



A Community Collaboration to Improve Chest/Breastfeeding Rates

Peoria Pregnancy Connections (PPC)

The Children's Home, Good Beginnings Home Visiting Program, Family Connects Home Visiting Program, Peoria County Health Department, Unity Point Methodist Medical Center, Heartland Knoxville Federally Qualified HealthCare Center (FQHC), OSF St. Francis Medical Center, and University of Illinois College of Medicine Peoria are partnering to improve Continuity of Care for pregnant and postpartum women in Peoria County. An outreach worker from Good Beginnings Home Visiting Program met with pregnant women at Heartland Knoxville FQHC with a warm hand off from the obstetrics provider. The outreach worker subsequently provided extensive support and connection to resources and other programs. Patients were more likely to move forward with referrals when the worker was in person.

Public Health Challenge

Most communities have a wealth of support services for pregnant and postpartum parents. Unfortunately, families and medical providers are often unaware of what is available and/or have barriers to accessing the resources. Access to WIC, home visiting, transportation, prenatal education (including lactation), substance use disorder treatment, and more would help pregnant patients have healthier babies and be more likely to chest/breastfeed their infants. Opportunity exists to bring the patient, community outreach worker, and medical persons together in the clinic setting at time of service. While facilitating enrollment in services, simplifying enrollment processes, and improving knowledge of support options; in person hand offs result in collaborative relationships between the medical staff and community partners.

Approach

The Illinois State Physical Activity and Nutrition (ISPAN) program helped connect partners in the Peoria region to develop a collaborative approach to improving lactation support. After several policy

and systems changes to improve lactation support in the region, the group leveraged funds from the Illinois Public Health Institute's Title V breastfeeding support grant from the Illinois Department of Public Health to evaluate the impact of connecting families to support in their healthcare office at the time of service. After their medical visit, families were guided to a community outreach worker. The outreach worker met with families and connected them to Ready, Set, Baby (RSB) curriculum, area resources, and post-delivery home nursing support. Women who were experiencing their 1st or 2nd pregnancy, enrolled in Medicaid, had at least four months remaining in their pregnancy, and were local to Peoria County, IL were eligible for enrollment in the Peoria Connections Program. Enrollees selected desired connections to local resources via a "menu" of local support services (see figure 1). Enrollees (figure 2) participated in three listening sessions, received Ready, Set, Baby prenatal education, touched base with a community outreach worker multiple times, and were enrolled in Family Connects Postpartum Home Visiting Program. The program provided transportation support and three gifts to incentivize continued participation by enrollees. Enrollment in the PPC

Program was also offered remotely to patients via a telephone call from the community outreach worker after a web-based referral was placed (see figure 3 timeline).

“I literally did not know these resources existed” - Dr. Kaleb Jacobs Heartland Knoxville Obstetrician

“Don’t give up especially with young girls; very helpful and others need it” - Peoria Pregnancy Connections client when asked if they had any suggestions for Peoria Pregnancy Connections

Name:		DOB		
Support	Yes!	Let's talk more	Not now	Details
Family Support Specialist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Provides support and education in-home for the entire family by bringing activities and information that help you teach your baby so you can be best parent you can be. Consistent support until your baby turns 3 years old.
Birth Doula	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Non-medical support that enhances the childbirth experience by providing prenatal education, compassion, and support during labor and delivery. See if you qualify for free doula support services.
WIC	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Nutritional and breastfeeding support from pregnancy until your baby turns 5 years old.
Centering Pregnancy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Prenatal care that combines a typical check-up with more time and attention in a group setting. It is a way for you to share, learn, and grow with other pregnant women who are due near the same time during prenatal appts.
Prenatal Group Class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Receive quality prenatal and nutritional information, tour of the hospital, and have a group baby shower (offered for 1 st time moms). Learn about other community prenatal groups available to all who are expecting.
Breastfeeding Group Class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	A class to learn about breastfeeding basics. Knowing the facts will help you make informed choices that are best for your family.
Perinatal Mood Support Group	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Feeling down, anxious, or stressed? Pregnancy and parenting are hard. This group helps you navigate your mood and gain healthy tools to manage life stressors.
Better Birth Specialist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Monthly prenatal support throughout pregnancy until 6 weeks postpartum with opportunity to enroll in family support until the infant turns 2 years old.
Housing Resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Housing hardship or unstable housing? Request referral support options and a housing/landlord resource list.
Food Resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Referral and connection to local resources for local food pantries and linkage to other free food resources in the area.
Breast pump	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Get approval to receive a breast pump through your health insurance or see if you qualify for a complimentary breast pump with program participation in the Peoria Pregnancy Connections
Pregnancy/Baby items	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Preparing for baby? Assistance available for getting a crib, car seat, or other baby and pregnancy items.
Parenting Class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Becoming a parent doesn't come with an instruction manual. Let us help connect you to a parenting class available in our community.
Childcare Assistance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Need help finding childcare, learning about childcare options, and navigating Child Care Assistance Program? Peoria Pregnancy Connection can help find quality childcare for your family needs.
Transportation Assistance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Attending regular prenatal appointments is important to your health and the health of your baby. Assistance for transportation to medical appointments is available.
Smoking/Substance Use Support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Want to stop smoking cigarettes or marijuana? Connection to programs that provides supportive services for wellness, stress management, and substance use relapse prevention.

Figure 1: “Menu” of Services offered to PPC clients

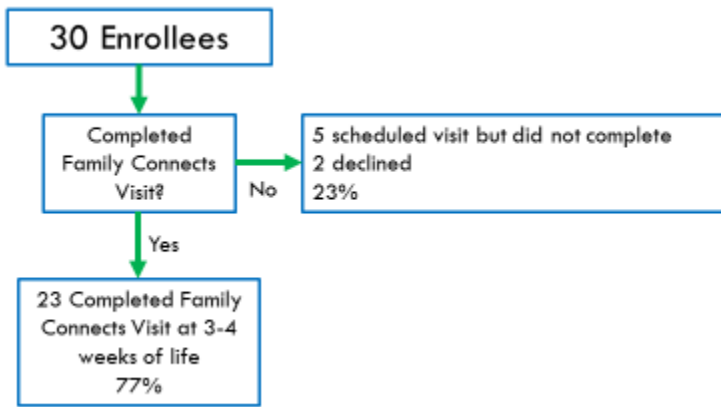
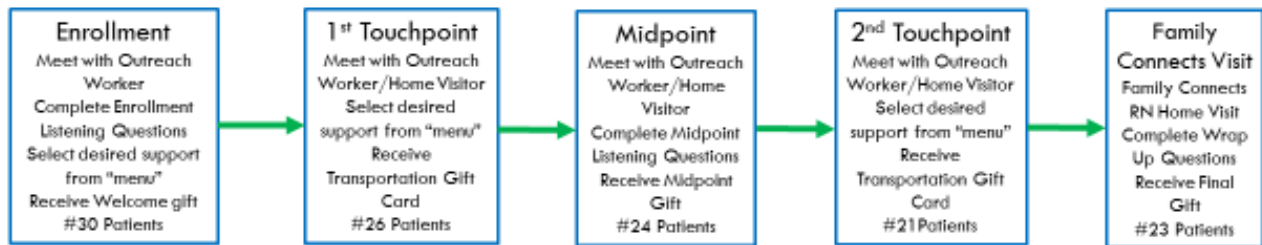


Figure 2: PPC Enrollment

About ISPAN

ISPAN is a five-year, \$4.6 million initiative to implement physical activity and nutrition interventions designed to make it easier for Illinoisans to live the healthiest lives possible, especially in low-income and rural communities and communities of color that have been the hardest hit by chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes and heart disease. With funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Illinois Public Health Institute is collaborating with the Illinois Department of Public Health, local health departments in three regions of the state, and a unified coalition of organizations from multiple sectors to tackle the root causes of obesity and chronic disease

TIMELINE

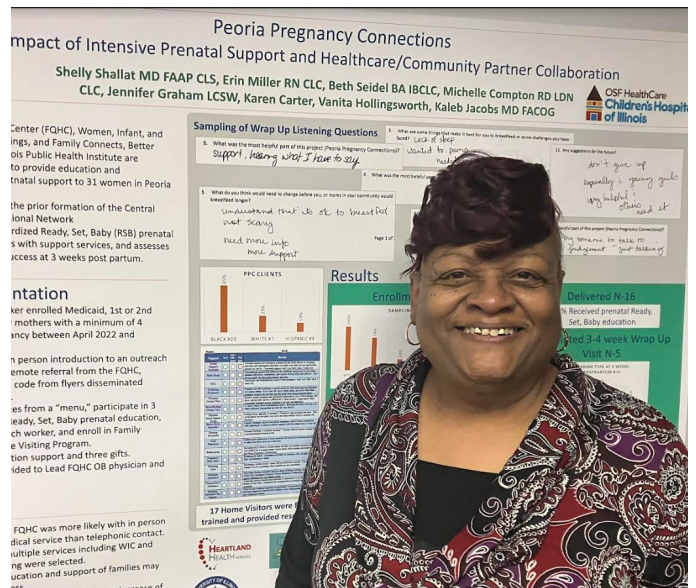


- Enrollment 4/22 through 8/22
- Deliveries 8/22 through 1/23
- Midpoint Questions were administered at independent touchpoint or with 2nd touchpoint
- Actions completed between enrollment and Family Connects Visit for all clients

Figure 3: Timeline



Family Connects and Good Beginnings Home Visiting Programs



Vanita Hollingsworth - Good Beginnings Outreach Worker

Results

Thirty (30) pregnant women were enrolled in the Peoria Pregnancy Connections Program. Most enrollees were Black (64%) or Hispanic (23%) and were located in an urban area (77%). Despite flyer dissemination to community partners and remote referrals from the clinic for telephonic connection, 90% of enrollees were obtained from face-to-face visits and warm handoffs primarily at the Heartland clinic. The most common services selected were WIC (100%), Family Support Specialist (75%), Pregnancy/Baby items (33%), and Breast Pump (24%). 80% of clients received Ready, Set, Baby Education and 17 home visitors were trained to administer the curriculum.

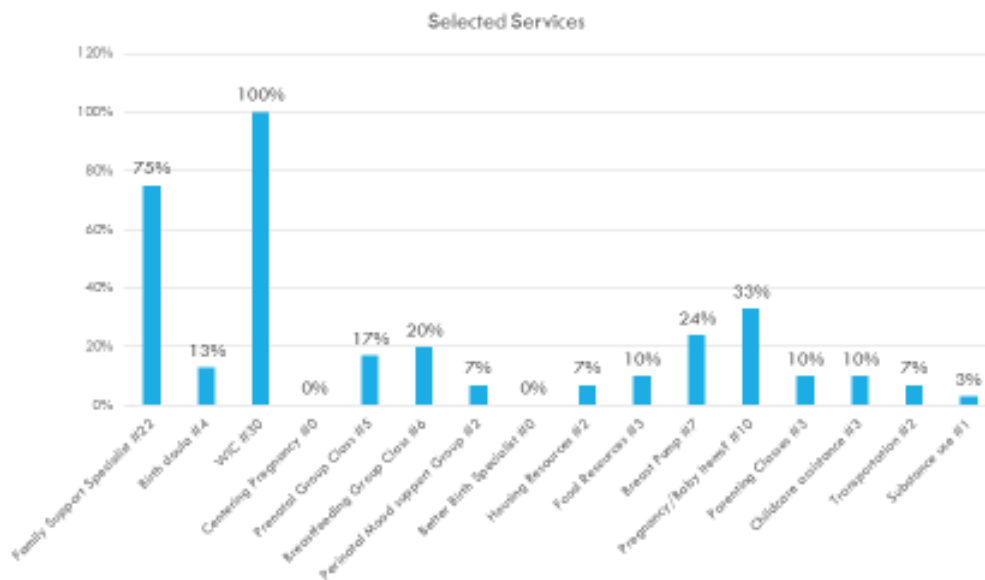
Twenty-three (23) clients completed the PPC program including the Family Connects Home Nursing visit at 3-4 weeks of age. About 87% of pregnant women indicated wanting to breastfeed before delivery. Baseline any chest/breastfeeding rates at the clinic was 40% at the 2 week visit prior to our project. At the Family Connects home visit (3-4 weeks post-partum), about 65% of PPC clients were chest/breastfeeding their baby (Comparable chest/breastfeeding rates at the 2 week visit for all newborns at Heartland for the same time frame as the PPC program was 66%).

An additional outcome from the Peoria Pregnancy Connections Program was the development of a referral process for all pregnant patients. The PPC “menu” was quickly adopted by the entire clinic, which led to a significant increase in referrals to area resources for all clients. These referrals were placed via a web-based referral system to community resources with telephonic follow-up. Zero patients were referred for resources in June of 2023 while 117 referrals were placed in July of 2023 after clinic wide institution of the “menu.”

Ultimately, an increase in breastfeeding rates for all patients at the FQHC was observed during implementation of the Peoria Pregnancy Connections Program. This is likely due to the quick spread of connection to resources, training of home visitors, and concurrent quality improvement initiatives at the birth hospital and clinic that were supported by ISPAN.

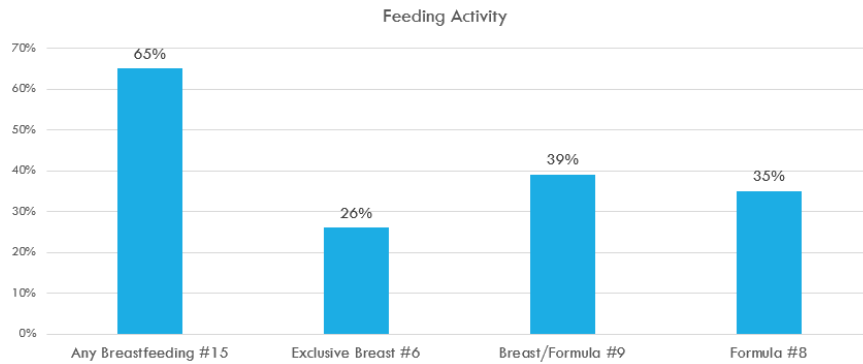
100% of PPC clients would recommend the program to someone else. When asked what the most helpful part of the project was, people mentioned the education (lactation was specifically mentioned), the resources, having someone to listen without judgement, giving assurance, and the information being given in person.

SELECTED SERVICES - #30 MOMS



All services were selected at Enrollment with the exception of 1 person requesting a doula at the third touchpoint.

FEEDING ACTIVITY AT FAMILY CONNECTS VISIT 3-4 WEEKS POSTPARTUM #23 MOMS



Comparison to Feeding Activity for ALL Heartland Newborns 5/21 - 12/21 at **2 week visit**

Any chest/breastfeeding – 40%

Exclusive chest/breast – 22%

Comparison to Feeding Activity for ALL Heartland Newborns 8/22 - 2/23 at **2 week visit**

Any chest/breastfeeding – 57.1%

Exclusive chest/breast – 27.3%

*Multiple Interventions simultaneously in process. Likely impacted PPC and Heartland Population overall

What's Next

Both Heartland Knoxville OB clinic and the Good Beginnings Home Visiting Program found the Peoria Pregnancy Connections project to be helpful for both medical providers and patients. Relationships were formed. The enrollment clearly showed that people were more likely to accept services when meeting with a person face to face instead of a telephone call. Moving forward, the outreach worker will continue to go to the clinic two half days per week. The clinic staff are scheduling pregnancy confirmation visits on these half days therefore allowing the outreach worker to connect with the newly pregnant persons. Referrals will continue to be tracked.

The Ready, Set, Baby training and materials are centrally consolidated. Multiple agencies have access to the materials and will train all new staff. Partnering agencies for Ready, Set, Baby training are TASC, Bright Futures, Good Beginnings, Crittenton Center, Peoria Head Start, Peoria ROE, and the Boys and Girls Club. Grant money was used to supply hands on flip chart visual aides.

Ultimately, Peoria Pregnancy Connections was very impactful. While PPC clients were connected to support, the menu of services quickly spread to the entire clinic and improved resource connection via web-based referrals for all patients. The team appreciated a much higher acceptance rate of services and home visiting from in person enrollment with a warm hand off from a medical provider. Multiple community agencies are now delivering a consistent prenatal education curriculum. Due to PPC and concurrent quality improvement projects at OSF St. Francis Medical Center and Heartland Knoxville, there was a significant increase in chest/breastfeeding rates in the FQHC population from 40% to 66% at 2-4 weeks of age. The formula shortage likely contributed to increased exclusivity rates as well. Embedding community partners in medical settings appears to improve provider understanding, referrals, family acceptance of services, and duplication of work.

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