



COMMUNITY PARTNER QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

VOL. 5

SPRING 2021

FIRSTSTEPSCENTRALMN.ORG

763-276-0441

Happy Spring!

We are looking forward to spring bringing new growth and change to our collaborative work. Our four counties have made the collective decision to transition family home visiting models from Healthy Families America and Nurse Family Partnership to MECSH this summer. Learn more about our new model, MECSH, on page 3 of this newsletter.

Our sites continue to monitor recommendations from MDH, our evidence based models, and individual county administrative teams to provide family home visiting services to interested families. Time in family home visiting across our sites has been limited this past quarter due to staff prioritized to COVID-19 work, including COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics, but sites anticipate more time in family home visiting over the next quarter, and even a return to in-person visits for some. Phone and telehealth options will also be available.

Currently all families referred to family home visiting are contacted through the First Steps Central MN centralized intake process by a PHN within 3 business days of receipt. If an eligible family expresses interest in ongoing support from one of our nurses in family home visiting during that conversation, the referral is forwarded to the appropriate county and assigned to an ongoing PHN who will enroll the family.

Our family newsletters have remained a monthly publication and touchpoint to enrolled families. You can access them on our First Steps Central MN website.

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.

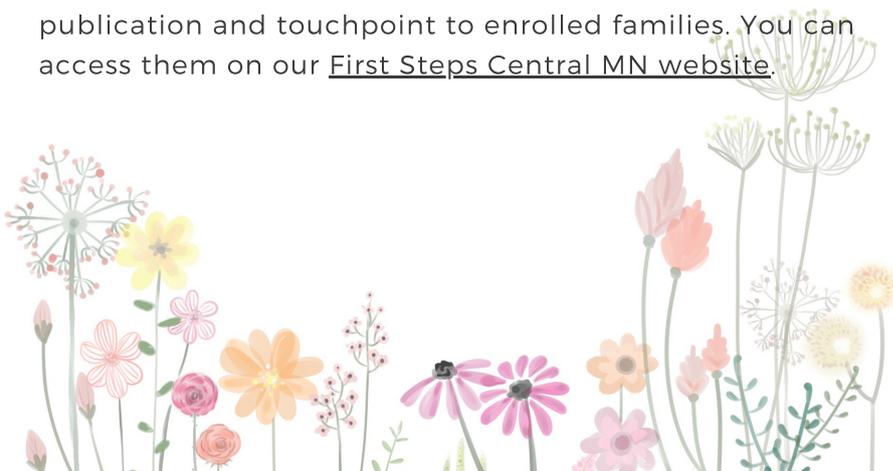
Our nurses help promote healthy birth outcomes and positive parent-infant relationships, encourage healthy growth and development for infants and young children, prevent complications of illness and chronic disease conditions, promote healthy and safe environments, and encourage family self-sufficiency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

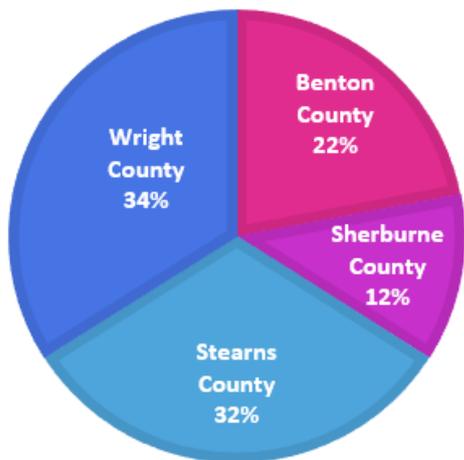


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FIRST STEPS
CENTRAL MN

FIRST STEPS CENTRAL MN - REFERRAL COUNTY OF RESIDENCY



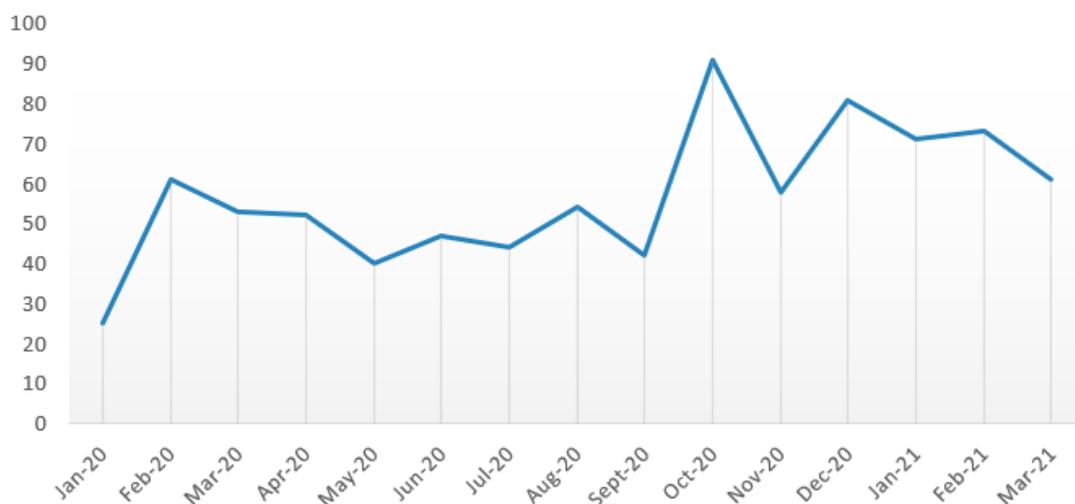
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2021 - Quarter 1

OUR CONTINUED APPRECIATION TO EACH OF YOU FOR YOUR REFERRAL PARTNERSHIP TO SERVE FAMILIES IN OUR REGION WELL.

THIS FIRST QUARTER OF 2021, WE HAVE CONTINUED TO AVERAGE 17 REFERRALS A WEEK.

First Steps Central MN - Centralized Intake Monthly Referrals



Family Impact Story

"I have been working with a mom who has had a very tough pregnancy. She was very nauseous and had a lot of emesis, which was making daily life very tough. She could barely eat, and had lost ten pounds. She would go to her primary care provider and was prescribed anti-nausea medications, but nothing seemed to be helping. Mom was becoming so frustrated because nothing was helping her symptoms and she didn't feel listened to. She considered ending her pregnancy because she felt that her health was in jeopardy. I had discussed with this mom the importance of being an advocate for herself and ways to do so. The mom chose to call her provider one more time to find a solution. Mom called me back the next day to say that after advocating for herself, her provider provided an alternative solution to alleviate her symptoms. I was very happy that this mom was able to stand up for herself to find the root of the problem and a solution that was going to work for her. Once this mom was on new vitamins her nausea and vomiting stopped. Mom is having a much better pregnancy now and is very excited for baby to come. She enjoys working with me to learn more about child development and tools to nurture a strong parent-child relationship."

-Lily, Sherburne PHN

What is Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home Visiting (MECSH)?

An Evidenced-Based Family Home Visiting model developed by Dr. Lynn Kemp from Western Sydney University for families needing extra support in their parenting journey. While the model was developed in Australia, it has expanded to other countries, including South Korea and United Kingdom, as well as been implemented in the United States in the state of Vermont, and many counties across Minnesota in the past year. Staff from our four counties are planning to be trained in June. Families currently working with a nurse in our HFA or NFP models will be supported in the transition to MECSH or other family home visiting programs offered by public health.

A primary goal of MECSH is to build skills in adaptation and self-management in moms, dads, and families. This is achieved by purposefully reducing the number of visits over time and aiming for 25-30 visits overall from the prenatal period to the child's second birthday. During the program, families are supported to make connections with other community resources, services and supports. Home visitors are Public Health Nurses.

MECSH Focus

Pregnant women (of any maternal age or with any number of children in the family) or parents with babies up to 6-8 weeks post discharge from hospital who meet eligibility criteria of having psychosociodemographic and/or health characteristics that place child at risk of poorer health and development; and lack the ability to adapt and self-manage.

Outcomes

MECSH is an evidence-based family home visiting model with proven short, intermediate, and long term outcomes for families. Here is a listing of some of those outcomes:

- Parents experience a positive transition to parenting their new child
- Parents demonstrate greater regulation of their child's environment and provide adequate care
- Parents are more responsive to their child
- Parents have ability to adapt and self-manage despite the difficulties they face
- Children have improved physical health, mental health, language, literacy, and executive function
- Children experience positive transition to formal schooling
- Parents are well-supported and confident in their abilities to support their children's learning and development
- Parents have built supportive community links and developed informal and formal supports

MECSH MISSION

Within a salutogenic (health-creating) child-focused prevention model, support identified families with young children to adapt and self-manage in their parenting journey, and source the resources to parent effectively despite the difficulties and challenges they face in their day to day lives.

Website <https://www.earlychildhoodconnect.edu.au/23-news/39-mecsh-trial-outcomes>

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

- Connect to Facebook pages by local public health:
 - [Benton County Public Health](#)
 - [Sherburne County Public Health](#)
 - [Wright County Public Health](#)
- **Minnesota Energy Assistance Program:**
 - Provides grants for home energy costs, based on household size, income, and fuel cost. Renters and homeowners are eligible.
 - Additional funds are available to pay a past due bill, get emergency fuel deliver, or help with furnace/boiler repair or replacement.
 - Families can find their county's EAP provider by calling 1-800-657-3710 or online at:
<https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/eap-provider.jsp>
- **Milestones Early Learning Scholarships**
 - provides financial assistance to low income families to support the enrollment of their young children in high quality early childhood programs (Childcare or Preschool).
 - Families can view eligibility criteria and apply at <https://www.milestonesmn.org/> or contact Mindy at 320-251-5081 or mhortsch@milestonesmn.org
- **MDH COVID-19 Wellness Pocket Guide:**
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/mhpocket.pdf>
- **Breastfeeding Resource Lists**
 - Benton <https://bit.ly/3gLn1G1>
 - Sherburne <https://bit.ly/3u5uRhZ>
 - Stearns <https://bit.ly/3gQBSiq>
 - Wright
 - English: <https://bit.ly/3nz32M1>
 - Spanish: <https://bit.ly/3e3D9Rl>



OUTREACH MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH, SOMALI & SPANISH

Self-Referral Cards



Brochures



Supporting Benton, Sherburne, Stearns and Wright Counties

WWW.FIRSTSTEPSCENTRALMN.ORG

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.

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.