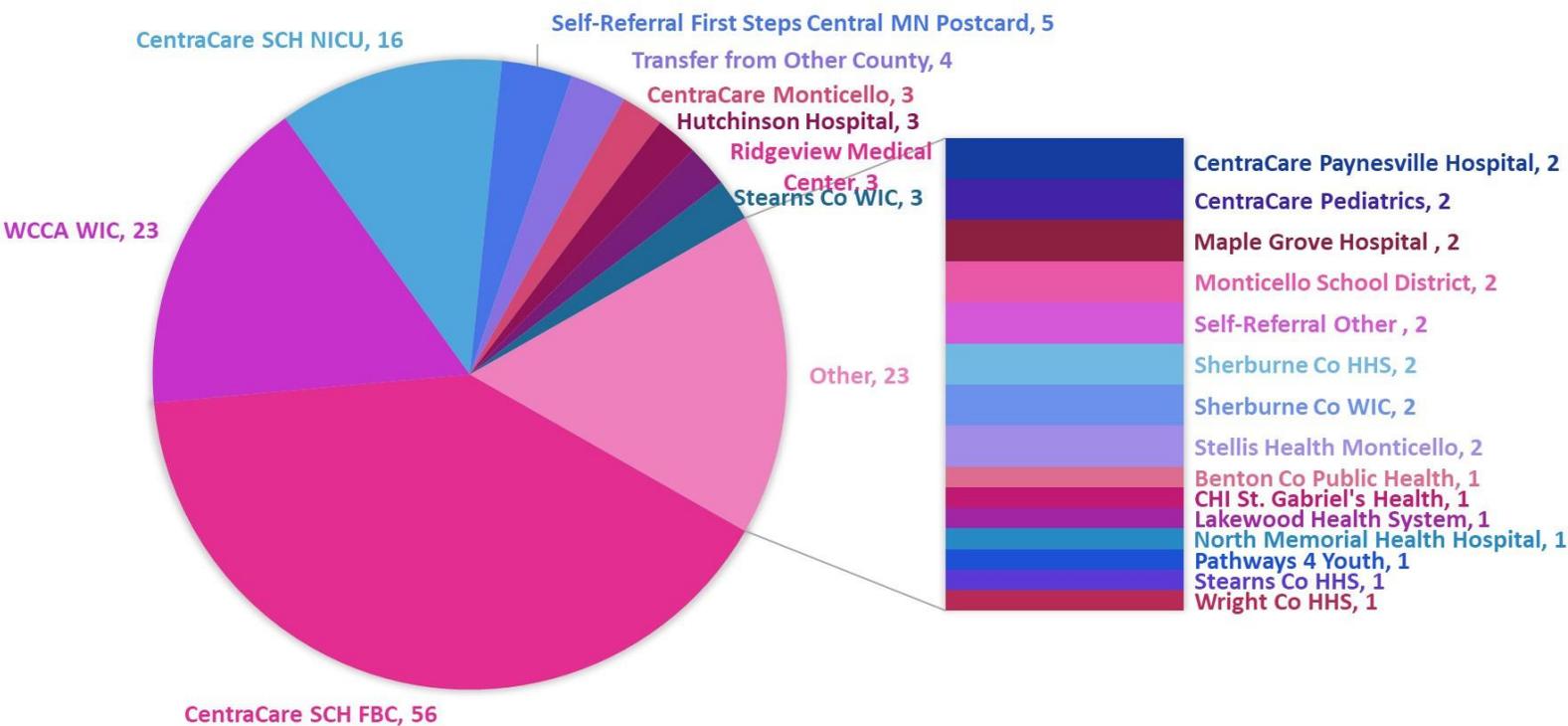


FIRST STEPS CENTRAL MN COMMUNITY PARTNER REFERRAL IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES/CONCERNS | 2020-Q2



Note: % based on referrals with identified challenges/concern

FIRST STEPS CENTRAL MN REFERRAL SOURCES | 2020-Q2



Partnership with CentraCare Health--Epic Care Link

On August 17, 2020 the Epic Care Link will begin its pilot within CentraCare - Plaza Clinic Obstetrics & Women's Health. The Epic Care Link will help connect prenatal patients to family home visiting services in a new way. Epic will flag providers if a patient has an identified risk factor for family home visiting. If a patient agrees to have a follow-up call from a Personal Nurse to learn more, the provider simply clicks a button in the Epic system to generate a referral to First Steps Central MN. We look forward to rolling out the Epic Care Link to additional CentraCare services, clinic locations, and the inpatient setting in the future.

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

(CLICK ON THE **TITLES** TO LINK DIRECTLY TO THEIR PAGE OR STORY)

- Connect to Facebook pages by local public health:
 - [**Benton County Public Health**](#)
 - [**Sherburne County Public Health**](#)
 - [**Wright County Public Health**](#)
- 
- [**Benton County COVID-19**](#): for questions related to COVID-19 in Benton County, call 541-766-6120
- [**Sherburne County COVID-19**](#): for questions related to COVID-19 in Sherburne County, call 763-765-4156
- [**Stearns County COVID-19**](#): for questions related to COVID-19 in Stearns County, call 320-656-6625
- [**Wright County COVID-19**](#): for questions related to COVID-19 in Wright County, call 763-682-7607
- [**NFP Stands with MN Moms to Fight COVID, Racism, Poverty**](#): An article written by Jim Welsch, co-chair of the Minnesota Nurse-Family Partnership Community Advisory Board about how NFP nurses are supporting first-time, low-income moms with telehealth visits and providing nursing assistance and vital emotional support during the pandemic and Black Lives Matter movement.
- [**Helping Families Make a COVID 19 Plan**](#): A template for making a plans for the health and safety of your family during COVID-19.
- [**Disaster Mental and Behavioral Health and COVID-19 Resources**](#): from MDH website
- [**Caring for Yourself in the Face of Difficult Work**](#): a printable pocket card
- [**How Supervisors and Managers Can Support Staff During COVID-19**](#): handout from MDH
- [**Tips for Work/Life Balance During COVID-19**](#): tip sheet from MDH
- [**PsychHub**](#): Short Videos on a Variety of Mental Health & Wellness Topics

OUTREACH MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH, SOMALI & SPANISH

Self-Referral Cards



Brochures



Supporting Benton, Sherburne, Stearns and Wright Counties

WWW.FIRSTSTEPSCENTRALMN.ORG

STAFF CONNECTION

EACH QUARTER WE WILL INTRODUCE YOU TO MEMBERS OF THE FIRST STEPS CENTRAL MN FAMILY HOME VISITING TEAM!

Gina Loterbauer, BSN, RN, RDH, PHN

gina.loterbauer@co.benton.mn.us

320-241-4761

- Lives in St. Cloud. Married with 2 kids, 1 dog
- Started with First Steps in 2020. I have worked as a Public Health Nurse with Benton County since 2016 as the Child and Teen Checkups Coordinator, and am currently working on obtaining my CLC.
- What do you like best about your job? I love being able to be a support and build relationships with families, and connecting families with resources in the community.
- *My favorite children's book is "Love You Forever" by Robert Munsch
- *My favorite children's activities are: singing nursery rhymes, reading books, building forts, going on walks and bike rides, and having dance parties!
- I love coffee and yoga. I have a history as a yoga teacher and want to include aspects of mindfulness and fitness with my own family and the families I work with.



"Gina understands and approaches work and life with a strength based lens, comes with lived experience as a mother herself, and is a wonderful person all around. She always has a calm, peaceful attitude that people love to be around. I am grateful she is part of the team and serves her hometown community."

-Nicole Ruhoff, Benton County Supervisor/CHS Administrator

Julie Heidelberger, BSN, RN, PHN

julie.heidelberger@co.sherburne.mn.us

763-202-5501

- Lives in Zimmerman. Married, 5 nieces, 2 dogs, 4 cats
- Started with Wright County and First Steps Central MN in July 2019 as a nurse home visitor. I work with first time moms in the Nurse-Family Partnership program. Prior to that I worked for 10 years as a home health nurse caring for pediatrics and adults with complex medical needs.
- What do you like best about your job? I enjoy getting to know my moms, their future goals for themselves and baby and connecting them to resources. I love to see their excitement as they share what new milestones baby is working on and/or has achieved.
- My favorite children's book is "We're Going on a Bear Hunt" by Michael Rosen
- My favorite children's activities are creating with Playdough and outdoor scavenger hunts.
- I love photography.



"Julie is new to Public Health AND NFP. She has had numerous training in this past year, learned community resources for both Wright and Sherburne Counties, and modified visits to telemedicine due to COVID19. She has recently expanded her territory to include Benton County. Quite a hectic first year! Julie has helped clients access resources, including Medicaid. She has connected them with lactation counseling, and needed therapies. Julie has a client with special needs that she is always there for. Julie has collaborated with the client's social worker and parent to assure that the client has all of her needs met. This collaborative effort, and Julie's great interventions, has helped the client succeed in her parenting role."

-Mary Nesseth, Wright County Supervisor

Valerie Stoll, BSN, RN, PHN, CLC

valerie.stoll@co.wright.mn.us

763-682-7864

- Lives in Monticello. Married with 5 kids, 1 dog, 1 cat.
- Started with First Steps Central MN July of 2019. I have worked for Wright County since Aug. 2016, primarily working as a Traditional Family Home Visiting nurse and as the Coordinator for Child and Teen Checkups. Prior to this I have worked in home health, hospital and nursing home. I received my nursing degree in 2008 and received a bachelor's degree in psychology in 2002.
- What do you like best about your job? What I enjoy most is seeing the interactions between children and parents. The unconditional love and the dance they develop with each other through these interactions. I also enjoy that the program is individualized, where the family sets the goals and together we discover how to best meet the needs of their family. A bonus is always when I get to hold a baby.
- My favorite children's book is "Guess How Much I Love You" by Sam McBratney.
- My favorite children's games are Candy Land, Guess Who, Sorry. The classics never get old.
- If I was an animal, I would hope to be a dog. Faithful, friendly and always forgiving.
- Fun fact: I actually don't like coffee. As popular as the drink has become I haven't tasted any that I have enjoyed, yet.
- I feel each day I see success in a family. Helping turn the difficult moments into learning moments and celebrating the successful moments. They all mean so much to how families cope. Some days just being that listening ear and letting families give their feelings words is the best I can offer a family. Families let me into their homes, and I'm grateful to teach and learn from the families I serve.



"Val is a fantastic advocate for her clients. She consistently goes above and beyond to help connect her clients with resources and services that they qualify for. Through our pandemic response, Val has stepped up to take more clients and referrals, due to other PHNs being assigned to the pandemic response. Val did this without complaint, and continues to carry a full caseload and contact new referrals that are interested in services."

-Casey Henre, Wright County Supervisor