

2021-2022

A GUIDED JOURNEY IMPACT REPORT

MECKLENBURG COUNTY
PUBLIC HEALTH

BACKGROUND

National data from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) have shown that maternal deaths in the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic increased by 33% and was even higher in Black and Hispanic women.¹ While COVID-19 was listed as the secondary cause of death, other direct causes point to diabetes in pregnancy (95.9%), high blood pressure (39.0%), and other pregnancy-related conditions (48.0%).¹ Many other factors influence pregnancy-related health outcomes, such as: race and ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic factors, such as income level, educational attainment, medical insurance coverage, access to medical care, pre-pregnancy health, and general health status.² These factors and certain health behaviors and statuses are influenced by a variety of environmental and social factors, such as access to care.²

In Mecklenburg County, the most recent Community Health Assessment (CHA) revealed that access to care remains a top health issue to its residents. The CHA process includes a review of community health indicators, community opinion survey, a community priority setting activity and action planning on leading priorities. One of the leading priorities to expand access to care is to deliver increased health and social services to groups that have not been well integrated into health care systems due to cultural, economic, geographic or health characteristics.

BACKGROUND

Community health workers (CHW) play an integral role in helping health and social care organizations achieve health equity, especially when well-developed CHW programs address both the clinical and non-clinical needs of patients and clients.³

In 2021, Mecklenburg County Public Health Department leaned into the complex problem of how health care systems can integrate social care (i.e., services that address health-related social risk factors and social needs) into clinical and community settings by implementing A Guided Journey (AGJ). This program was launched as part of Mecklenburg County's priority funding to address health disparities among mothers in designated public health priority areas. Using the CHW model, the program has linked women to prenatal and postpartum care and other supportive services as an effective strategy to improve perinatal health disparities and outcomes in Mecklenburg County.

1) Thoma ME, Declercq ER. All-Cause Maternal Mortality in the US Before vs During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2022;5(6):e2219133. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.19133

2) Maternal, Infant, and Child Health. Maternal, Infant, and Child Health | Healthy People 2020. <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/leading-health-indicators/2020-lhi-topics/Maternal-Infant-and-Child-Health/determinants#:~:text=Determinants%20of%20Maternal%2C%20Infant%2C%20and%20Child%20Health&am p;text=These%20include%20race%20and%20ethnicity,health%2C%20and%20general%20health%20status.> Accessed July 22, 2022.

3) Centers. On the Front Lines of Health Equity: Community Health Workers. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/community-health-worker.pdf>. Published April 2021. Accessed August 1, 2022.





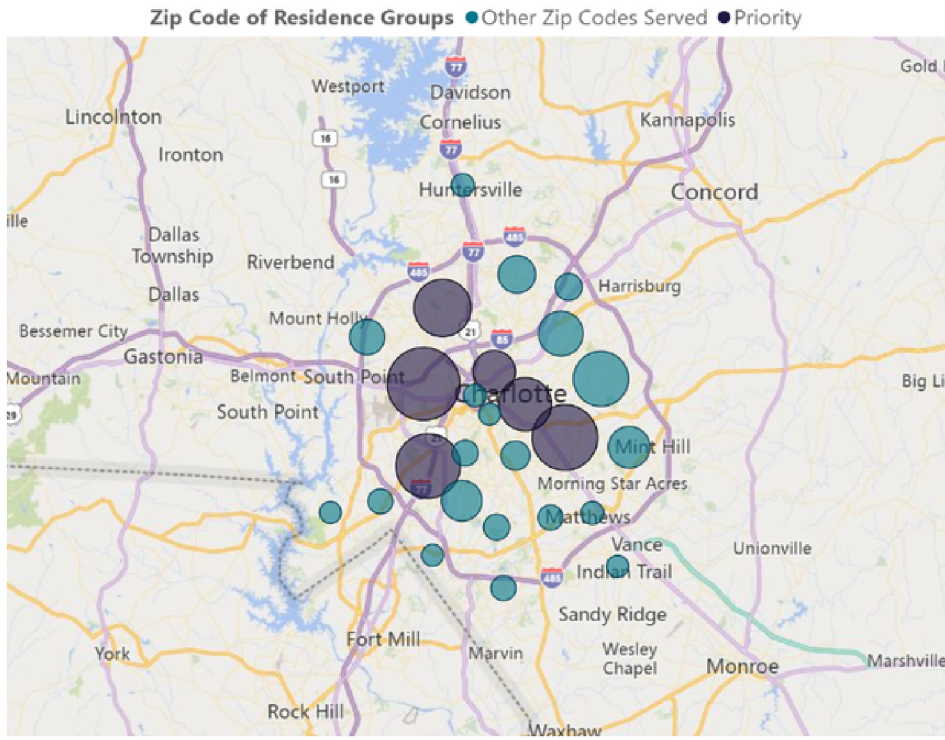
CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY

"I would not have had the essential resources to provide for my newborn and family without A *Guided Journey's* help."

~ AGJ Program Participant

AGJ BY THE NUMBERS

Clients Served by Zip Code of Residence (FY22 Q1-Q4)

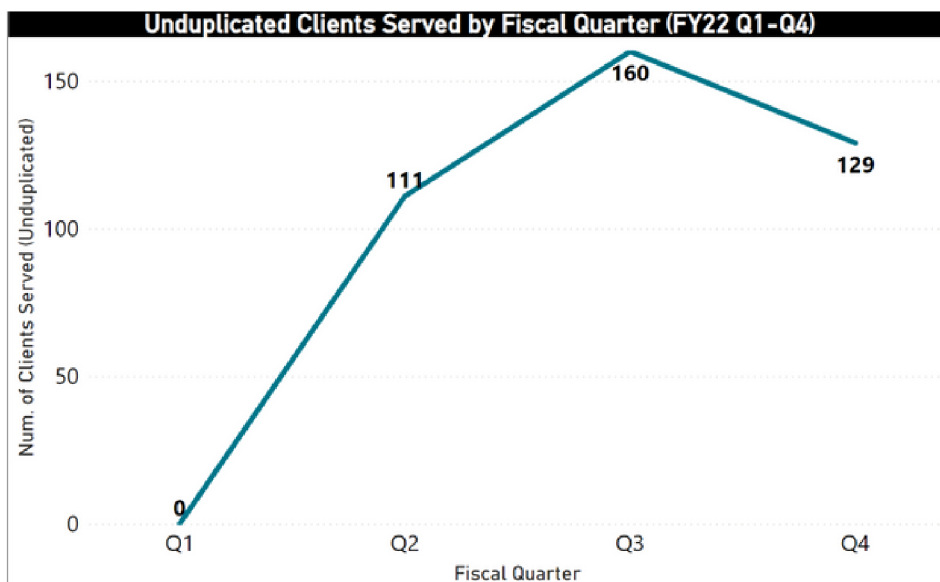


In Mecklenburg County, six zip codes (28205, 28206, 28208, 28212, 28216, 28217) form a crescent-shaped area of poverty and low educational attainment around the center city of Charlotte.

These areas are designated as Public Health Priority Areas (PHPA), which is linked to higher rates of chronic disease, infectious disease and death.

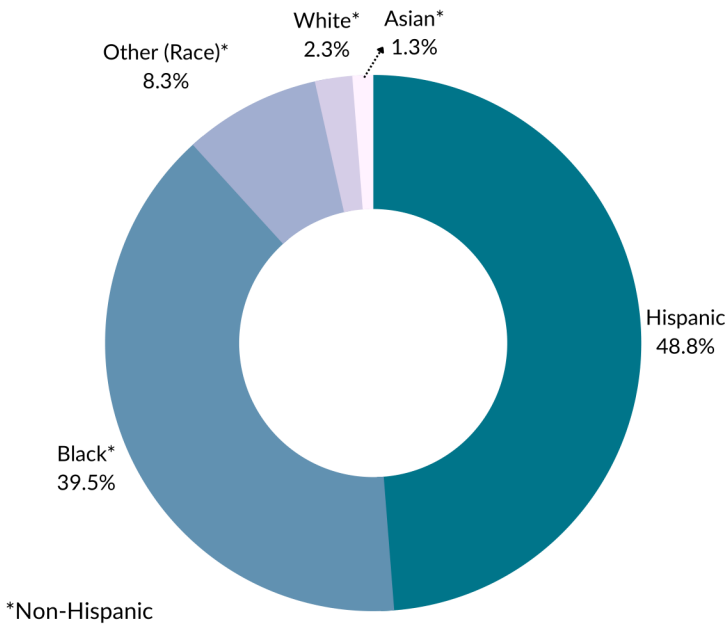
For this reason, AGJ community partners conducted targeted outreach in these areas to address health disparities among Mecklenburg County mothers.

Total number of clients served =
400



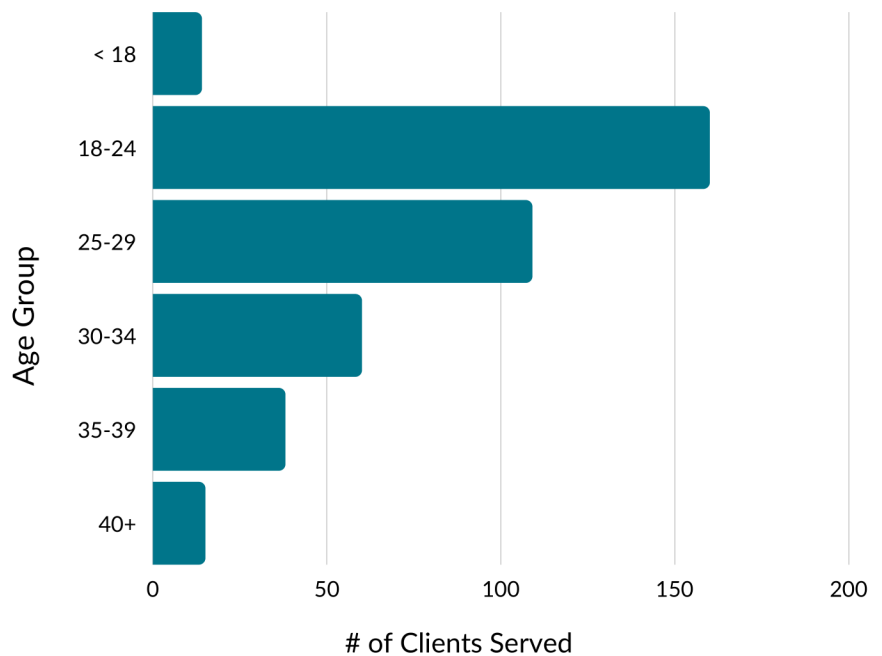
AGJ BY THE NUMBERS

Race of Clients Served



88% of clients were Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Black, which reflected the targeted outreach efforts by CHWs

Age of Clients Served

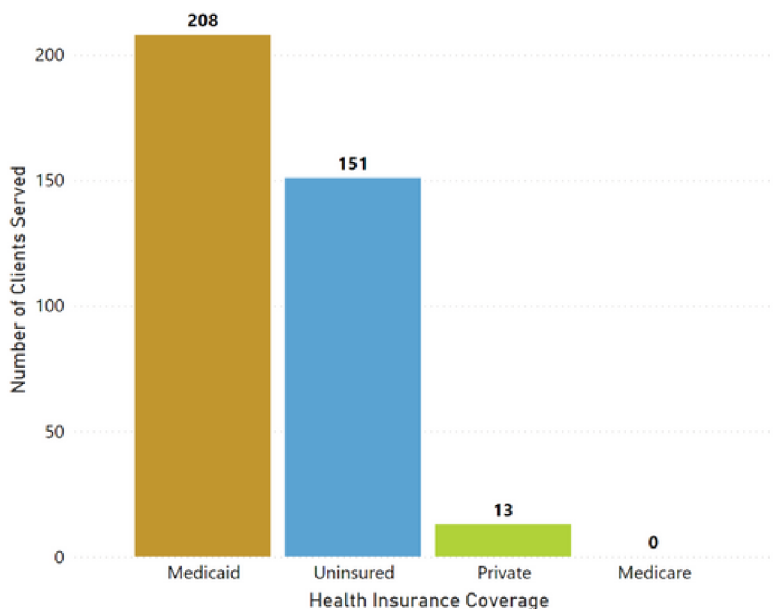


The majority of clients were 18-29 years old, making up **67%** of the program

ACCESS TO HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES



Health Insurance Coverage of Clients Served (FY22 Q1-Q4)



Over **50%** of clients were covered by Medicaid

While **38%** of clients were uninsured

Other Related Factors (FY22 Q1-Q4)



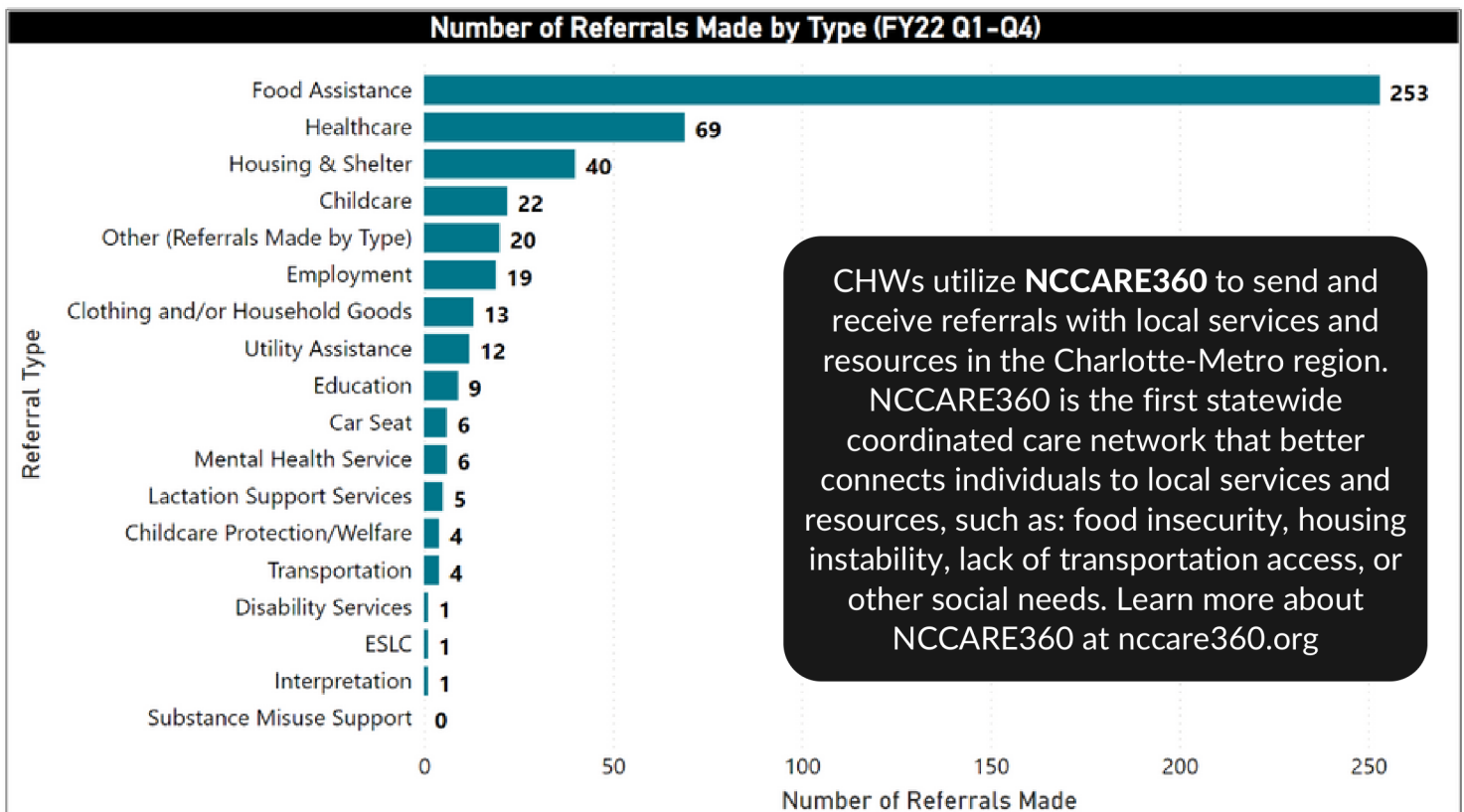
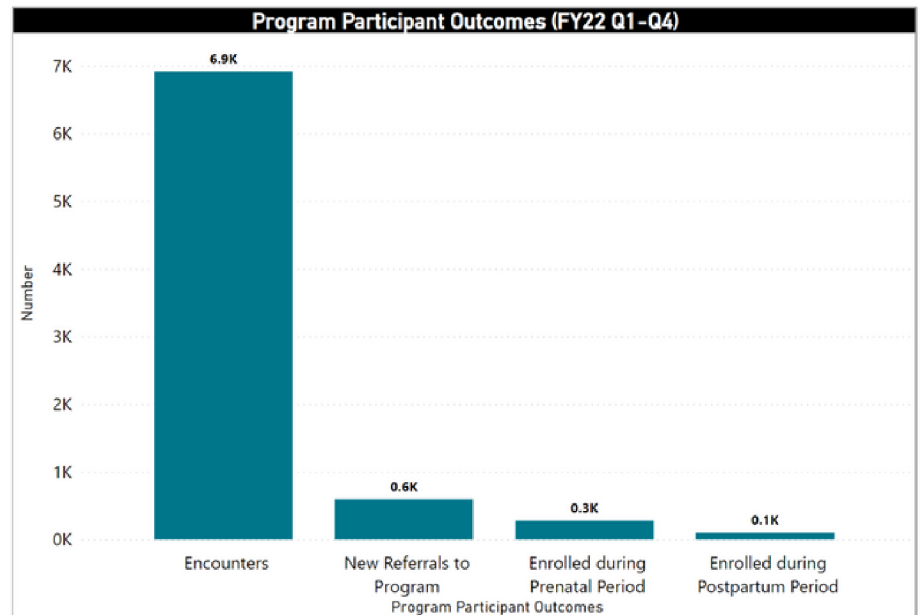
73% of clients were receiving WIC benefits

While **32%** of clients were receiving SNAP benefits

OVERALL IMPACT

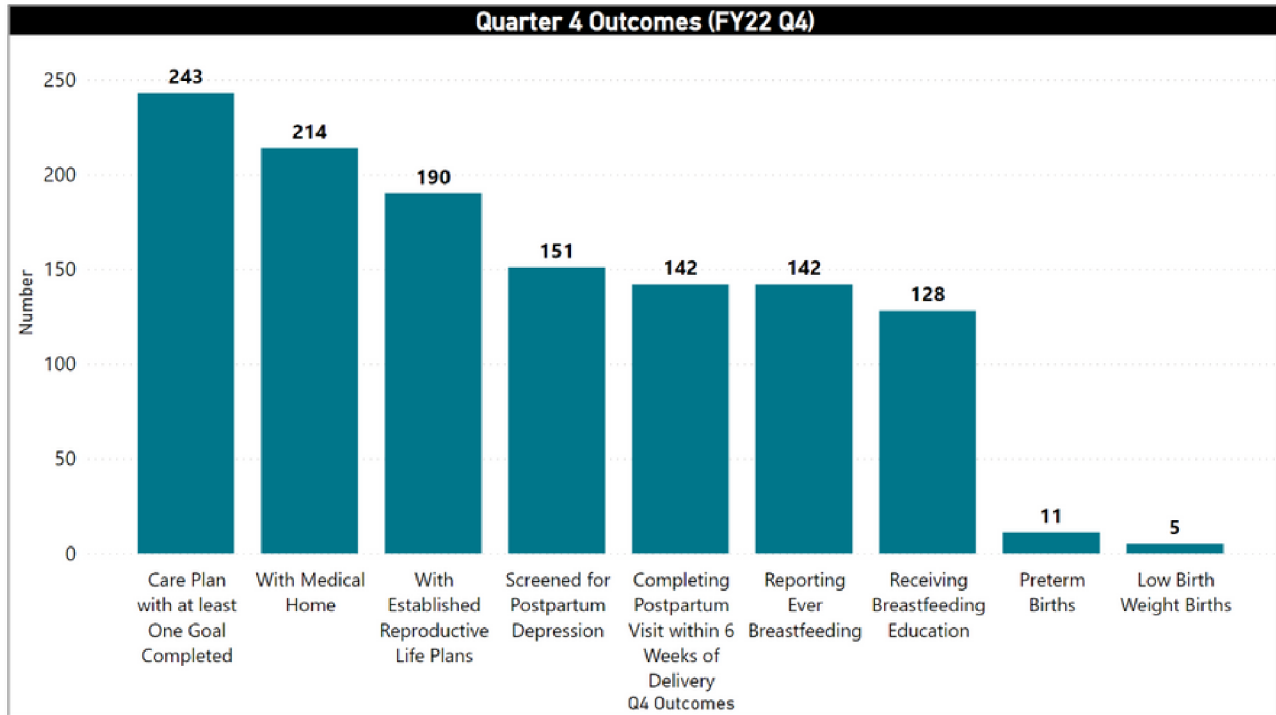
A brief outline of AGJ's approach and outcomes

An **encounter** is defined as an interaction between a client and a CHW for the purposes of providing a referral and/or assessing the health status of a client. Please note, an encounter may not always result in a new referral to any given program.



CHWs utilize **NCCARE360** to send and receive referrals with local services and resources in the Charlotte-Metro region. NCCARE360 is the first statewide coordinated care network that better connects individuals to local services and resources, such as: food insecurity, housing instability, lack of transportation access, or other social needs. Learn more about NCCARE360 at nccare360.org

OVERALL IMPACT



Outcome Metrics Defined

Care Plan- sets client goals, identifies activities or action steps needed to achieve these goals, expected dates for each action step, and any resources or support needed to complete the Care Plan.¹

Medical Home- an approach to providing comprehensive and high quality primary care that extends beyond the walls of a clinical practice. It builds partnerships with clinical specialists, families and community resources.²

Reproductive Life Plan- sets personal goals about becoming pregnant, such as whether they want to have any or more children, and the desired timing and spacing of those children. It also may help identify reproductive health care needs that include contraceptive services, pregnancy testing, and counseling to help become pregnant, or manage a pregnancy with prenatal and delivery care.¹

1) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

2) American Academy of Pediatrics



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Keila Marlin, Cynthia Masese, Lauren Cook contributed to the development of this report.

Mecklenburg County Public Health Department would like to extend a special thank you to the community partners, Care Ring and Symmetry Behavioral Health Systems that facilitated AGJ in FY 22.

In conclusion, the Mecklenburg County Community Health Worker Initiative would like to acknowledge the commitment of the many CHWs and CHW field allies who served on this project during its first year of implementation.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about AGJ, contact Mecklenburg County's Community Health Worker Initiative at CHWI@MeckNC.gov

