



Children's Health Initiative



Message from Andrea

Today, nearly 188 babies will be born across Minnesota. And what these children experience in the first thousand days can predict a lot about what their lives will be like later on.

The science is clear. A child's earliest months are critical to healthy brain development. We know, for example, that 85 percent of brain development occurs before the age of three. And we now recognize that the simple acts of playing, talking, reading and singing help a child's brain develop and see the world as a place to thrive.

There's a lot riding on making sure our kids have the best starts we can provide. That's why investing in the well-being of children and their families is so important at HealthPartners. And that's what our Children's Health Initiative is all about. We focus on promoting early brain development, providing family-centered care and strengthening our communities. It's about taking action and forming new community partnerships to improve the health of our children from before birth through childhood.

This report shows just a few of the ways we're partnering to succeed. We're making progress, but there's much more to do. Whether you're a parent or not, there's a place for you in this important work. I hope you'll join us.

Together, we can make the difference that means a good start for every child — and a brighter future for our whole community.



Andrea Walsh

ANDREA WALSH
President and CEO



Our areas of focus:

Play, talk, read, sing to encourage every caregiver to “exercise” their child’s brain developing. As part of this work, all children 6 months to 5 years old receive a book at every well-child visit.

Social/emotional development tools to help children with social/emotional and developmental delays get to the appropriate resources. All children from 2 months to 5 years are screened for delays at regular intervals during well-child visits.

Healthy Beginnings to promote drug-, alcohol- and tobacco-free pregnancies by universally screening all pregnant women and offering non-judgmental support.

Breastfeeding promotion to encourage mothers to feed their babies only human milk for at least the first 6 months of life by offering support and resources to patients, members and employees.

Postpartum depression screening to support expecting and new mothers at their OB-GYN visits as well as their infant’s well-child visits. This is a preventive service for all mothers.

Standard workflows to support long-term health goals for children and families by aligning evidence-based guidelines, clinical tools and measurement across our organization.

Adolescent health to develop clinical standards for talking to adolescents about sexual health, pregnancy prevention and other important adolescent well-being topics.

Family and community connections to expand access and partnerships with community programs to support families that are most at-risk.

Reducing disparities including racial and economic disparities in maternal and child health.



Play, talk, read, sing every day

Research shows that the achievement gap begins when children are babies. Children who are read to every day have a 20,000-word vocabulary. Compare that to the 3,000-word vocabulary of children who aren't read to daily. That's why the American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended that pediatricians and policy makers promote reading aloud daily to children from day one.

While many of our clinics have been participating in Reach Out and Read for more than 10 years, in 2015, HealthPartners expanded the program at our 55 primary care clinics across

the organization. Our care teams in OB-GYN, pediatrics and family medicine partner with this statewide program to give families developmentally appropriate children's books. Books are given out beginning at the expecting mother's 32-week OB-GYN visit, and going through the child's 5-year well-child visit. Along with the books, parents also get information on the importance of playing, talking, reading and singing with their child every day.

As of 2018, we have given out more than 250,000 books.

Program highlights:

- We offer books in 10 different languages
- Over 85,000 pediatric patients received a book in our clinics in 2018
- Our 55 primary care clinics participate in the nation-wide Reach out and Read program.
- A child will receive up to 11 books through this program



Healthy Beginnings: promoting drug-, alcohol- and tobacco-free pregnancies

Each year, an estimated 15 percent of infants are affected by prenatal alcohol or illicit drug exposure nationally. Prenatal exposure to alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs has the potential to cause a wide spectrum of physical and developmental challenges for these infants.

To confront this long-lasting issue, HealthPartners Riverside and Como clinics started the Mother-Baby program in 1989. Now called Healthy Beginnings, the program universally screens every woman who seeks pregnancy care at our family medicine and OB-GYN clinics, using a urine screen and a questionnaire.

The Healthy Beginnings program helps women who are experiencing substance use disorder, mental illnesses, homelessness, poverty, domestic violence, and other complex psychosocial conditions have a healthy pregnancy and birth. The program provides patients with support, education referrals and resources.

Since 2016, the number of women referred to the program has increased by 24 percent.

Program highlights:

- Healthy Beginnings supports around 11,000 patients a year
- Since 2016, 3,300 woman have been referred to the program

Postpartum depression screening

Early identification and treatment of postpartum depression is a key to helping both mothers and their children have the best possible health results. The CDC estimates that as many as 1 in 5 women experience a perinatal mental health disorder, including postpartum depression.

In 2011, Park Nicollet clinics developed a model in which new mothers are screened for postpartum depression during their child's visits with the pediatrician. Due its success, we expanded the model across all of our clinics in 2016 through

collaboration with our OB-GYN, Primary Care, Family Medicine and Behavioral Health departments. On average, we reach out to 120 moms a month.

To screen for postpartum depression, we use a simple 10- question survey that the mother completes. For women who have signs of postpartum depression, HealthPartners will provide resources and support, including access to a behavioral health specialist.

In 2018, we administered nearly 25,000 screenings.

Program highlights:

- We reach out to 120 moms a month for additional mental health support
- In 2018, we administered nearly 25,000 post-partum depression screenings



Breastfeeding promotion

Each mom and baby are different, but there are a lot of benefits for moms and babies that breastfeed. For every 1,000 babies not breastfed, there are an extra 2,033 physician visits, 212 days in the hospital and 609 prescriptions in the first year of life.

Over the past 5 years, we've made changes to best support employees, patients and the community in their choice to breastfeed.

In our clinics, we've expanded support by ensuring every primary care and OB-GYN clinic has an Outpatient Breastfeeding Champion on site to support patients with breastfeeding. More than 70 champions were trained in 2018. We also welcome the community to join one of our five free Mom & Baby Café support groups across Minnesota and western Wisconsin. This program will expand to four new locations by end of 2019.

Milk depots are another way to support moms who want to ensure their babies receive human milk. Hudson Hospital opened its milk depot in 2015, with Methodist Hospital following in 2017. Both hospitals accept breast milk donations and sell processes milk to mothers who need it at cost.

In 2017, we received the Minnesota Department of Health's Breastfeeding Friendly Employer recognition, naming HealthPartners as a top Minnesota employer working hard to support employees' breastfeeding goals. Today date, we have more than 20 lactation rooms for employee use across the organization.

Program highlights:

- More than 70 breastfeeding champions
- 5 free Mom & Baby Café support groups
- We received recognition as a breastfeeding-friendly employer
- We have more than 20 lactation rooms across the organization for employee use



Adolescent Health

As teens mature and grow, it is important they feel comfortable discussing their health concerns with their clinician. In 2017, HealthPartners started to develop clinical standards for talking to adolescents about sexual health, pregnancy prevention and other important adolescent well-being topics.

Clinician education

To support our clinicians in how to facilitate these conversations, HealthPartners launched a training video and discussion in 2018. Of the almost 400 clinicians who took the training, 77 percent reported being better equipped to facilitate thoughtful, intentional conversations with adolescents about sexual health and provide education on birth control options.

Patient education

In preparation for a medical visit, we actively involve parents and teens by sending them a letter about what to expect. During the visit, information is shared about growing up, puberty, healthy eating and exercise. We also discuss smoking, drinking, sexual health, emotional health and safety.

Questionnaire

Teens fill out a voluntary, confidential questionnaire covering many health issues that they're concerned about. This helps our clinicians better understand a teen's specific needs. Since launching the survey in 2018, 90 percent of teens on average fill out the survey.

Confidential visits

Time is provided during appointments so teens can discuss questions or concerns privately with their clinician. We also see teens alone if they come in for specific confidential services.

Program highlights:

- Almost 400 clinicians took training on how to facilitate better discussions with teens
- 90 percent of teens fill out our confidential questionnaire



Little Moments Count

Playing, talking, reading and singing are among the most important things kids need for brain development. And whether or not a young child experiences these moments will affect their learning and opportunities for the rest of their life. For example, reading proficiency by 3rd grade is the single most important predictor of high school graduation.

That's why HealthPartners, in partnership with 200 other organizations, developed a community campaign called Little Moments Count. This is a statewide movement to help parents, caregivers and the community understand the importance of talking, playing, reading and singing early and often with children.

Leadership council

A leadership council was formed in 2016 to drive forward community action and campaign development. To date, 28 organizations are part of this council, spanning across sectors. In 2019, the council collaborated to launch a Little Moments Count website, Facebook and Instagram pages and an employer toolkit.

ParentPowered texting

In 2018, bookmarks were developed to promote Little Moments Count and Think Small's ParentPowered texting program. Parents can sign up for the program to receive fun facts about their child's development and easy-to-implement tips on how to encourage intentional learning in everyday moments. More than 5,000 bookmarks have been given out.

Program highlights:

- Nearly 30 organizations are part of the leadership council to support community action.
- Think Small's ParentPowered texting program is available in English, Spanish and Somali. Arabic will be added in 2020.
- More than 200,000 books were given out across Minnesota's health care systems as part of the Reach Out and Read program.



Health care collaborative

Leaders of health care systems across Minnesota have been convening since early 2018, including HealthPartners, Allina, CentraCare, Children's Minnesota, Hennepin Health, Fairview and Sanford Health. Together, we're looking at how we can expand Reach Out and Read and Think Small ParentPowered texting in all of our clinics and hospitals, reaching more than 100,000 families.

Learn more at littlemomentscount.org.





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