



COMMUNITY PARTNER QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

VOL. 6

SUMMER 2021

FIRSTSTEPSCENTRALMN.ORG

763-276-0441

On July 1, our home visitors transitioned to a new home visiting model, Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home-visiting (MECSH-pronounced 'mesh').

Traditional family home visiting will also continue to be an option for families in our counties. As always, public health continues to offer a variety of programs and resources for families in our communities.

Along with the transition of home visiting models, our nurses have returned to in-person home visiting. This is being done based on each county administrative team's policies so procedures may vary county-to-county. Our goal is always family and nurse safety. Phone and telehealth options remain available at this time as well. Nurses are eager to rebuild their caseloads and have greater time spent in home visiting and appreciate referrals being made by our community partners!



Talking Points

What is MECSH?

- A home visiting program that provides personal nursing support for families throughout pregnancy and as baby grows and develops.
- MECSH is always free to families and voluntary. If families choose to participate, they can change your mind at any time.
- Nurses will support parents to identify and plan for the needs of themselves as caregivers, baby's needs and family needs.

What families can expect:

- Visits usually start during pregnancy or soon after bringing baby home. Visits continue until child turns 2 years old.
- After baby comes home, the nurse will visit weekly for 6 weeks, then every other week, and over time the visits are spaced further apart.
- At each visit families will be able to talk with their Nurse about how they and their baby is doing.
- The Nurse will share information on caring for and bonding with baby, playing and talking with baby to help them grow and learn.
- Visits will usually last about an hour.

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

IDENTIFIED AREAS OF CONCERNS FOR FAMILIES MAY INCLUDE (BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO):

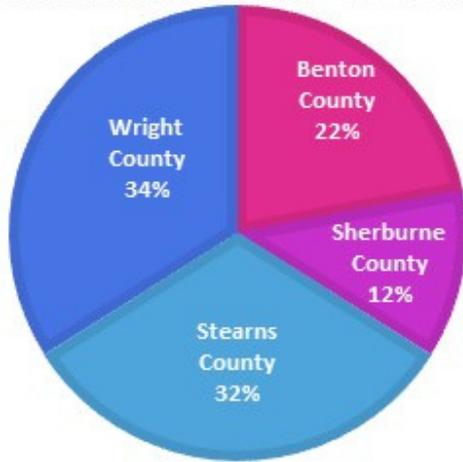
- financial or housing insecurities
- infant feeding support
- limited support system,
- limited parenting skills
- late prenatal care or poor compliance
- history of or current abuse, safety concerns, violence, mental health concerns, chemical or tobacco use or abuse

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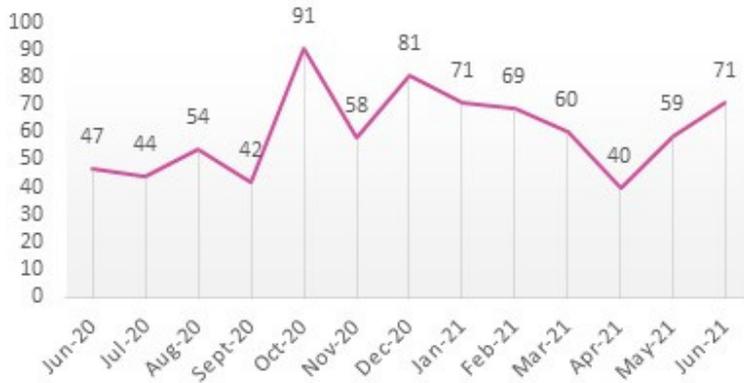
FIRST STEPS
CENTRAL MN

FIRST STEPS CENTRAL MN – 2021 REFERRAL'S COUNTY OF RESIDENCY



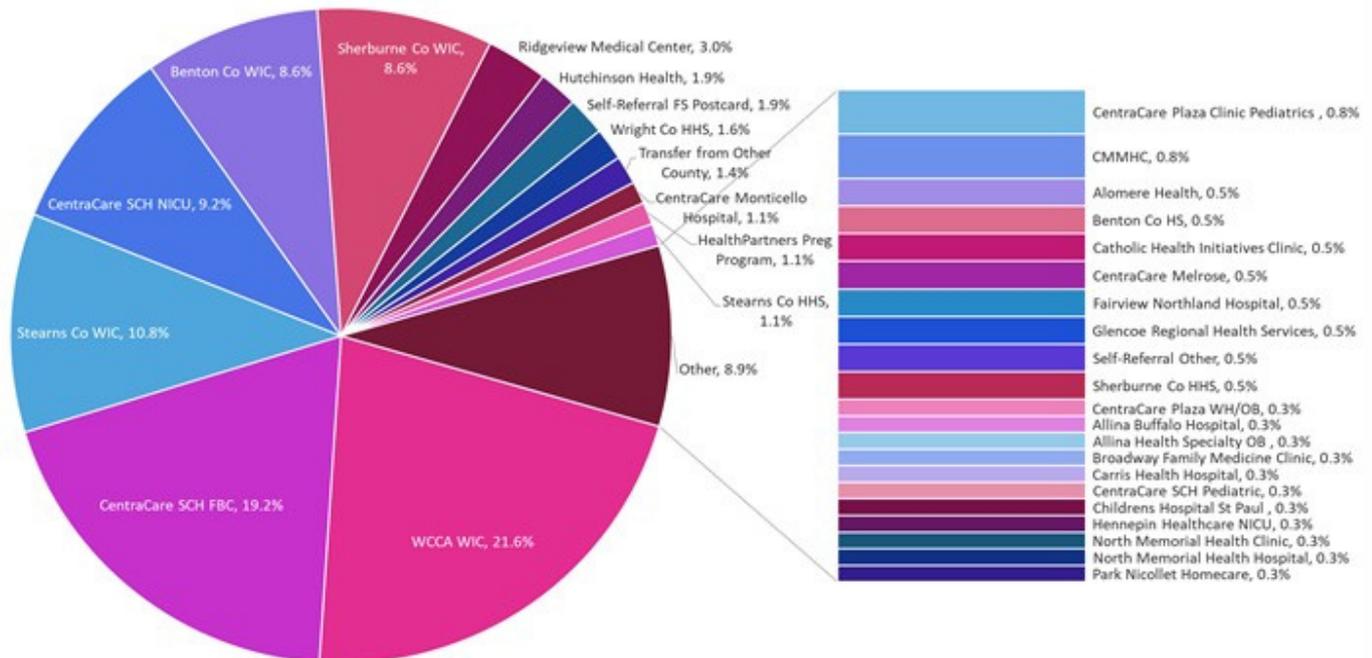
Referrals have come in across the region from 35 community partners in 2021.

First Steps Central MN - Centralized Referral Intake Monthly Referrals



Averaging 15 referrals per week in Quarter 2 of 2021, with an initial dip in April.

FIRST STEPS CENTRAL MN - CENTRALIZED INTAKE REFERRAL SOURCES 2021



Family Impact Story

In our home visiting program, our Nurses encourage parents to create family goals, and they help parents to accomplish their goals. This may be done by breaking the goal down into attainable steps, checking in on progress, providing resources, and supporting and empowering parents to take action. Below is a story submitted by Sherburne County PHN Lily that showcases a family accomplishing a goal they set for themselves, as well as building upon a family's social network.

"I have been working with a family for about 9 months and they are non-English speaking. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, mom and child have not had a lot interaction with other children or individuals outside of the family's home. Mom created the goal of enrolling her child in swimming lessons so they could have interactions with others. Mom felt this might help with some of the separation anxiety the infant has when mom is away. With the help of Community Ed in the family's school district, I was able to assist mom with enrolling in and attending parent-infant swimming lessons. During our home visits that followed the first few weeks of lessons, mom shared how swimming lessons were going. Mom was happy and proud that she was able to accomplish her goal and thankful of how I was able to support her in this and empower her to work towards the goal. She said her child was unsure and scared at the first two lessons, but at the third lesson infant was splashing around, smiling, and loving the water. Mom was so happy with how her child became more comfortable in the water and relaxed being around other kids. Mom now has a goal to find more programs she can attend with her child because she noticed a positive difference in her child's separation anxiety and her own comfort level around meeting new people."

Celebrating World Breastfeeding Week (WBW)!

Submitted by Gloria Sorem, Lead Family Health PHN at Sherburne County and IBCLC

WBW is celebrated every 1-7 August. WBW started in 1992, with themes including healthcare systems, women and work, the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, community support, ecology, economy, science, education and human rights.

The theme for 2021 is Protect Breastfeeding – A Shared Responsibility

- Focus on how breastfeeding contributes to the survival, health and wellbeing of all, and the need to protect breastfeeding worldwide.
- Although support at the individual level is very important, breastfeeding must be considered a public health issue that requires investment and support from the community.

WBW2021 has four main goals:

1. Inform people about the importance of protecting breastfeeding
2. Anchor breastfeeding support as a vital public health responsibility
3. Engage with individuals and organizations for greater impact
4. Promote action on protecting breastfeeding to improve public health

Ways to celebrate:

- Post breastfeeding trivia on your social media
- Gift a mother-to-be with a breastfeeding support basket
- Motivate a local business known to be breastfeeding accommodating to place a "Breastfeeding Friendly" sign or plaque in their window.
- Encourage moms to write a letter to their child about their breastfeeding experience
- Lobby display at work
- Wear advocacy gear



**BLACK
BREASTFEEDING
WEEK**

For more information and ideas about WBW, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/5vwhpvf3> Black Breastfeeding Week is August 25-31, 2021. Find out more information at: <https://blackbreastfeedingweek.org/>

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

- Connect to Facebook pages by local public health:
 - [Benton County Public Health](#)
 - [Sherburne County Public Health](#)
 - [Wright County Public Health](#)
- **Proof Alliance** Mission: to prevent prenatal alcohol exposure and to improve the quality of life for people living with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders. They offer trainings, webinars, support groups, and linkage to a variety of resources for families impacted by prenatal alcohol exposure. <https://www.proofalliance.org/>
- **Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace** If your workplace is committed to supporting breastfeeding mothers, visit <https://tinyurl.com/495av23v> to learn how to apply for this recognition.
- **Local breastfeeding support groups:**
 - Buffalo Baby Cafe, Wednesdays 10a-12p, Wright County Historical Society
<https://tinyurl.com/2kkwzpz>
 - Mercy Hospital-Mother Baby Center, Mondays 12p-2p 763-236-7430
 - Monticello's MILK: Breastfeeding & Mother Support- beginning Thursday, Sept 23
<https://tinyurl.com/krtszp57>
 - Maple Grove Mommy & Me Breastfeeding Support Group: Tuesdays 10:30a-12p 763-581-2021
 - St. Cloud Area Baby Cafe- beginning Tuesday, September 14 <https://tinyurl.com/92e2an2n>
 - Princeton Baby Cafe: anticipated start date fall 2021
- **Help Me Connect** Flyer on page 5 of newsletter



OUTREACH MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH, SOMALI & SPANISH

Self-Referral Cards



Brochures



Supporting Benton, Sherburne, Stearns and Wright Counties

WWW.FIRSTSTEPSCENTRALMN.ORG

If you know a family who may benefit from connecting with one of our Nurses, 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.

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 postcards to hand out, please contact us at 763-276-0441.

help me



Connect Families with their Local Communities

Help Me Connect is an online service navigator that helps providers connect pregnant individuals and families with young children (birth-8 years old) with services in their community.

When young families thrive, we all do.

Find Families Services and Resources



Healthy Development and Screening

Parenting programs and identify concerns early



Developmental and Behavior Concerns

Services for early intervention, special education and mental health



Disability Services and Resources

Community and family support for children with disabilities



Early Learning and Child Care

Education and child care programs



Family Well-Being and Mental Health

Support the whole family's safety, physical health and mental health



Tribal and American Indian Families

Resources and supports for American Indian families



Additional Caregiving and Community Support

Resources for homeless, immigrants, refugees, teen parents and other family situations



Dental Care

Find and access affordable dental care



Basic Needs

Help with food, housing, transportation and more



Legal Services

Low-cost or free legal services and information



Emergency Resources

Support during crises

How to use

1. **Visit:** helpmeconnectmn.org
2. **Select:** A category to see list of services
3. **Enter:** An address to find services nearby
4. **Create:** Favorites for future use
5. **Contact:** HelpMeConnect@state.mn.us for more information



Help Me Connect is an interagency collaboration between Minnesota's Departments of Education, Health and Human Services. This product is made possible using federal funding, 93.434 - ESSA Preschool Development Grants Birth through Five. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Office of Child Care, the Administration for Children and Families, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Learn more on the [Preschool Development Grant webpage](https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/early/preschgr/). <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/early/preschgr/>