



BRIDGES TO MOMS PROGRAM 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Released March 2023

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Bridges to Moms is a program that looks at the many ways that pregnant vulnerable women can fall through the health care safety net and intervenes to close the gaps with the goal of improving overall women's health, birth outcomes, health equity and nurturing self-sufficiency. In an age where medical care seems less and less personal, Bridges to Moms stands out as a program that improves health care access and outcomes through frequent personal connections. The result of this investment in personal contact has been better birth outcomes, higher attendance at prenatal and post-partum appointments, stronger maternal bonding with their babies, and fewer hospital days. Moreover, the Bridges to Moms services don't end with delivery. We connect to primary care, mental health, government programs, daycare, food sources and other necessities that allow the moms to move forward with their lives. In 2022 we formed collaborations with 3 Workforce Development Training Programs to help the women learn marketable skills.



Bridges to Moms Team 2022

L-R: William Diaz, Edeal Infante, Dr. Roseanna Means, Donicely Zapata, Lydia Marshall

Bridges to Moms is housed in the Division of Women's Health of Brigham and Women's Hospital. The program was founded by and is led by Dr. Roseanna Means, a physician trained in Women's Health who also has over 40 years' experience helping women facing homelessness. We believe that pregnancy and childbirth are just one of many aspects of the whole health of women. When women are referred to Bridges to Moms, we look at their whole health trajectory, not just the pregnancy. We think about what aspects of

health access they will need going forward, whether they will need mental health or other medical specialty support, and work with them to ensure that they don't lose those connections if their social circumstances get in the way.

Although Massachusetts has one of the lowest levels of maternal mortality in the US (8.4 deaths per 100,000 births), one of the most important causes of maternal mortality among all maternal deaths is hypertension—a condition that is treatable and preventable, but only if diagnosed. The most important service that Bridges to Moms provides, unique among programs that help vulnerable women, is guaranteed transportation to medical care, even if the state places them 50 miles or more away from their providers, because continuity of care and monitoring during pregnancy can make the difference between life and death.



Mom with NICU baby



Home visit to mom of twins placed in far-away shelter

Bridges to Moms was launched at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in 2016, at first using a community-based outreach team, then in 2022, as the program grew, we hired the staff as BWH employees. This meant that our staff, many of whom have lived similar experiences as our patients, now have more stable employment that includes generous benefits. Bringing the staff into the hospital has improved our capacity for closing more gaps in key social determinants of health that, if left unaddressed, can affect the health of both the mother and her baby. It has also allowed the program to provide better continuity of care, as we have grown our collaborations both inside and outside the walls of the hospital. By the end of 2022, Bridges to Moms had helped over 500 women since 2016, including during the pandemic, when conversations had to take place on sidewalks, in lobbies, over the phone or through telehealth.



WE CAN'T DO THIS WITHOUT YOU:

The work that Bridges to Moms does for pregnant and/or postpartum homeless and housing-insecure women is critically important for their health, but is considered “non-billable” to insurance companies, so we rely nearly 100% on our donors. In 2022, thanks to that tremendous philanthropic support, Bridges to Moms was able to meet the demand for our services by hiring 3 full-time Community Health Workers who were also housing search and support experts, and a half-time Research Assistant.

Volunteers mind the babies during our Annual Career Day event, and the moms get to meet other moms, learn skills, connect to services, feel empowered.

Thank you to our Collaborators...

Boston-area housing agencies
Boston Public Health Commission
BWH Care Coordination
BWH Center for Community Health/Health Equity

- Stronger Generations

BWH Community Partners
BWH Department of Medicine

- Women's Health
- Primary Care
- Global Health & Health Equity

BWH Department of Ob-GYN

- Midwives across Boston who deliver at BWH

BWH Department of Pediatric/Newborn Medicine

- Mama Sana Program
- Transition to Home Program

BWH Development Office
BWH Office of Strategic Communications

BWPO Social Care Team
Building Mass Careers/ABCMA/Gould Construction
Cambridge Trust
Community Health Centers affiliated with BWH
Flexible Services under the Medicaid ACO Contract
Found in Translation
Friends of the Unborn
Greater Boston Legal Services
Harvard Medical School
Household Goods
InSource Services
Lyft
Metro Cab
Pacific Interpreters
State Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
State Department of Transitional Assistance
William James College Workforce Development Program

***** ...and to our many wonderful volunteers and donors*****

BRIDGES TO MOMS SERVICES:



Our staff work hard every day to provide Intensive case management; care coordination; housing search & support; transportation and food assistance & support; referrals for child-care/primary care/mental health care; utility assistance; accompaniment to appointments including medical, housing, court; assistance with translation of government forms and applications; advocacy at all levels. Poor women seeking shelter are often moved by the state Housing Department several times in one year. One of the strengths of Bridges to Moms is that the Housing Search and Support Services continue through the baby's first birthday in order to prevent relapses into homelessness.

As an indication of how available our staff are to our clients, we handle calls many times on weekends and after-hours. Bridges to Moms staff are often the first person that the patient calls when they are sad, confused, scared, or overwhelmed, because it is so hard to figure out how to connect to a "live" person in our busy health care systems. Our staff take the time to build trust and to understand our patients' cultural norms and expectations.

After the delivery, the moms need help getting settled, getting “stuff” for themselves and their babies, getting into the routine of being a mom. For some of the moms, if their baby is premature, their first post-partum days are spent visiting their babies in the NICU to bond and to learn how to care for their infants. Some moms are placed in far-away shelters, cut off from proximity to the hospital or anything familiar. Others are needing to find safety, to go where a former batterer can’t find them. Throughout the baby’s first year, we are still there for them, helping them get to their appointments or to visit their baby, helping them get their babies into daycare, helping them connect to primary care, or to transfer to a place closer to their providers or their child’s school. We are there for them to help them figure things out.



Precious baby blankets made with love by our supporters



Annual Career Day October 2022

During that year, we offer several paths towards self-sufficiency. As soon as we meet the moms, in addition to the tangible items we give them that affect their health, we also provide hand-outs on local online free classes for acquiring one’s GED or learning English. In the Fall, we host an Annual Career Day: the women are provided transportation to the BWH and are treated to a day of skills-learning from community volunteers and Workforce Development Opportunities. The skills we offered this year included: resume re-writing, interviewing skills, and budgeting advice. Several BWH/Children’s Hospital Pediatricians answered

questions at a “Pediatrician’s Corner”. Our stalwart volunteer ladies provided childcare for the day. Breakfast and lunch, baby clothes and baby items were given out and several big-ticket items were distributed through an auction.

In November 2022, our moms were invited by Andrew Guy of the New England Patriots and his wife, Andrea Guy, to attend a Group Baby Shower at Gillette Stadium. The Guys made this day into a wonderful memory for the moms and their children, and generously gave items the moms needed to welcome their babies. In the Spring of 2023, Bridges to Moms will host its first Day of Beauty—a day for the moms to be pampered and to feel special for Mother’s Day.



Moms with NE Patriots at the Guy Family Foundation Group Baby Shower

During the year following delivery, we make sure the moms are connected to Primary Care in order to establish continuity and to make sure the women understand the importance of ongoing planned and preventive care. The Primary Care connection is particularly important

for those moms who need follow up for the medical conditions that put them into the high-risk pregnancy group: hypertension, pre-eclampsia, gestational diabetes, epilepsy, mental health and substance use disorders, asthma, Covid, and others. We help the moms sign up for daycare and encourage them to look ahead to greater self-sufficiency. We have formed collaborative relationships with training programs in the community that offer opportunities for growth and financial stability. These programs are the Community Health Worker Training Program at William James College, medical translation training with Found in Translation, and apprenticeships in the building trades through Building Mass Careers, in affiliation with the Associated Builders and Contractors of MA and Gould Construction Institute.

RESULTS:

Over 90% of the women referred to Bridges to Moms at the BWH in 2022 were women of color. This has been a consistent aspect of our program since its inception and why Bridges to Moms is so important at the BWH as an example of how we put our DEI goals into action. Spanish (43%) followed English (54%) as the primary language of our patients. All our outreach staff are bilingual in English and Spanish. Despite maternal mortality being 3-5 times higher in women of color, since our program began in 2016, none of the 500 mothers we have cared for has died. The moms enrolled in Bridges to Moms attended nearly all of their prenatal appointments, 85% were successfully connected to primary care, and although the ones whose babies went to the NICU had sicker babies than moms in a comparison group, the Bridges to Moms' babies went home sooner or at least as soon as the comparison group babies did.

Demographics:

Hispanic: 70%
Black, Non-Hispanic: 24%
White/Other: 6%

Primary Language:

English: 54%
Spanish: 43%
Other: 3%

An important intervention in the Bridges to Moms Program is our Housing Search and Support work. By the end of the baby's first year, over 80% of the moms had moved into a far better/safer/cleaner home than they were when we met them. Some of the younger ones remained "couch-surfing" with a relative, or in a smaller apartment because the state could not find them something bigger they could afford, or we were able to secure rental relief funds for them to stay where they were instead of being evicted. Virtually none of our moms ended up on the street. Every mom who had identified as experiencing trauma or violence was placed in a safer location.



TANGIBLES:

Bridges to Moms spent \$73,000 on food, transportation, and essential tangibles for our moms in 2022. These are items that are non-billable, even though they are essential components of good health. We are deeply grateful to our donors for helping to offset these costs.

Huge thanks to members of St. Andrews in Wellesley who donated a car-load of necessary baby items

TANGIBLES: THE NUMBERS

1972:

The number of meal tickets given out to the BWH cafeteria for food access. For many of the moms, this is their only meal of the day.

175:

The number of Gift Cards to Target and Stop and Shop that were given to help buy food and baby essentials. We also purchased and received donation of Diapers, wipes, formula, Pack & Plays/bassinets, cribs, layettes, baby clothes and other baby items.

760:

The number of taxi vouchers given out for transportation to medical appointments including pre-natal care, post-partum care, specialty care, primary care for mom and baby, care for babies needing specialty care following NICU discharge for complex medical issues, moms needing to visit their babies in the NICU and visits to see potential housing placements. We have no control on where the women are placed in shelter—the state Housing Agency (DHCD) makes those determinations. But we are committed to health equity. Whether the mom is placed in Holyoke, Brockton, Worcester, Lynn, Salem or right down the street, Bridges to Moms gets them to their medical care.

BUDGET: THE NUMBERS

For the Fiscal Year 10/1/2021 to 9/30/2022

Revenues: (sources: donations, pledges, investment income):

TOTAL: \$562,090

Expenses:

\$240, 531 (personnel)

\$ 86, 213 (non-personnel & overhead)

TOTAL: \$326,744

I am SO PROUD of my team and the hard work they do to improve the lives of vulnerable women and their babies.

In 2023, we are adding a 4th Community Health Worker, a Program Coordinator/Manager, and expanding capacity in response to greater need and a rise in family homelessness across all of MA.

READ ABOUT OUR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS:



**WILLIAM JAMES
COLLEGE**

**Center for Workforce
Development**

Bridges to Moms Program is a partner agency and a referral source for the Community Health Workers (CHW) **Training Program at William James College's Center for Workforce Development.** Funded by the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA), the

CHW Training Program equips culturally and linguistically diverse cohorts of paraprofessionals to enter a career ladder pathway into the behavioral health field. Program participants demonstrate a commitment to working in underserved communities serving children, adolescents, and transitional aged youth. The CHW Program offers a certificate training, mentorship, career counseling, professional development, and a \$5,000 cost of living stipend to participants. Bridges to Moms Program serves as a fieldwork placement site and provides a full-time salary and benefits to individuals who enroll in the CHW Training Program.



Found in Translation is a Boston-based nonprofit organization that was established in 2011. The mission of this program is to give low-income bilingual women an opportunity to attain economic security through the use of their language skills and to reduce racial, ethnic, and linguistic disparities in healthcare by unleashing bilingual talent

into the workforce. This program provides training to prepare women to become medical interpreters at no cost. Participants receive mentoring and career guidance as well as supportive services designed to eliminate barriers to participation that include study materials, assistance securing childcare and technology support. Upon graduation, interpreters are able to enter the workforce and secure employment earning \$25+/hr in a field that continues to expand.



Building Mass Careers is a Massachusetts nonprofit corporation focused on pre-apprenticeship educational opportunities in the construction industry for high school students, veterans, dislocated workers, out of school youth, people with disabilities, and other underserved populations. Building Mass Careers provides a pathway to construction careers with educational programming with nationally recognized credentials. Building Mass Careers works in

partnership with two affiliated entities actively involved in the Massachusetts construction industry:

- The Massachusetts Chapter of Associated Builders and Contractors (ABCMA) is our private sector connection to over 470 member construction affiliated companies who hire our program graduates and support our participants with guest speakers, tools and job site visits.
- Gould Construction Institute (GCI) is a non-profit trade school licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Occupational Licensure / Office of Private Occupational School Education.

Each person that enters the construction industry is on the path to earning a very competitive salary, developing valuable skills, and building America with their own hands. Learn more at [www. buildingmasscareers.org](http://www.buildingmasscareers.org).