



# COMMUNITY PARTNER QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

VOL. 9

SPRING 2022



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

763-276-0441

## Welcome Spring!

Our teams have been busy reaching out to community partners to help spread the word about how our Personal Nurses can support families in Central MN. Thank you for taking the time to meet with us in person or virtually. We have enjoyed learning about your organizations during our outreach, as well. We bring that information back to our teams for ongoing resource sharing. We value building relationships with you and local families and are continually brainstorming ways to improve our efforts and serve more families.

Because we value your feedback and want to make data-driven decisions, we ask each of you to take a short survey about these quarterly Community Partner Newsletters. Your feedback will help determine future direction of these newsletters. Please complete this survey: <https://tinyurl.com/y2ymxb28> (or scan this QR code) by 5/24/22.



Lastly, thank you for continuing to send referrals to our centralized intake. Every single referral that is received receives a follow-up phone call from one of our nurses. That conversation begins by the nurse listening to a family's needs, questions, and wants. From there, the nurse will use their nursing and maternal child health knowledge to answer the questions, provide education and information about resources, and offer a home visit. Our goal is to meet all pregnant and newly postpartum parents where they are at and connect them with the information and resources they want in order to support their pregnancy, postpartum, and parenting journey.

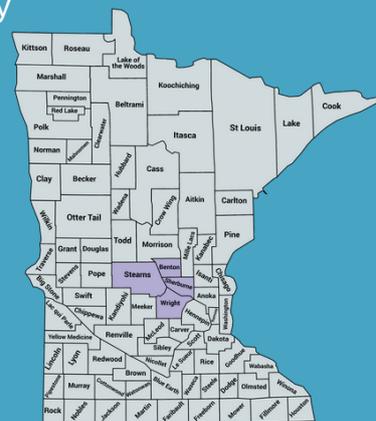
We look forward to connecting with even more of you in the months to come, for outreach, in collaboration to support families, and at local events. We invite you to continue to refer all pregnant or newly postpartum families to First Steps Central MN. You can make a referral to us by downloading and completing our referral form from our website then faxing it in to 763-765-4250. Or you can give us a call at 763-276-0441 to relay the referral information. Home visits with a personal nurse are provided at no cost to families and are always voluntary. Our visits continue in-person, but do have both phone and telehealth options available as well.

## 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.

We encourage our community partners to connect ALL pregnant and newly postpartum families to us.

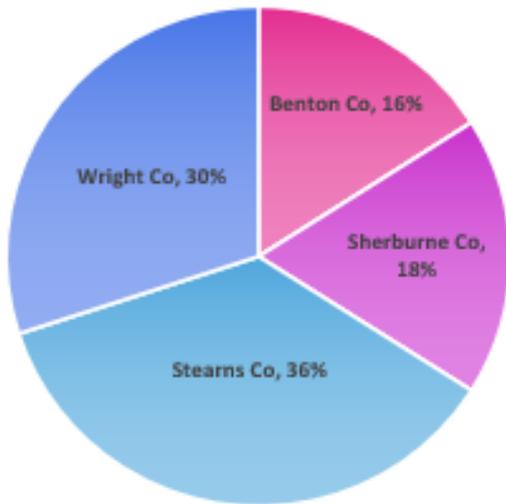


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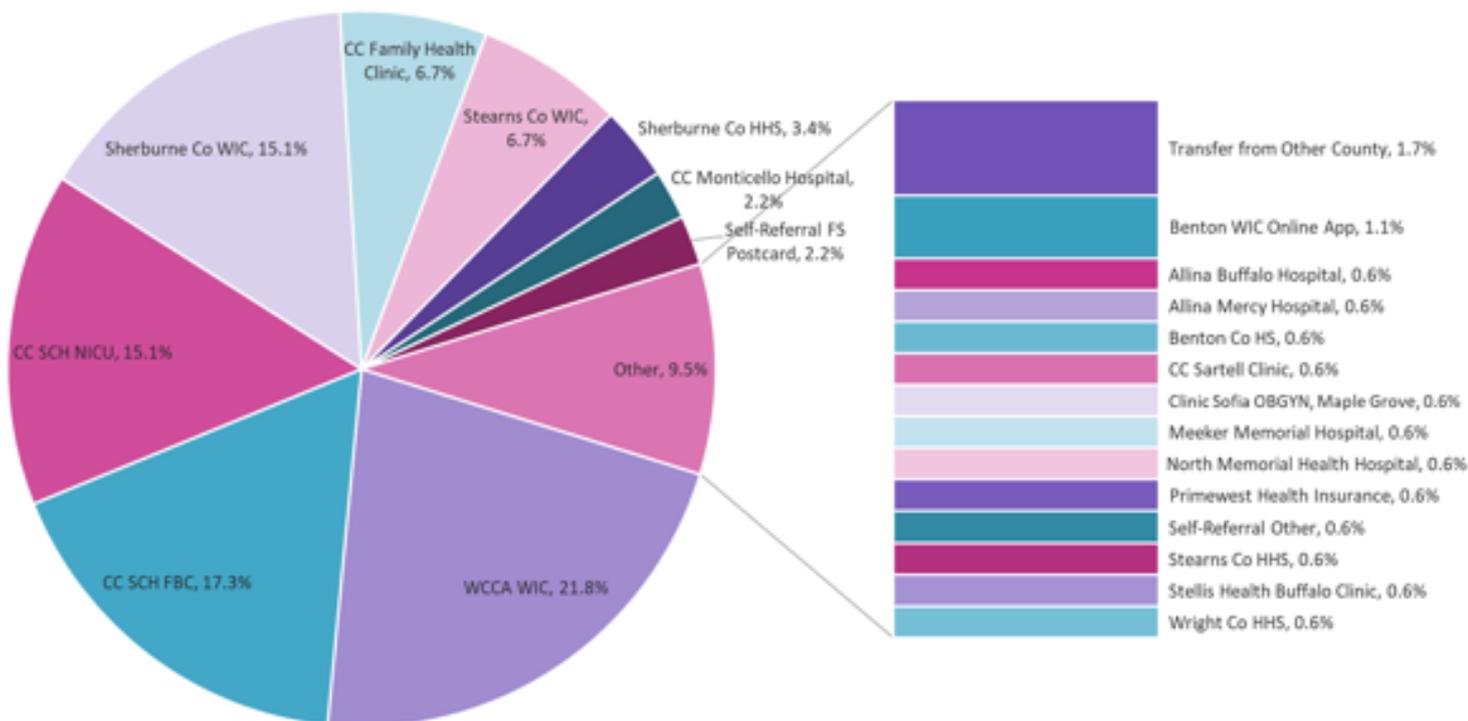
FS % REFERRALS BY COUNTY OF RESIDENCE



FS centralized intake referrals have come in across the 4-county region from 23 community partners in this first quarter of 2022 with an average of 15 referrals per week.

FS Personal Nurses reach out to all referrals to offer family home visiting and connect families to resources. Over 70% of these referrals reached are interested in family home visiting. Additionally, FS Personal Nurses are able to answer any questions, provide support and validation, and offer referrals to other services as needed.

FS CENTRALIZED INTAKE REFERRAL SOURCES, Q1-2022



# COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:



**BENTON COUNTY WIC  
SHERBURNE COUNTY WIC  
STEARNS COUNTY WIC  
WRIGHT COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION**

**We recently surveyed our partners in WIC. Here is some of their valuable feedback and more information about MN WIC!**

- WIC eligibility: Women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or recently had a baby; infants to age 1; children to age 5.
- Families must meet income guidelines (185% Federal Poverty Guidelines) or be enrolled in any of the following programs would qualify: MA or MNCare; Energy Assistance; HeadStart; Free or Reduced School Lunch program.
- Applicants must provide proof of identification, proof of address, and proof of income or enrollment in a program listed above.
- WIC appointments are currently being done by phone through at least mid-October 2022.
- Appointments typically are every 3 months. Appointment length vary depending on size of family and appointment type, anywhere from 15min-2 hr.
- Best way for families to apply:  
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/index.html> or on their county's website.

## WIC staff's tips & tricks when offering a First Steps referral:

- Offer it as follow up from a 'Personal Nurse' rather than Public Health Nurse
- Let the family know the nurse is there to help them be the best parent they can be, and to help with breastfeeding challenges.
- Explain that it is a great way to have additional support, whether that be with parenting, feeding baby, or other resources in the community. They can always opt out, but encourage them to at least have the referral sent, so when the time comes that they need the additional support and education, they have a nurse to develop that relationship with.
- A lot of time I have best luck if I offer First Steps as a nurse who is free to the client, will visit, and find them resources in the community for items they need for baby...I present the nurse as an asset for getting them connected and then we can move towards parenting goals once the relationship is established.

## REFERRALS TO FIRST STEPS (2020-2021)

- 584 referrals from WIC
- 41% of First Step's Centralized Intake Referrals

### Benton County WIC

- 850 participants per month
- Email: [wic@co.benton.mn.us](mailto:wic@co.benton.mn.us) Phone: 320-968-5156, Fax: 320-968-5330
- Applicants are generally contacted within 1-2 business days of applying (typically same day) to schedule.

### Sherburne County WIC

- 1430 participants per month
- Phone: 763-765-4116, Fax: 763-765-4154
- Applicants are generally contacted within 24 business hours if applying online. If calling to apply, it takes about 10 minutes to gather the information needed then families can schedule.
- Sherburne recently started a Peer Breastfeeding Counselor Program; learn more on pg 5 in our Resource Spotlight!

### Stearns County WIC

- 3700-4000 participants per month
- Email: [wic@co.stearns.mn.us](mailto:wic@co.stearns.mn.us), Phone: 320-203-6942
- If calling to apply, applicants may be able to schedule a same day appointment if available

### Wright County Community Action WIC

- 1775 participants per month
- Email: [wic@wcca.web](mailto:wic@wcca.web), Phone: 320-963-6500 ext 245, Fax: 320-963-5745
- Applicants are generally contacted within 1-2 business days to schedule.

# IN THEIR OWN WORDS: RESPONSES FROM WIC STAFF ON WHY THEY REFER FAMILIES TO FIRST STEPS

"I think it is a great resource and good support for families...can give them access to other programs."

"Bringing a new baby home is a big transitional period and is unique to each individual. Having support in those early weeks and months is crucial for the health of baby and mom. First Steps is a wonderful opportunity to meet parents where they are at in order to learn or review best practices of care and empower folks to be the best parents they can be."

"For first time moms there is a lot to know and learn, so having a personal nurse is a great thing!"

"I refer many of our brand-new participants to First Steps for additional support for breastfeeding, parenting skills, postpartum health, baby behaviors. The additional support and education helps our parents feel more confident welcoming their new baby."

"I see what a difference it makes for parents to have support and education through family home visiting."

"I believe families benefit from the support of caring and knowledgeable health care/public health workers. Investing in pregnant moms and their babies helps provide families the confidence and stability to not only "get by" but also to thrive physically, emotionally, and developmentally."

"Family Home Visiting offers positive parenting services and support so that families can grow with their babies. Early intervention/ education/ prevention."

"In WIC, we see typically talk with families every 3 months. It is valuable to offer a referral to a resource for a PHN to visit the family more frequently, especially face to face as WIC appts are done remotely at this time."

"First Steps can spend more time with a family than a WIC staff person has time for during the typical WIC appt."

"Many of them have needs that go beyond the scope of WIC... Clients are more likely to be successful when they feel supported."

# RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

## Sherburne County Peer Breastfeeding Counselor Program

Call 763-765-4116 for more information. Peers are recruited and hired from WIC's target population, and, to the extent possible, representing the same racial/ethnic background as the mothers they support. Peers are available to Sherburne County WIC clients outside usual clinic hours and outside the WIC clinic environment. WIC peer counselors give basic breastfeeding information and support like this to other moms:

- Tips for how to breastfeed comfortably, even in public.
- Ways you can stay close to your baby through breastfeeding after you return to work or school.
- Ideas for getting support from your family and friends.
- Ways to get a good start with breastfeeding.
- Tips for making plenty of breast milk for your baby.
- Help with breastfeeding concerns.

*"When you're pregnant or a new mom, it helps to talk to other moms who know what you're going through. That's the idea behind WIC peer counselors. They're moms in your community who breastfed their own babies. They will give information and support to moms like you."*

## May is Mental Health Awareness Month:

- Community Adult Mental Health Initiative (CAMHI) <http://mnmentalhealth.org/>
- Pregnancy & Postpartum Support Minnesota (PSI-MN): <https://ppsupportmn.org/>
- Nystrom & Associates Mother-Baby Program: <https://www.nystromcounseling.com/our-services/mother-baby-program/>
- Prairie Care Maternal Mental Health Services: <https://www.prairie-care.com/treatment/perinatal-mental-health/>

**Odam Medical Group Mobile Clinic**--coming early May 2022! This mobile clinic is offering medical services to: Benton, Sherburne, Stearns, Wright, Cass, Crow Wing, Otter Tail, and Clay Counties. Sponsored by BCBS-MN. Services include: acute and chronic illness, pediatric care, medical annual wellness visit, wellness child visit, physicals, women's health, men's health, and more. [www.odammedicalgroup.org](http://www.odammedicalgroup.org) 320-204-4024

**MILK--CentraCare Monticello's** free, drop-in MILK group is an encouraging and welcoming opportunity for breastfeeding, pumping, and supplementing moms to talk with certified lactation consultants, measure pre and post-feed weights for their baby, learn about available resources and network with other moms. 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the Month, Eastview Education Center's Media Room, 9375 Fenning Ave, Monticello, MN. Call 763-271-2218 for more information.

## 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](http://WWW.FIRSTSTEPSCENTRALMN.ORG)

### Flyer

Families living in Benton, Sherburne, Stearns, or Wright Counties can call 763-276-0441 or visit [www.firststepscentralmn.org](http://www.firststepscentralmn.org) to learn more!