



Who We Are

Change is good. In 2008, change was particularly good for Chicago Health Connection. We completed an intensive evaluation of our agency to crystallize our vision and articulate a strategic plan for ongoing operations. In the process of this assessment, we realized a few critical points:

- Our reach exceeds the Chicago area and, in fact, is national in scope.
- Our core competencies encompass program development, training and replication.
- Our greatest strengths lie in our ability to integrate community stakeholders and build skills that lead to sustainable growth and change.

These insights resulted in a change to our mission. Today we are an organization that provides technical support and consulting services to community-based organizations that focus on maternal and child health and well being. We're the agencies' agency – not a direct service provider.

To mark this significant change in our focus, we renamed the organization **HealthConnect One**. Why this name?

- **"Health"** because we retain our focus on maternal and child health.
- **"Connect"** because we connect underserved populations with support from within their communities for better results on a grassroots level.
- **"One"** because we believe in the power of one – one caring health worker, residing in the same community as the people she supports, engaging one-on-one to strengthen parent-child bonds and help women and children live healthier lives, and joining in a unified effort to make change for the benefit of families.

In this year's report, I'm happy to introduce you to three community leaders – each a stellar example of the power of one individual to enhance the quality of life for others in their communities. You'll also learn about the key initiatives HealthConnect One is undertaking to deliver more positive outcomes through national programs that promote community-based maternal and child health services.

There's one other important "one" in our success equation – you. Your continued interest and financial support make it possible for us to stretch our wings, broaden our reach and achieve greater results across the country. Your contribution makes a difference – today and tomorrow. Thank you.

Rachel Abramson
Executive Director

HealthConnect One is a training and consulting agency that develops community-based approaches to maternal and child health promotion. Our technical assistance helps organizations achieve demonstrably better health outcomes for communities, families and individuals. We work collaboratively to convene stakeholders around the specific needs of their communities. We train and nurture community health workers to improve their outcomes. We advocate to raise funds and gain support for policies that impact women's and children's health. By building trusting relationships and integrating new approaches into existing programs, we deliver sustainable results that improve the health and well being of mothers and their families.



HealthConnect One will continue to lead the way for community-based organizations to strengthen the health of their communities – mother to mother and neighbor to neighbor.



Where We've Been

To raise a healthy baby, you have to begin with a healthy mother.

And to strengthen community health, you have to strengthen the capabilities of the individuals in the community.

For more than 20 years, we've been training and consulting with organizations like Stroger (previously Cook County) Hospital, to improve the health and well being of mothers, children and families. Our programs promote strong peer-to-peer relationships and encourage natural and accessible methods of care, such as breastfeeding. Our training has helped hundreds of women become role models in their own communities, breaking negative patterns and bolstering the health of individuals and families. The dramatic positive outcomes from programs we helped begin have resulted in requests for consultation from national and international partners. This year, our nationally-recognized Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Training and Placement Program provided training, consulting and networking support to new breastfeeding projects in Chicago and in six southeastern states, expanding our reach and impact.

In 1996, we developed the Chicago Doula Project to train women as doulas - coaches to pregnant women before, during and after the baby's delivery. Twelve years later, our training and consulting role in community-based doula programs has resulted in the integration of this model in 23 sites in 10 states across the country. Today, we're working with an additional 11 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia to bring to more communities the positive outcomes this initiative continues to deliver. This year we engaged partner agencies around the country to successfully advocate for a \$1.5 million federal allocation for the national expansion of community-based doula programs through the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau – the first significant federal program supporting community-based doulas.

One-On-One: Tomeka Johnson

Tomeka received a call from a client who had just delivered twins and was having trouble breastfeeding. One of the children, with low birth weight, was having difficulty latching. Tomeka raced to the hospital and within 15 minutes, she helped the woman find the best way to hold the infant for successful breastfeeding.

Where We're Going

One person reaching out to another.

One individual understanding the challenges and providing support to a neighbor.

One caring friend guiding and counseling another to improve the long-term health and well-being of mothers, children and families.



Teaching community health workers to be successful at assessing community needs, providing information and support, and advocating for their clients and communities is what HealthConnect One does best. Right now we're using these capabilities in support of the new Chicago Community Health Workers Local Network. Our common mission is to increase the role of community health workers in promoting health in struggling Chicago neighborhoods. As we continue to train front-line staff and lay health workers, we are also building a network of community-based stakeholders – organizations that are committed to integrating trained community members into their community outreach programs. This work will expand the community health worker's role in decreasing health disparities and promoting health.

As one agency helping others, HealthConnect One will continue to galvanize community-based organizations and healthcare workers to strengthen local efforts that support better health and well being for underserved populations.

One-On-One: Zelena Smyer, Doula at The Haven Mother's House

"My role as a Doula is to be nurturing to these moms. They come from an addictive lifestyle; these moms have been traumatized and abused. By giving them a sense of how it feels to be nurtured they learn how to be nurturing to their babies."



What's New



As an outgrowth of our strategic planning initiative, HealthConnect One has broadened its role in collaborative health efforts. We convene community stakeholders to develop messages that promote the health of families, beginning with the childbearing year.



In 2008, we began spearheading a new program that encourages African American and Hispanic families to donate infant umbilical cord blood. Stems cells in umbilical cord blood can help to save a life – but not if the person who needs it is unable to find a match in the public bank. Ethnicity plays a role in finding a match, and there are not enough cord blood matches in the public banks for African-Americans and Hispanics who need treatment. With greater representation from these communities, birthing families we will help increase our nation's capacity to provide matches for life-saving stem cell treatments to resolve future illnesses and diseases.

Pursuing our strengths will move HealthConnect One into a pivotal role in helping communities across the country make meaningful, quality-of-life improvements for individuals.



One-On-One: Alfredo López

“About 10 years ago, I started working as a volunteer in Centro San Bonifacio at the same time that I was taking health promoters training for HIV/AIDS prevention, diabetes prevention and self-esteem. I hadn't had any of this information before coming to this country. So I feel good about being able to help people in my community prevent and control disease.”

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 Illinois Department of Human Services
 Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition
 Illinois WIC Program
 Lydia Home
 March of Dimes
 Marillac Social Center
 Metropolitan Family Services
 Mile Square Health Center
 SIDS Foundation of Illinois
 Stroger Hospital Perinatal Center
 TCA Health, Inc.
 University of Illinois at Chicago
 University of Chicago
 West Side Future YMCA
 Westside Association for Community Action
 Westside Health Authority

National

Alabama WIC Program
 Berkeley Department of Public Health, California
 Bloomington Area Birth Services, Indiana
 Brooklyn Childcare Collective, New York
 Chicanos Por La Causa, Phoenix
 D.C. Developing Families Center
 Emory University, Georgia
 Family Service Agency of San Francisco
 Fort Worth Dallas Birthing Project
 Georgia WIC Program
 Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention
 Greater Philadelphia Health Action, Philadelphia
 The Haven Peer Support Doula Project, Denver
 Healthy Origins, Maryland

Healthy Teen Network, Baltimore MD
 The Indiana Perinatal Network
 Mary's Center for Maternal and Child Care, Washington, DC
 Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker Program
 Maternity Care Coalition, Philadelphia
 Open Arms Perinatal Services, Seattle
 Pacific Association for Labor Support (PALS), Seattle
 Phoenix Birthing Project
 Seattle Midwifery School
 Support, Empowerment, Advocacy and Doula Project, Albuquerque
 University of Colorado Harris Community-Based Doula Training Program
 University of Minnesota Irving B. Harris Training Center for Infant-Toddler Development, Minneapolis
 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Washington D.C.
 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health, Region V
 Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation, Alaska
 ZERO TO THREE Press, Washington, D.C.

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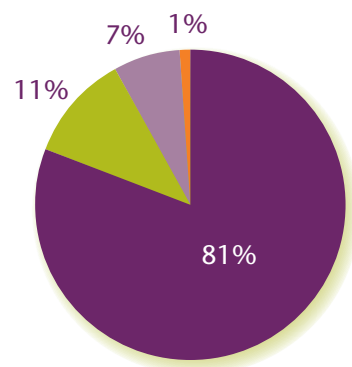
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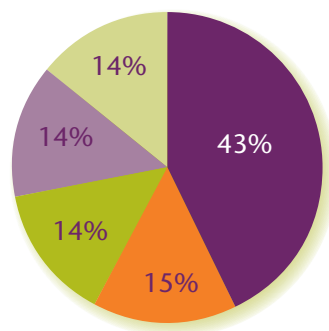
Sources of Funding Used

July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008	\$722,952
Foundation grants	81%
Government Contracts and Fees	11%
Individual Donations	7%
Miscellaneous (interest and cash reserve)	1%



How Funds Were Used

Harris Doula Institute	43%
Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program	15%
Community Health Worker Program	14%
Management and General	14%
Fundraising	14%



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Design by McKnight Kurland Baccelli/ www.mkb363.com

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Photography by Flint Chaney Photography/ www.flintchaney.com