

# OneCare Vermont Network Success Story

## Family Wellness Program in Windsor & Woodstock



The Family Wellness Program, a newly formed collaboration of the Community Health Department and Clinics of Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center (MAHHC) and its Ottauquechee Health Center (OHC), implements the Vermont Family Based Approach (VFBA) created by Dr. James Hudziak of the Vermont Center for Children Youth and Families at the University of Vermont. This unique model is designed to improve health and well-being by focusing on the family as the unit of health.<sup>1</sup> The VFBA aims to facilitate the emotional and behavioral health and well-being of families with evidence-based health promotion and prevention from a family perspective. In addition to provision of family wellness coaching in clinics, the Family Wellness Program participates in community initiatives that enhance opportunities for families to further engage in the wellness domains of the VHBA, and promotes a culture of health in partnership with community partners.

<sup>1</sup>Hudziak J, Ivanova MY. The Vermont Family Based Approach: Family Based Health Promotion, Illness Prevention and Intervention. Child Adolesc Psychiatric Clin N Am 2016;25:167-178

### SPOTLIGHT ON: THE MT. ASCUTNEY PEDIATRIC CLINIC

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#### Key Drivers

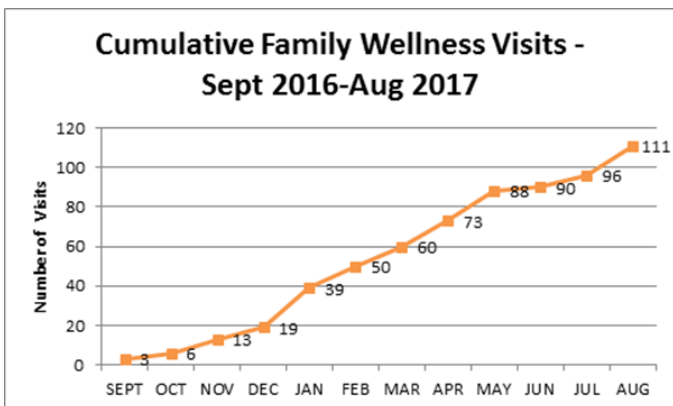
- Emotional and behavioral health is the foundation of health.\* Families play a central role in setting the stage for children to flourish.
- A healthy family environment is the most powerful protective factor for children. Caregiver engagement with health promoting self-care benefits the entire family unit.
- Parents today face extraordinary obstacles and stressors in creating healthy and positive family environments, including worsened economic conditions, traditional care givers returning to the workplace, and the weakening of extended family and community supports.

\*<https://www.surgeongeneral.gov/priorities/prevention/strategy/mental-and-emotional-well-being.html>

#### Family-Wellness Approach in Windsor

- A Family Wellness Coach (FWC) position for 20 hours/week was implemented in Aug. 2016.
- Provider refers a family to the FWC for a coaching visit at the Mt. Ascutney clinic
- Discussion at a coaching visit includes 1) understanding family's strengths and stress response, schedules/routines, and areas of interest; 2) collaborating with families to discover strategies that are best suited for each member of the family, and the family unit, that will promote health and wellness; 3) non-judgemental support to address barriers to health and wellness goals.
- Post visit there is continued support of on-going adoption of Positive Parenting Skills.

### OUTCOMES



The Family Wellness Program began accepting referrals in Sept. 2016. There has been a steady trend of increasing referrals for coaching sessions.

Windsor was awarded a Promise Community Grant in 2017 in part due to the strength of the Family Wellness Program. In the next phase of the program, the goal is to offer Wellness Coaching sessions to all families of young children in addition to referral-based coaching sessions.

"For years I have been trying to figure out how to break thru the parenting challenges I have been facing with my daughters... This approach introduced me to a new way of looking at these challenges and my relationship with my kids. It has given me the information, support and tools to identify the steps I need to take towards making positive changes." \*

"In a short aMt. of time, I have experienced major shifts in my relationship with my children." \*

"I guess I just needed to hear from someone that I had the power to do this." \*



\*Parent Comments

### LESSONS LEARNED

- ✓ Flexibility - Based on demographics and geographic area, it is important to be flexible and to meet families where they are at on the health continuum as well as location. In some cases, home visits may be most useful for engagement.
- ✓ Simplicity - The model allows for supporting a family with achievable research-based wellness activities, which create relief and are steps towards wellness.
- ✓ Integration - Incorporating a family-based health promotion approach in a clinic requires patience and flexibility.