



COMMUNITY PARTNER QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

VOL. 7

FALL 2021

FIRSTSTEPSCENTRALMN.ORG

763-276-0441

Fall Greetings! In this past quarter, our teams have been growing their skills in our new evidence-based home visiting model, MECSH (pronounced 'mesh'). In-person, phone and telehealth options remain available at this time, both in MECSH and our traditional home visiting programs. As always, home visits are provided at no cost to families and are voluntary. 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!

Nurses have been eagerly building caseloads and spending more time in homes. We thank all of our referral partners who took the time to refer families to us. Please keep helping us connect with pregnant and new parents in our communities to support the babies and next generation born into this trialing time.

We are also focusing more energy on outreach to our community partners. This includes maintaining our relationships with past referral sources, as well as building new connections, to serve more families in need. Parents now, more than ever, need these connections, parenting support, skills, and education. We are here to help – staff are available to provide outreach, either via phone, telehealth option, or in-person. In the past, we have attended our partners' staff meetings, orientation sessions, or training days to equip their staff with the knowledge of family home visiting and how we can work together to meet the needs of families. If your agency is interested in learning more about First Steps Central MN, would like an in-service or presentation, please contact us.

Lastly, if you know a family who may benefit from connecting with us, first talk to the family and get their permission to make a referral. Then either [download our referral form on our website](#) to fax in to 763-765-4250, or give us a call at 763-276-0441.

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

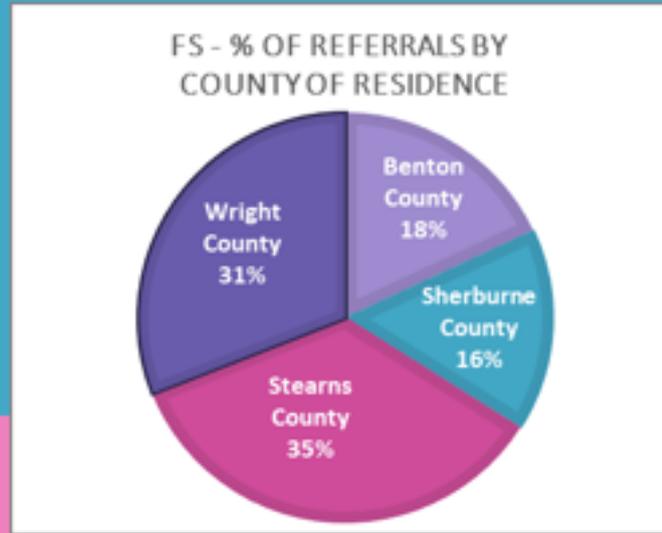
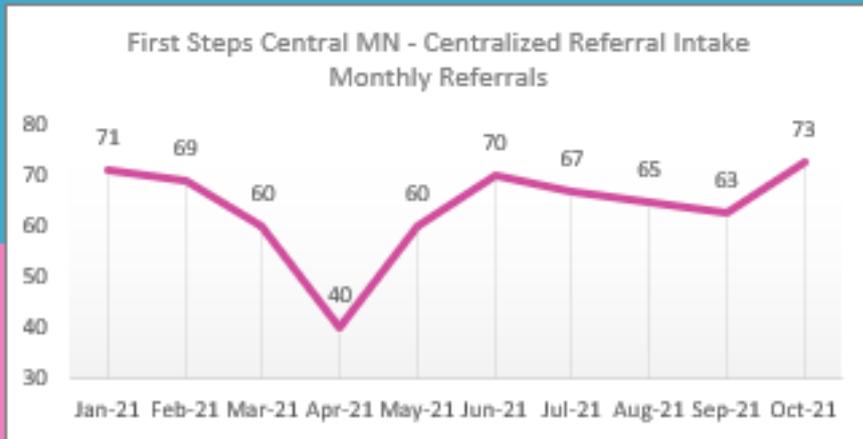
New on our website is a list of our most Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and answers. Check it out here: <https://firststepscentralmn.org/faq> If you still can't find what you are looking for, email us at referrals@firststepscentralmn.org or call 763-276-0441.

FALL 2021

QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER

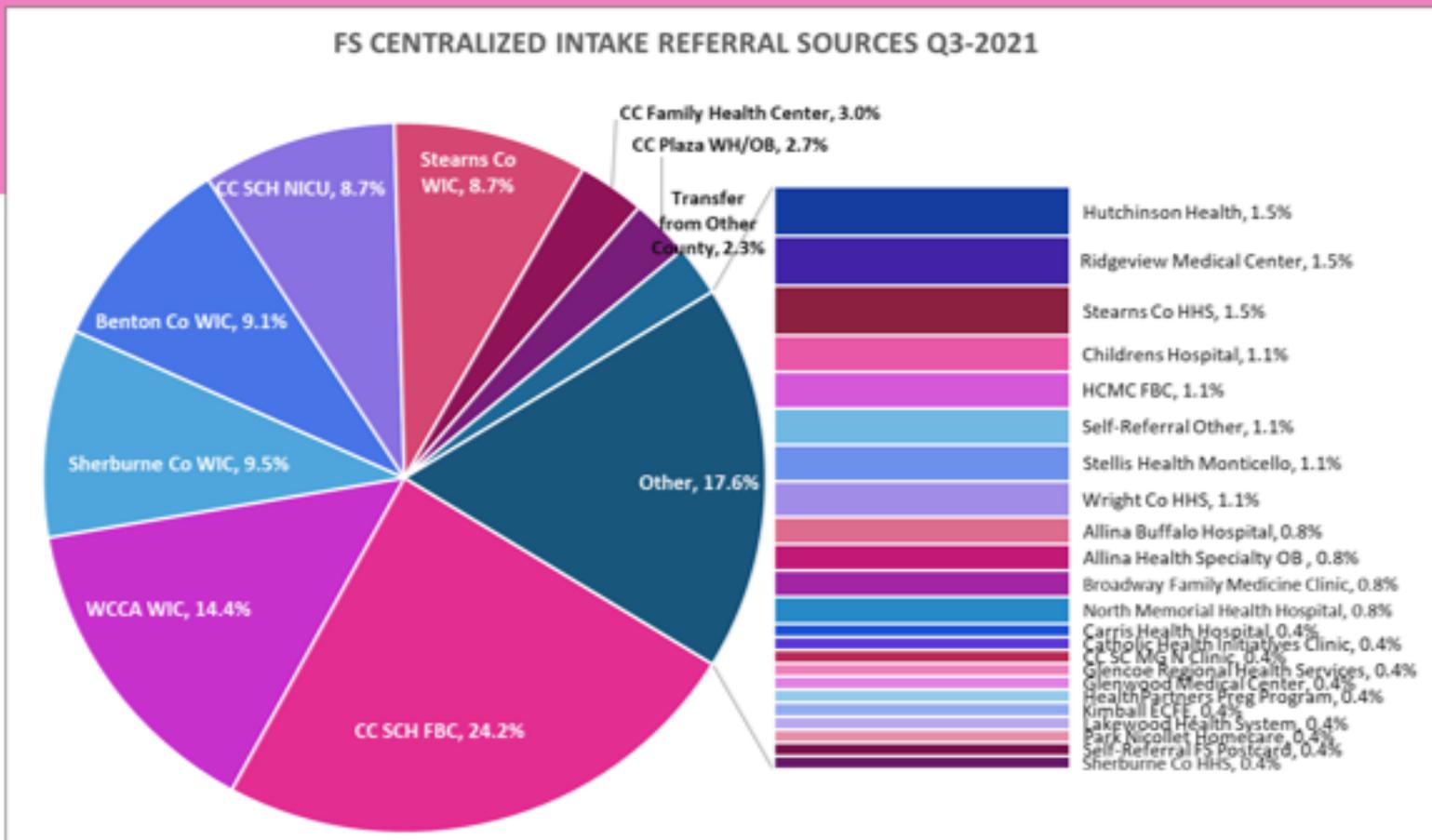
FIRST STEPS
CENTRAL MN

Data Dive Q3-2021



FS centralized intake referrals have come in across the region from 42 community partners to-date in 2021 with an average of 15 referrals per week.

70% of referrals reached with initial engagement calls are interested in family home visiting and assigned to counties – the other 30% may decline family home visiting but do have immediate questions answered in the call and are offered other resources at that time.





Curriculum Focus: Period of Purple Crying

submitted by Katie Loftus, Wright County PHN

One component of our MESCH home visiting program is introducing families to **The Period of Purple Crying**. This Period begins for a newborn at about 2 weeks of age and continues until about 3-4 months of age. It is a normal part of every infant's development. There are other common characteristics of this phase, or period, which are better described by the acronym PURPLE. All babies go through this period. It is during this time that some babies can cry a lot and some far less, but they all go through it.

PURPLE

PEAK OF CRYING

Your baby may cry more each week, the most in month 2, then less in months 3-5

UNEXPECTED

Crying can come and go and you don't know why

RESISTS SOOTHING

Your baby may not stop crying no matter what you try

PAIN-LIKE FACE

A crying baby may look like they are in pain, even when they are not

LONG LASTING

Crying can last as much as 5 hours a day, or more

EVENING

Your baby may cry more in the late afternoon and evening

Use of the PURPLE education materials seem to lead to higher scores in knowledge about early infant crying and the dangers of shaking.

- One study from British Columbia, Canada published in Child Abuse and Neglect showed the implementation of the Period of PURPLE Crying prevention program was linked to a thirty-five percent reduction in hospitalizations with injuries related to shaken baby syndrome/abusive head trauma (SBS/AHT). The study compared SBS/AHT hospitalization rates prior to the PURPLE program being implemented to rates after the program was implemented in 2009.
- In the eight years following the program's implementation and despite the great recession, which has been shown to be a contributor to increased SBS/AHT, the rate of SBS/AHT hospitalizations for children less than two years of age fell from 6.7 cases to 4.4 cases per 100,000, a 35 percent decrease.
- Similarly, SBS/AHT hospitalizations for children less than one year old fell from 10.6 cases to 7.1 cases per 100,000, a reduction of 33 percent.

Every dollar spent on the Period of Purple Crying education has been shown a return savings of \$54 to society.

<http://www.purplecrying.info/>



MESCH allows for families to get their own materials. They receive consistent and clear messaging that is delivered in doses of teach, reinforce, and advocate. The families then have ability to share those materials with friends and family that will be helping to care for baby.



Many parents share great relief learning about the Period of Purple Crying knowing that it isn't that they are bad parents or that they have a bad baby, but that this is just a normal period of development that although difficult to get through it will eventually end.

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

- **Give Kids a Smile (GKAS) Program:** Provides underserved children with free oral health care. The 2022 dates are February 4 & 5. Call 1-844-490-GKAS to find out if there's a GKAS event happening near you.
- **Benton, Sherburne, Stearns & Wright County Dental Innovations Coordinator:** Gregory Wise gregory.wise@co.wright.mn.us He can help with finding a dental provider, scheduling dental appointments, providing information on dental resources, and attending community events.
- **Fare For All:** Co-op purchasing program that offers affordable groceries and packages of produce and meat for up to 40% off retail prices. They have \$10 Produce Packs to \$11 Meat Packs and \$20 Combo Packs--the choices are nutritional and affordable. Many locations throughout the Metro area and Greater MN: <https://fareforall.thefoodgroupmn.org/>
- **THRIVE Central MN-Project: "Welcoming All Babies"** Goal is to empower and affect change to improve our community for future generations. Provide high-quality early childhood parent support to all families. Includes the "100 Cups of Coffee" interviews to:
 1. Inform Early Learning systems about parenting experiences in non-white communities.
 2. Collect and share information about existing resources, which could be the interviewees themselves, and/or resources the interviewees share.
 3. Build collaborative relationships in non-white communities.
 4. Invite diverse people with lived experiences into leadership to shape/improve those services.
 5. Supplement and support a path to more early childhood professionals of color.
 6. Provide assessment and evaluation data for the Early Learning system of practice.
- **Sherburne County HHS Community Outreach:** see page 5 of this newsletter for more information.

Family Impact Story

Our Nurses receive regular Reflective Supervision, both individually, and as a group with an Infant Mental Health Specialist, to support their home visiting work. This helps Nurses reflect on their daily work in homes and has numerous benefits. Nurses also use reflection with families to encourage informed decision making. Below is a story submitted by Sherburne County PHN Sarina that showcases how she used these skills to empower a mom with a decision that mom was facing:

"I began working with this mom in January 2021. She was 19 and just found out she was pregnant. The pregnancy was unplanned and both she and her boyfriend were nervous about becoming parents. They were unsure if they were ready to become parents. Mom was considering all their options and was unsure of how her decision would affect her relationship with her boyfriend. As her Nurse, I offered emotional support and information to mom, without bias, so that she could make a decision. Through reflection, mom was able to navigate her feelings and realized how connected she already felt to her unborn baby. She shared that she felt more confident in her decision to parent when she was educated on the resources and support that could be provided to her as a new mom, including our home visiting program. Mom delivered her baby this summer, and although she has still been faced with the new challenges of parenthood, she has been able to utilize the tools and resources available to her to feel better prepared and supported."

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



Health & Human Services Community Outreach



NEED HELP?

SNAP (FOOD) * FINANCIAL

EVICCTIONS * DISCONNECTS * HOUSING

CHILD CARE * HEALTH CARE

We can help you apply, come see us at the bus!

CashWise (East) - 1001 4th St. SE St. Cloud

2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month

9:30am – 3:00pm

No appointment necessary