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Zanesville-Muskingum County

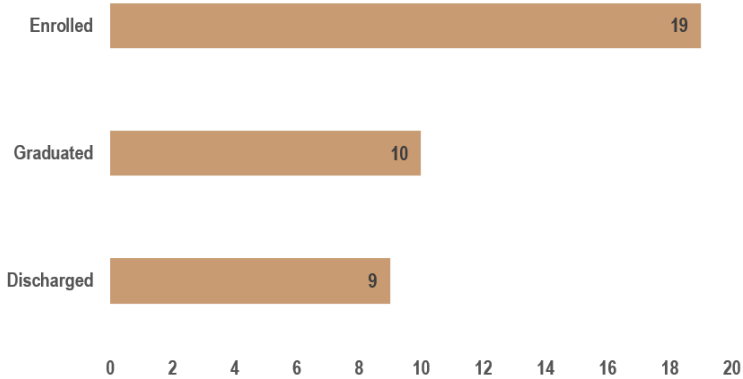
# 2025 Annual Report

# SMART CHOICES STRONG FAMILIES

Zanesville-Muskingum County Health Department's (ZMCHD's) Smart Choices Strong Families (SCSF) program supports women who are pregnant or up to one year postpartum and may be struggling with substance use, or who are currently in recovery and would like additional support. A Registered Nurse works with women to address any questions and concerns with a non-judgmental approach. The program is designed to help women feel more confident, capable, and hopeful for the future.

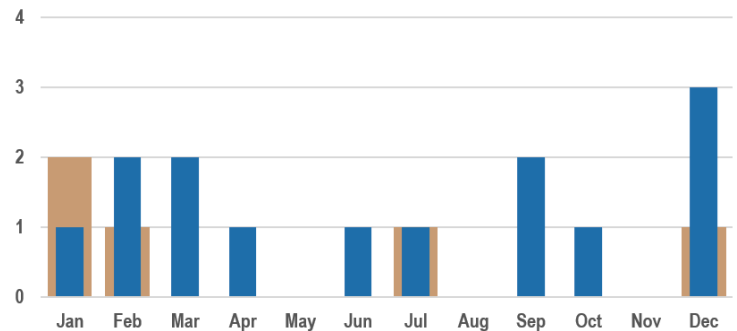
## DURING 2025, THE SMART CHOICES STRONG FAMILIES PROGRAM:

A total of 10 clients graduated from the program.

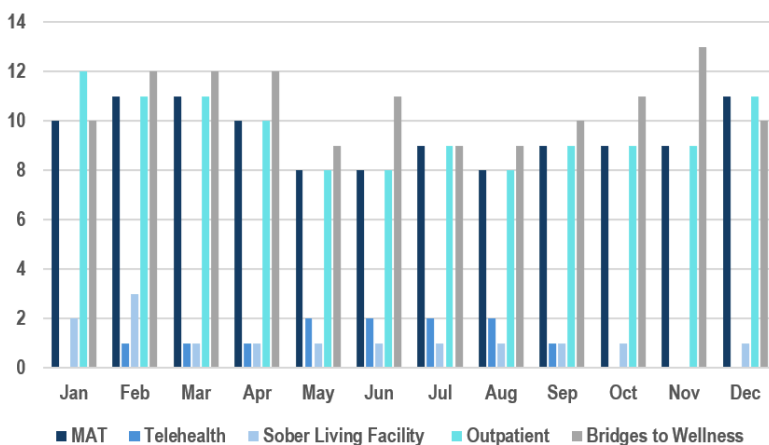


SCSF enrolled 5 previous clients for help in a subsequent pregnancy\* and 14 new clients.

\*Past clients often re-enroll to ensure they have support during new pregnancies.



SCSF connect clients with at least one additional program for support.



### Celebrating Success

- 0 client overdoses during 2025
- 1 client quit smoking before the end of her pregnancy
- 3 women in the program obtained a job
- 2 women obtained safe and stable housing
- 1 voluntary CPS case was closed without children being separated from mom
- 1 pregnant mom with HEP C was in remission after completing treatment
- 6 new providers were given information about the program



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# SMART CHOICES STRONG FAMILIES

## SMART CHOICES STRONG FAMILIES SUCCESS STORY:

Carrie enrolled a participant and began working with her when she was 11 weeks pregnant. She was having her first child at age 39, following a history of miscarriages and uncertainty about her ability to carry a pregnancy. Prior to enrollment, she had begun using non-prescribed pain medication to manage severe migraines. Upon learning she was pregnant, she immediately sought Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) and remained fully compliant with all appointments throughout her pregnancy. She also successfully quit using tobacco one month prior to delivery. Despite her strong engagement in treatment, her son was diagnosed with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) at birth and required a 13-day hospital stay. She attempted breastfeeding but transitioned to supplementing with formula to support healthy weight gain. Since discharge, her son has demonstrated typical development with no delays or concerns and continues to meet age-appropriate milestones. Throughout her time in Smart Choices Strong Families, she received prenatal education, information on NAS, and ongoing support around milestones and age-appropriate activities during her son's first year. The participant stated, "I received more education from you than I did at my prenatal appointments." The program also connected her with financial resources through her insurance and JFS, so she could care for her newborn while taking time away from work. She successfully completed the program and continues to provide a safe, stable environment for her growing child.

## MEET THE SCSF MATERNAL CASE MANAGER AND PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE



**Carrie Williamson**

### What experience do you have in your current role?

I have been a nurse for the past 19 years with experience working in maternal newborn programs, mental health, dermatology, and oral surgery. I started off working as an LPN and continued my education to obtain my RN and BSN. I have spent the past seven years working as a Public Health Nurse with a specialty focus on working with prenatal women with substance use disorder.

### What do the steps of this program look like?

I work very closely with each individual to build trust, assess their needs, and identify any barriers they may face. I connect them to resources to overcome these barriers, provide education, and offer support throughout the pregnancy and postpartum year.

### Does anyone else in the county do similar work?

My program is very unique and was funded by the Mental Health and Recovery Service Board through a grant seven years ago to help address the problem of substance use during pregnancy. Since then, the grant funding has ended and ZMCHD continues to fund the program. We have seen a huge growth in the way the community looks at substance use, the treatment providers that have opened in the area, and the services they offer. This program is free and completely voluntary and is tailored to each participant's needs. I work closely with our community partners to provide wrap-around support to the participants who enroll in the program. To date, 69 women have graduated from the program.

### Why do you think this program is important?

I think it is important to have a nonjudgemental program to support pregnant people who are affected by substance use. There are a lot of stigmas involved with substance use and when you add pregnancy on top of this, it brings an additional layer of guilt and shame. The participants may face additional social determinant needs and challenges as well. My goal is to provide wrap-around support and improve care for pregnant and postpartum people affected by substance use so they can deliver a healthy baby and continue to live a sober and healthy lifestyle to raise their children. The health of our families impacts the community.