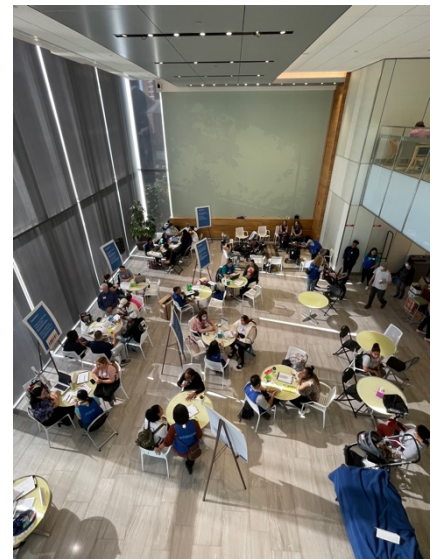


**BRIDGES TO MOMS PROGRAM 2023 ANNUAL REPORT**  
**February, 2024**  
**Roseanna H. Means MD, Director**

Bridges to Moms is a program that looks at the many ways that pregnant vulnerable women can fall through the health care safety net. Our team of clinicians, housing and benefits experts, case managers, and community resource specialists intervenes to close the many gaps with the goals 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 2023, we invested more resources into helping the women gain self-sufficiency by expanding the opportunities and connections at our annual Career Day. Skills stations included resume writing, interviewing skills and budget/finance advice. Representatives from our 3 current Workforce Development Training Program partners (William James College, Found in Translation and Associated Builders and Contractors of MA) shared materials on their programs and how to apply. Pediatricians met with moms to answer basic questions. Childcare and food were provided and all participants were given rides to the event. In 2024, we are expanding our partnerships to create more opportunities for the women to gain financial self-sufficiency.



<p>Since we started in 2016:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 600 women have received BTM Services</li> <li>• At any one time, we are helping over 200 women</li> <li>• &gt;93% are women of color</li> <li>• Not a single maternal death since the program started</li> </ul>
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<p>In 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80% kept their prenatal appointments</li> <li>• 88% were connected to ongoing primary care</li> <li>• 87% of the moms felt their mental health had improved because of the help they received from Bridges to Moms</li> </ul>
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**Bridges to Moms/Division of Women's Health**

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<https://dwh.bwh.harvard.edu/bridges-to-moms-program/>



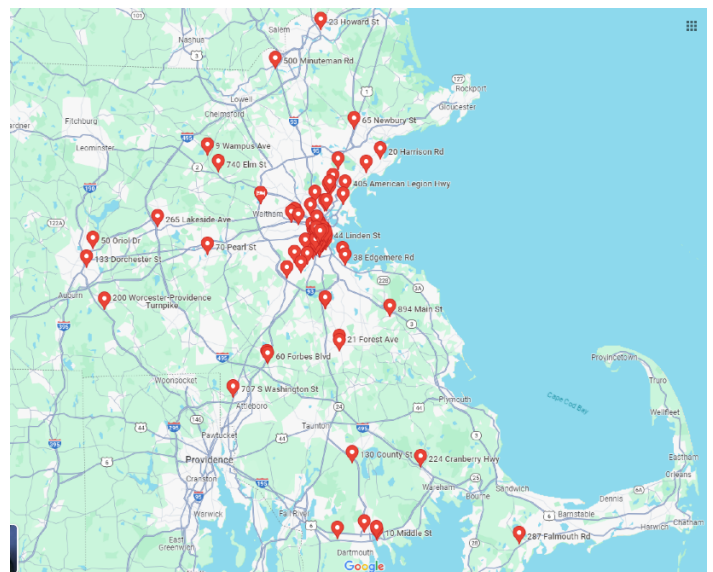
We also addressed the pervasive loneliness and isolation present in the women’s lives by introducing a second annual event: a Day of Beauty, held near Mother’s Day in the Spring, and staffed by volunteers who provided free hair styling, manicures and make-up, childcare and even live music. Some of the women who volunteered were also our clients, fulfilling one of the paths forward that we offer the women who have received our services: “pay it back, pay it forward”. Women who have been able to move their lives forward, thanks to Bridges to Moms, are offered opportunities to give back and be an inspiration to those who are just joining us and figuring out how to get through each challenging day.



**Bridges to Moms Team 2023**  
 L-R: Carmen Pena, Eual Infante, Dr. Roseanna Means, William Diaz, Fernanda Ortega

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 who are 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 because of their social circumstances. The work we do now pays off in less crisis care later on. It’s more than just the moms: it’s their babies and their babies’ health that will be adversely affected if we can’t get the moms’ health on track.

High risk pregnancies and maternal depression pose serious risks to the health of both the mother and her baby. These diagnoses are abundant in the women we serve. It is vitally important that the moms are able to get timely and expert care, but that is a huge obstacle for women who are poor and alone. 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. In 2023, with the state in crisis from demand for shelter beds exceeding supply, pregnant and post-partum moms were placed in dangerously far-away places. Some of the rides cost as much as \$200 or \$300 each way. But the investment pays off: those moms all had healthy babies.

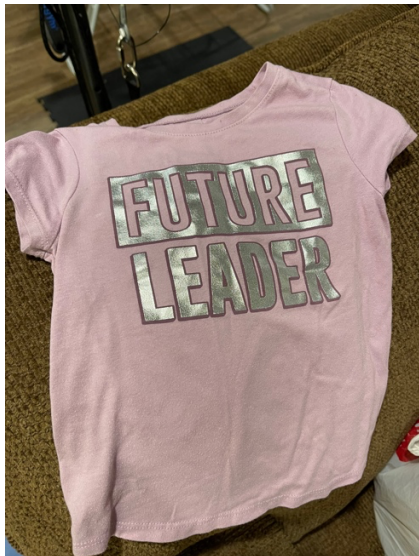


For moms whose babies ended up in the NICU, Bridges to Moms provided transportation every day of the child’s hospitalization, because those tiny babies need to be seen, held, cared for, sung to, and cuddled by their moms. Studies have shown that those critical early days of life can make a huge difference in how the babies’ brains grow. Bridges to Moms is proud to commit to making sure that our moms and babies stay close to each other and form those vital early bonds. In 2024, we are launching a partnership with Children’s Hospital’s Brazelton Institute. Psychologists will meet with the moms soon after delivery to teach the importance of active engagement with their babies. “Newborn Observational Therapy” is a proven method of nurturing newborn brains to grow and for helping new moms understand the nuances of their baby’s behavior and responses.

**WE CAN’T DO THIS WITHOUT YOU:**

The work that Bridges to Moms does for pregnant and post-partum 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. Bridges to Moms is working on long-term financial sustainability. In the meantime, **WE NEED YOUR HELP** to be able to continue to change lives. Thank you for all you do for these moms and babies!

Tangibles given out in 2023:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2118 rides</li><li>• 2600 meal tickets to the BWH cafeteria</li><li>• 250 gift cards for groceries and baby basics</li><li>• Many boxes of diapers</li></ul>



DONATE: [bwhgiving.org/bridges](https://bwhgiving.org/bridges)

## Thank you to our Collaborators...

Boston-area housing agencies

Boston Public Health Commission

BWH Care Coordination

MGB Community Health/Health Equity

- Stronger Generations

BWH Department of Medicine

- Women's Health
- BWH Medical Specialties
- Primary Care
- Global Health & Health Equity

BWH Department of Ob-GYN

- OB Social Workers
- Midwives across Boston who deliver at BWH

BWH Department of Pediatric/Newborn Medicine

- Mama Sana Program
- Center for Child development
- Transition to Home Program

BWH Community Partners

BWH Development Office

BWH Office of Strategic Communications

BWPO Social Care Team

Building Mass Careers/ABCMA/Gould Construction

Citizens Bank

Community Health Centers Affiliated with BWH

Department of Children & Families

Department of Transitional Assistance

Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities

Found in Translation

Friends of the Unborn

Greater Boston Legal Services

Harvard Medical School

Healthy Baby Healthy Child

Household Goods

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Center

Lyft

Lawrence Guy Family Foundation/Gillette Stadium

Metro Cab

Pacific Interpreters

Rian Immigration Center

William James College

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

**DONATE: [bwhgiving.org/bridges](https://bwhgiving.org/bridges)**