



# COMMUNITY PARTNER QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

VOL. 3

FALL 2020

[FIRSTSTEPSCENTRALMN.ORG](http://FIRSTSTEPSCENTRALMN.ORG)

763-276-0441

## UPDATES

September 30, 2020 marked the end of year two-quarter one of our evidence based home visiting expansion grant. This grant provided the platform for our four county family home visiting collaboration known as First Steps Central MN.

Several Public Health Nurses and staff continue to be pulled into the COVID-19 emergency preparedness response at varying degree across the four county region. Sites continue to monitor recommendations from MDH, our evidence based models, and individual county administrative teams to continue to provide family home visiting (FHV) services to families in need.

Public Health Nurses maintain regular contact with enrolled families and new referrals via mailings, phone, text, and telehealth options. They also may have some ability to do door drop-off bags and other social distance contacts on a limited case-by-case basis. The nurses have shown great creativity and commitment to the families in our communities. We also appreciate the support staff at each of the counties who assist the work of the nurses and supervisors in a variety of ways.

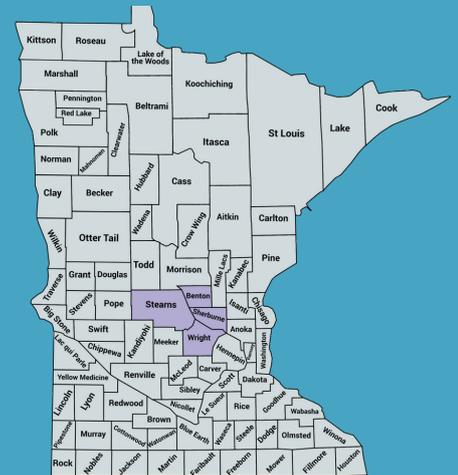
We are still accepting new referrals and enrolling new families in our programs. Thank you for connecting families to us!

Our family newsletters have remained as a monthly publication. You may access them on our [First Steps Central MN website](http://First Steps Central MN website).

### The First Steps Central MN Community Advisory Committee is made up of members from the following organizations:

- CentraCare Health
- Central MN Mental Health Center
- Family Youth Community Connections (FYCC)
- Great River Regional Library
- HFA Graduate
- Initiative Foundation/THRIVE
- ISD 728 (Elk River, Zimmerman, Rogers) ECFE
- ISD 882 (Monticello) Superintendent
- Reach Up Head Start
- Sherburne County Child Protection
- Sherburne County Health Promotions
- United Way

**Our first meeting is Monday, November 9, 2020 and will meet quarterly in 2021. If you are interested in participating on the committee, contact us at 763-276-0441 to learn more.**



## 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.

## FAMILY IMPACT STORIES

This Wright County PHN completed a window visit with one of her Healthy Families America families. The PHN and family were able to successfully maintain social distancing and safety, while the PHN was able to re-engage the family that was about to be closed to services after 3 months of creative outreach, or not visiting. As you can see, they did shaving cream paintings together on either sides of the window and gave permission to share their photos in our newsletter. Great creativity, PHN Karen!



Sherburne County PHN Windsong recently shared a family success story at the First Steps Central MN Joint Powers Board meeting. The HFA-enrolled mom and child also joined and gave a powerful testament to the relationship that has developed between PHN and mom and how that relationship has positively impacted her relationship with her child.

Next week, Stearns County PHN Laurie and one of her NFP moms will share her NFP story at our first Community Advisory Committee meeting. This mom volunteered because she wanted to give back to a program that has given her so much as a first time mom.

### 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 a 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 an 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

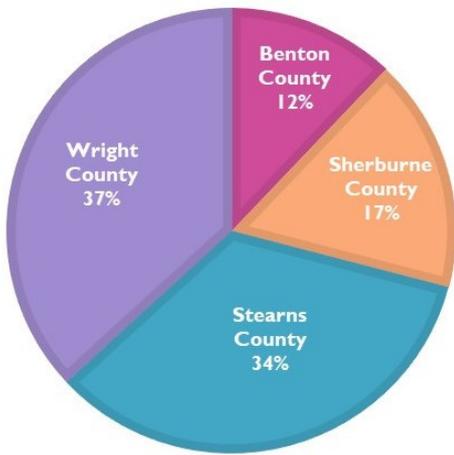
July 1, 2020-September 30, 2020

During Q3, First Steps Central MN received referrals from 31 community partners through the centralized intake process serving the four-counties. COVID-19 continues to impact outreach and service delivery with referral numbers maintaining levels of previous two quarters.

FIRST STEPS CENTRAL MN - REFERRALS BY MONTH



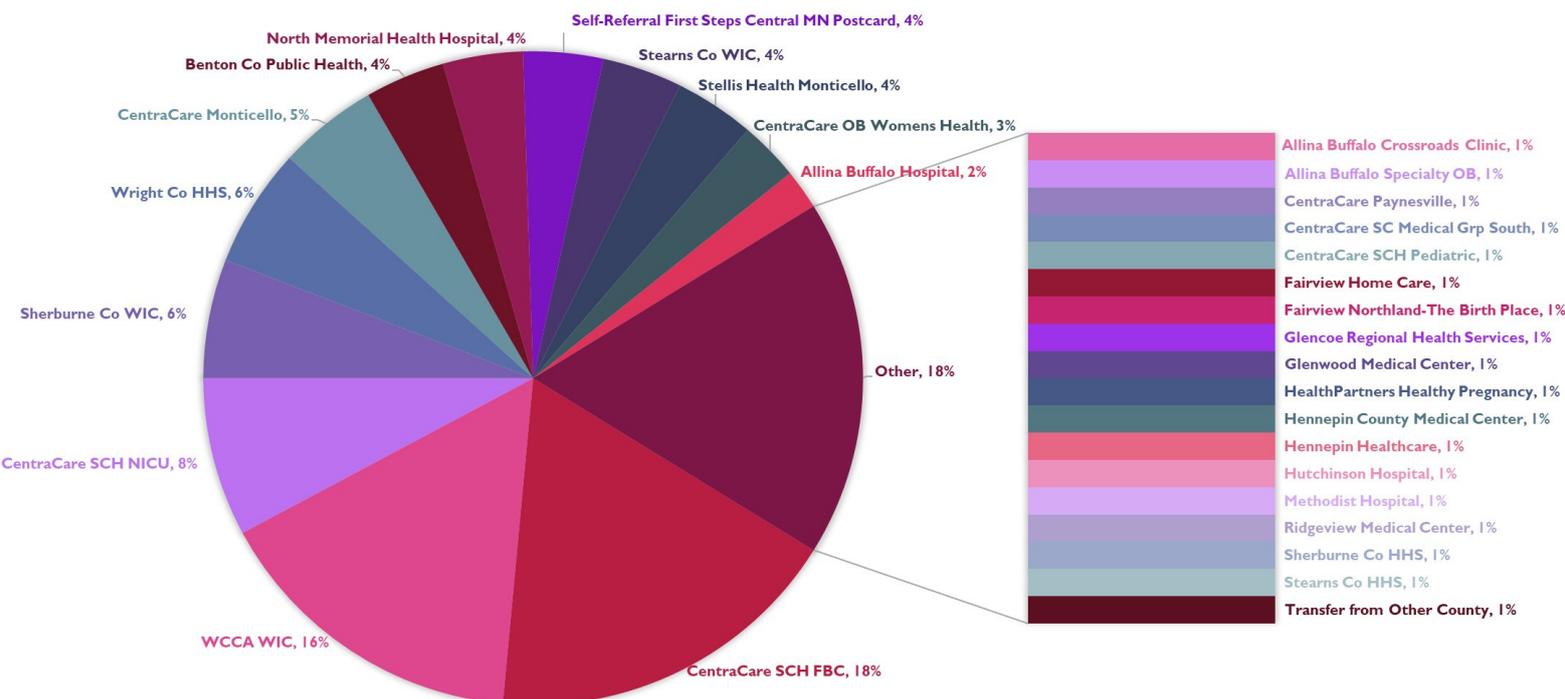
FIRST STEPS CENTRAL MN - REFERRALS BY RESIDENCY | 2020-Q3



## 2020-Q3 REFERRALS

- ❖ 58% First-Time Moms
  - Of those, 54% prenatal and 46% postpartum/parenting
- ❖ 40% Prenatal Referrals
  - Of those, 47% eligible for Nurse-Family Partnership program

FIRST STEPS CENTRAL MN - REFERRAL SOURCES | 2020-Q3



# 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](#)
- For questions related to COVID-19, please call the following phone numbers:
  - [Benton County](#): 541-766-6120
  - [Sherburne County](#): 763-765-4156
  - [Stearns County](#): 320-656-6625
  - [Wright County](#): 763-682-7607
- **Teaching Children & Adolescents about the Importance of Vaccines:** Baylor University launched a series that helps parents and teachers start conversations about vaccines with children and adolescents, found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y54c4j2q>. They also offer [The Amazing Vaccine Race](#), an activity for students to review the phases of COVID-19 vaccine development, found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yyexgetu>
- **Screen time and the Still-Face Experiment:** What happens when caregivers shift their attention from a baby to a phone? Read more at: <https://tinyurl.com/y2k36ubw> The original Still Face Experiment can be viewed at <https://tinyurl.com/ya3zrhfp>
- **Follow Along Program (FAP):** can help parents track their child's development and let them know if their child is playing, talking, growing, moving, and behaving like other children the same age. Ages & Stages Questionnaires are sent in the mail at 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 30, 36, 42\*, 48\* months old. Caregivers will also be sent handouts with fun activities for them to do with their child. Parents can enroll their child [online](#). If there is ever a concern, program staff will get in touch and talk about choices for further evaluation or early help services, like Help Me Grow.
  - \*Some counties offer questionnaires at 42 & 48 months while others end at 36 months.
- **Help Me Grow (HMG):** provides resources for families to understand developmental milestones and learn if there are concerns. This helps families take the lead in seeking additional support or referring their child for a comprehensive, confidential screening or evaluation at no cost. Families can self-refer [online](#).



## OUTREACH MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH, SOMALI & SPANISH

### Self-Referral Cards



### Brochures



Supporting Benton, Sherburne, Stearns and Wright Counties

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# STAFF CONNECTION

LEARN MORE ABOUT WHY BENTON COUNTY JOINED THE FIRST STEPS CENTRAL MN COLLABORATIVE



## Benton County

**Nicole Ruhoff, RN, BSN**

**CHS Administrator/Public Health Supervisor**

**When did your site first pursue HFA and/or NFP as a Family Home Visiting (FHV) model?** For Benton, a long time PHN wanted to have some sort of standard for home visiting. She had used some curriculums in the past, but they seemed to be missing something. She researched GJK and wrote a grant for the training. It was hosted in Benton County and I believe was the first in the state. Sometime later the HFA model was introduced and at that time the curriculum used by the model was GJK. Benton had not been able to pursue the model for accreditation, but we had implemented a model-like program.

**Please share 2-3 reasons why your agency chose to begin HFA and/or NFP home visiting:**

- Standardization
- Evidenced-based
- To gain tools to work with complex families

**Please share 2-3 reasons why your agency wanted to be a part of the First Steps collaborative work, and/or what do you now see as benefits of the collaborative:**

- The capacity at smaller agencies to implement an Evidence-Based FHV model can be a challenge. By joining the Collaborative, it meant removing some of the barriers: meeting the population criteria, developing the culture that FHV is a support to families and the ability to maintain model fidelity for the outcomes desired.
- There is much to be said about coordination and partnerships-the four counties recognize that sustainability, shared resources, "one stop shop" models and shared expertise can lead to effective and efficient service delivery.

**What are 2-3 misconceptions you think the public has about FHV? And what would be your message to them about those misconceptions?**

- Suspicion that HV is really more like child protection---Yes, nurses are mandated reporters but the intent is to support families to overcome barriers, not to catch them doing something wrong.
- It's for "bad" parents---Anyone that enrolls to learn more about parenting is a "great" parent already! Parenting is tough, everyone could use additional support.

**Please share 2-3 examples of Performance Measures your agency is currently working on or have worked on in the past that impacts the area of FHV:**

- Improving the referral process-internal and external-specific to First Steps Central MN
- Promoting the value of Public Health (part of the Benton County Strategic Plan)

**As CHS Administrator, what are three components of HFA or NFP that drives you to advocate for them/FHV at your agency?**

- Prevention works---the evidence shows that when families participate in EBHV, there are less negative impacts on a family. Models understand the complexities in a family and can be adapted to fit the family needs while still maintaining standards.
- Relationship focused---understanding the role of relationships is key to making community level change. We have to do better in our society.