



AAHP Executive Committee with Montgomery County Councilmember

## AAHP MONTHLY REPORT

December 2022



## I. INTRODUCTION

December concluded the first half of the fiscal year 2023 for the service contract between Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and McFarland & Associates, Inc. December was replete with intense and expansive activities by the African American Health Program (AAHP). It was also a time to reflect on the accomplishments and challenges of the past six months and to embrace new opportunities to improve and expand services for Montgomery County's Black/African American residents in the next six months.

The month began with World AIDS Day on December 1, 2022. To mark this occasion, AAHP staff attended the Solidarity for Health Equity event at the Silver Spring Civic Center and the Montgomery County HIV Testing, Linkage & Care Collaborative Meeting. The Solidarity for Health Equity event strongly emphasized the importance of HIV screening. It brought to light that Black women have one of the highest rates of HIV in Montgomery County. The data and related presentations underscored the importance of AAHP's daily work in Montgomery County. Educational materials were disseminated about AAHP services and HIV/AIDS, alongside condoms and giveaway items. Furthermore, the Montgomery County HIV Testing, Linkage & Care Collaborative Meeting presented an occasion to network and collaborate with other organizations committed to improving health and wellbeing in Montgomery County. The lessons learned will undoubtedly inform the operational planning for **National Black/HIV/AIDS Awareness Day 2023 on February 7, 2023**.

December was an intensely productive month during which AAHP secured access to high-quality healthcare services for Black/African American residents through a collaboration between AAHP and the Kaiser Foundation. As a result of this collaboration, AAHP assisted fifty (25) residents in renewing free health insurance coverage obtained in 2021 and gained new additional coverage for fifty (50) County residents in 2022. The estimated value of this coverage exceeds \$650,000 in annual healthcare premiums benefits. Also, the African American Health Program was awarded a competitive grant of \$25,000 to provide training and technical assistance to teach the new beneficiaries how to use the Kaiser health portals. Internet access to the portal will facilitate access to healthcare services by simplifying scheduling appointments, refilling prescriptions, obtaining healthcare data and laboratory results, etc. In addition, this grant will provide stipends to undergraduate and graduate student interns.

On December 16, 2022, the AAHP staff joined the Wheaton Woods Elementary School to host a winter wellness health fair. The goal of this occasion was to offer families a chance to engage in health screenings with community partners and to partake in winter crafts. At the event, AAHP provided blood pressure and blood glucose testing, bags filled with giveaway items, and pamphlets about safe sex, cardiovascular disease, breast cancer, and preventing obesity. This drew considerable attention and made AAHP's screening table one of the most popular booths at the event. After reviewing readings from many participants, several AAHP staff members noticed elevated readings, which were referred to the comprehensive chronic disease management team at AAHP for further care. Primarily families with elementary-aged children attended; it was inspiring to witness these kids observe their parent's preventative health practices and express interest in what they saw. Data has shown that when children watch their parents engage in these measures, they are more likely to understand how medical screenings can contribute to good health. Last but not least, this fair also aimed to encourage interaction

with County residents of Ethiopian descent, a population AAHP has been targeting for expanded community engagement.

Throughout December, SMILE staff commendably sought to build on successes from earlier months and engage SMILE moms more meaningfully by holding weekly breastfeeding support groups. Thoughtful implementation of tried-and-true strategies like text, e-mail, and call reminders, combined with invaluable support from nurses and interns in creating visually attractive flyers to inform the public, helped yield a 63% jump in breastfeeding numbers from July to December. According to the CDC, early breastfeeding cessation typically results from poor latch technique and lack of support and education. However, with increased instructional elements such as motivational interviewing and early intervention when addressing any challenges that may arise, breastfeeding mothers are now increasingly able to enjoy the benefits of breastfeeding with peace of mind.

In December, AAHP provided an expanded array of services for mothers lacking the essential resources or assistance required to foster a healthy pregnancy and postpartum stage. To this end, the staff welcomed several other organizations to strengthen the accessibility of services for mothers of color. AAHP began collaborating more efficiently with Montgomery County's Infants and Toddlers Program by introducing SMILE moms to the comprehensive array of services provided by the program to assist families in meeting the developmental requirements of infants and toddlers. Still, unfortunately, many people of African descent are unaware that this resource exists and miss out on the free benefits associated with prevention and intervention. Accepting children from birth to 34.5 months (as well as any referrals to the Child Find program), this program examines five critical areas of early childhood development: physical, social/emotional, cognitive, communication, and adaptive—while also providing services at home or within the community to families between birth and the beginning of school after their child's fourth birthday. Parents received advice and counseling about setting priorities and evaluating a child's strengths and needs. The training emphasized a family-centered model where parents can learn how to support their children's growth. Studies suggest that a 25% delay in one domain increases the risk of less-than-desirable results.

On December 20, 2022, AAHP hosted a webinar with the CEO and founder of Dynamic Wellness Massage to discuss the positive impact massage therapy can have on women's perinatal care and its potential to bond mothers with their infants. As a certified provider of maternal-infant massage services and a licensed massage therapist, she promotes massage as additional support during the pre-and postpartum phases. She educates parents/caregivers on how to provide therapeutic massage for their babies effectively. Her offerings range from prenatal and postpartum massages to infant massages—all backed by research that suggests these massages enhance overall health, decrease stress levels, and reduce muscle tension (American Pregnancy Association).

## **II. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

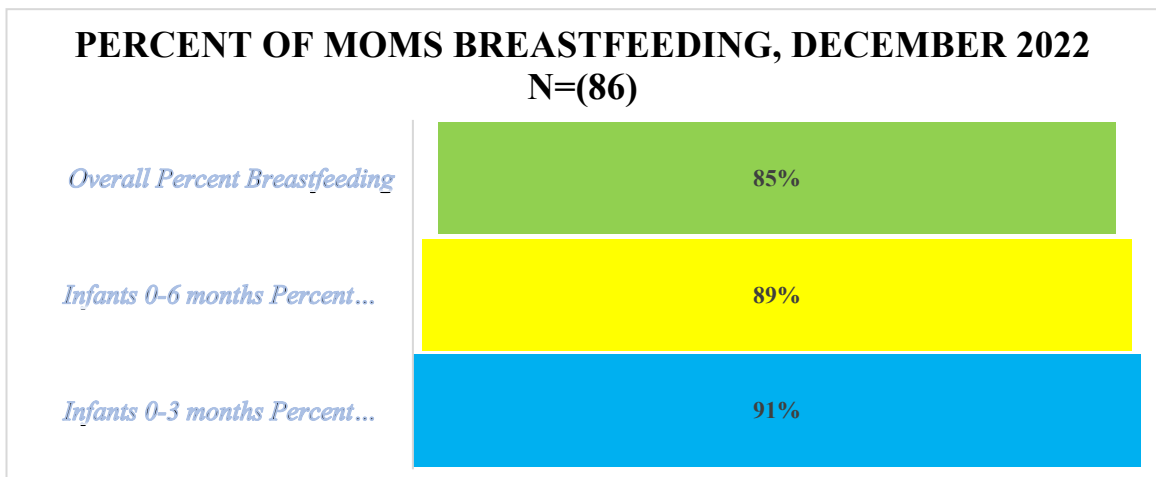
### A. The SMILE Program

On December 21, 2022, AAHP hosted an unforgettable end-of-year SMILE Graduation Ceremony and Christmas party with 15 mothers and 17 babies who had recently turned one. Invitations were sent in English and French, drawing a record turnout for AAHP. Guests were allowed to converse, ask questions, express concerns, observe, and celebrate the season.

During December, the SMILE program continued to sustain a large caseload to ensure that Black/African American pregnant women, mothers, and their infants live equally healthy lives in Montgomery County. The nurses continued to provide outstanding services that covered prenatal and postpartum education, referrals, and follow-ups toward the goal of favorable pregnancy outcomes and infant care for up to a year.

In December, the SMILE program managed an impressive caseload of 197 comprised of 109 mothers and 88 infants. Of those, 23 were prenatal cases, and 86 were postpartum. Eight babies celebrated their first birthdays, completed the program, and were discharged. The program also saw six newborns enter the world; one was born preterm via C-section, with the mother being released from the hospital but the baby remaining in NICU. The other five were born at term with average weight.

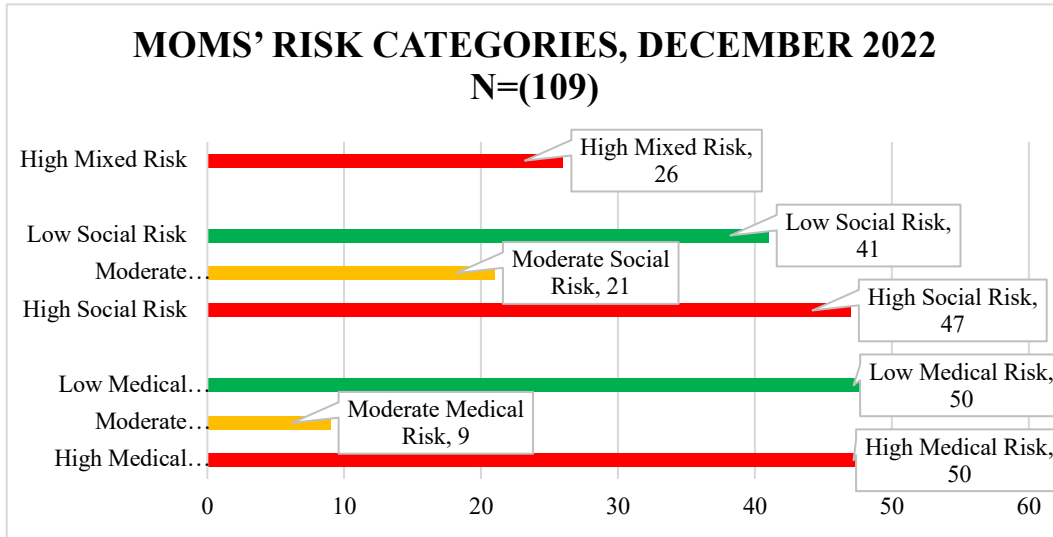
As before, the SMILE program surpassed national breastfeeding numbers. According to the 2020 CDC Breastfeeding Report Card, 58% of infants born in 2017 breastfed at six months and 35% at 12 months. Meanwhile, within the SMILE program, 85% of infants breastfed overall, 89% at six months, and 91% at 0-3 months.



**Figure 1. Breastfeeding Rates**

The high breastfeeding rates experienced by AAHP can be credited to the superb support provided. The nurses created a Breastfeeding Support Circle for mothers to share experiences and gain professional advice on topics such as sex after giving birth, infant massage, and postpartum survival. Furthermore, they taught participants how to identify and combat conditions like mastitis, plugged ducts, and thrush.

The SMILE program team routinely monitors health risks associated with pregnancy and the postpartum period to identify them early enough to access the appropriate interventions. *Figure 2* shows the risk profile of these moms in December.

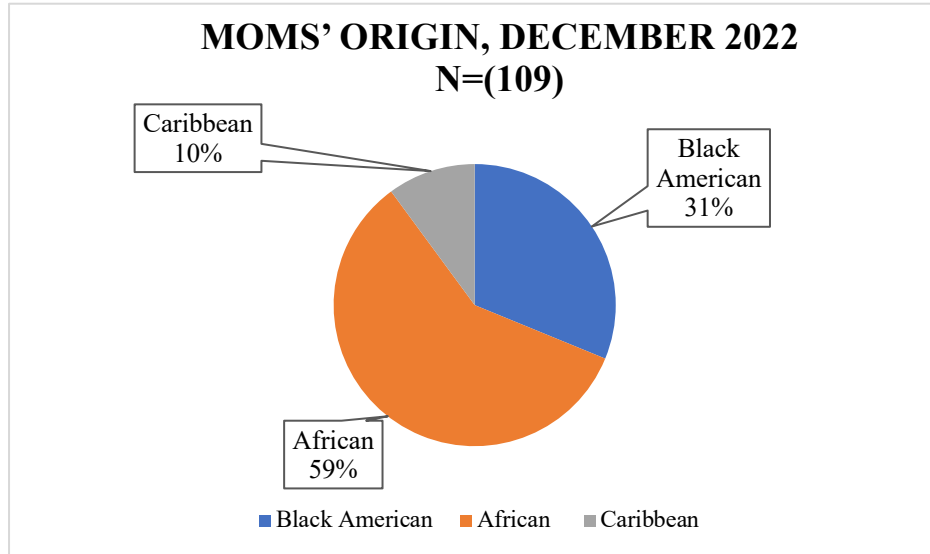


*Figure 2. Risk Categories*

Last December, SMILE moms were stratified by medical and social risk factors, with counseling and guidance offered for up to one year after delivery. Medical risk factors included gestational diabetes, pre-eclampsia, and mental health issues; social risks included restricted access to transportation, housing, safety, isolation, and a lack of support. Pregnant and postpartum women were assessed using the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale; those needing treatment were referred accordingly. The SMILE nurses consistently monitored participants and provided follow-up care for any medical requirements.

AAHP's Mommy Chat allows moms to share their experiences and benefit from each other's wisdom. This month, topics of discussion included sexual health and sexually transmitted infections.

In December, the ethnic profile of mothers participating in the SMILE program was 59% African, 31 % Black American, and 10% Caribbean.



**Figure 3: Ethnic Profile**

The table below presents an overview of the SMILE rolling three-month data from October 2022 through December 2022, compared to the program performance in the calendar year 2020. With the upcoming January report, the reference year will change to 2021.

PROFILES/SERVICES	*Monthly Average Calendar Year 2020	October 2022	November 2022	December 2022	Comments About December
<b>A) Currently Active Moms</b>	83	119	106	109	
Prenatal (still pregnant)	24	19	19	23	
Postpartum (Moms who have delivered)	58	87	87	86	
<b>B) All infants</b>	58	93	93	88	
Single Births	55	85	85	86	
Multiples	2	8	8	2	
<b>Case Load (A+B)</b>	140	212	199	197	
<b>MOM'S ETHNICITY</b>					
African American Clients	31	42	34	34	
African Clients	49	68	62	64	
Caribbean Clients	2	9	10	11	
<b>REFERRALS</b>					
HHS Prenatal Referrals Received	4	5	6	10	
Referrals from Other Sources	4	1	15	19	
<b>Total Prenatal Referrals</b>	8	6	21	29	
<b>NEW ENROLLMENTS</b>					
Prenatal Moms Newly Enrolled During the Month	7	6	3	9	
Infants Newly Enrolled during the month	5	10	5	9	

Newly Enrolled Post-Partum Moms		0	0	2	
<b>All New Enrollments for the month</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>20</b>	
<b>DISCHARGES</b>					
Prenatal Discharges	1	1	1	0	
Infant Discharges	5	7	13	8	
<b>Total Discharges</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	
<b>DELIVERIES</b>					
Term Deliveries	5	10	7	5	
Preterm Deliveries	1	0	2	1	
<b>Total Deliveries</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	
<b>BIRTH OUTCOMES</b>					
% Healthy Birth Weight	95%	100%	78%	83%	
Number of Low Birth Weight	1	0	2	1	
Number of Very Low Birth Weight	1	0	0	0	
Infant Deaths (including Stillbirths)	0	0	0	0	
Unfavorable Birth Outcomes (Congenital Anomaly, Fetal Demise, Miscarriage)	0	0	0	0	
<b>SERVICES</b>					
Total Home Visits	17	3	0	6	
Telephonic Consultations	144	232	222	245	
Community Referrals Made	26	30	35	34	
<b>BREASTFEEDING MOMS</b>					
Breastfeeding 0-3 months	92%	90%	95%	91%	
Breastfeeding 0-6 months		92%	88%	89%	
Breastfeeding 0-12 months	73%	81%	78%	85%	
<b>INSURANCE</b>					
Clients with Private Insurance**	23	34	27	28	
Clients with Medicaid Insurance**	60	68	67	78	
Clients without Insurance	n/a	7	10	3	Loss of Maternity Partnership Coverage

\*Averages are rounded up to the next integer

\*\* A client may have multiple insurances

Increase above reference year

Level with reference year

The decrease from the reference year

Untoward Outcome

The quantitative profile presented above does not capture the totality of the work performed by the SMILE team month after month, nor their passion or dedication.

The nurses worked tirelessly to ensure all pregnant women had access to health insurance through the Montgomery County Maternity Partnership Program. When a mother's insurance was no longer in effect after giving birth, alternative coverage was provided by the program. In December, the AAHP staff achieved free health insurance via Kaiser Permanente Foundation's Community Health Access Program (CHAP) for nineteen SMILE moms.

Teamwork and collaborative planning proved to be a successful strategy in managing and overseeing cases. Each week, nurses convened to review complex situations and strategize interventions with AAHP's community health workers, social workers, nurse supervisors, and clinical directors. Moreover, AAHP community health workers provided crucial assistance for mothers and families by furnishing them with diapers, car seats, breast pumps, pack-and-plays, clothing, strollers, and other necessary items for the growth and wellbeing of mothers, infants, and families.

#### **B. Chronic Disease Management and Prevention (CDMP) Programs**

The CDMP team stayed active with the virtual webinar curriculum, providing six classes weekly to help participants improve their overall health and manage chronic diseases. The month's focal point was heart health, which included live classes and videos that gave an overview of the heart and cardiovascular diseases, including the functions and pathologies of the heart and prevention methods and treatment options for each pathology. During the classes, participants learned how to maintain a healthy heart through proper nutrition and exercise. Furthermore, an overview of cholesterol was provided, along with information on its relation to hypertension and atherosclerosis and available treatments.

Wednesday and Thursday evenings provided evidence-based health education through Kick Start Your Health (KSYH) I & II series.

Quizzes, recipes, and healthy cooking demonstrations were presented during the Health and Nutrition classes on Thursday afternoons and the evening of December 12. During December, the Health and Nutrition/Food for Life Classes focused mainly on heart health. Each class included topical videos, discussions, quizzes, other handouts, and food preparation/cooking demonstrations. Below are the classes that were conducted.

Classes taught:

- December 1: Food for a Healthy Heart
- December 8: Keeping a Healthy Heart
- December 12: The Power Plate
- December 22: Power Food for the Brain
- December 29: Food and Mood



At the start of each class, participants discuss their triumphs and challenges from the week, the recipes tried and their opinions based on personal experience.

Foods Prepared during class:

- December 1: Pasta and White Bean Basil Sauce, Chopped Sweet and Sour Brussels Sprouts, Blueberry Corn Cakes
- December 8: Maple-Glazed Roasted Veggies, Spanish Artichoke and Zucchini Paella, Mock Tuna
- December 12: Baked Tofu Cutlets, Best Ever Fat-Free Vegan Gravy, Vegan Green Bean Casserole, Festive Kale with Sweet Apple-Cinnamon Vinaigrette and Pecan Parmesan
- December 22: Twice Baked Stuffed Sweet Potatoes (using Cranberry Relish), Braised Collards,
- Roasted Butternut Squash
- December 29: Smoky Black-Eyed Peas and Greens, Chipotle Slaw, Warm Apple Compote

Zumba classes provided the opportunity to exercise on Fridays. Yoga classes were conducted on Wednesdays. Finally, persons with prediabetes developed plans to reverse their diagnosis through step-by-step lifestyle changes in the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) on Tuesday evenings.

### CDMP CLASS Activities

ACTIVITY	HOURS	DATA REQUESTED	TOPIC COVERED
Health and Fitness online Webinar YOGA:  ZUMBA: Dec 7, 14, 21, and 28	10 am – 11 am  11 am – 12 pm	Class and Height, Weight, BP, BMI, % BF, Glucose, Cholesterol Screenings	This month focused on online, guided exercise, including yoga and Zumba, by trained exercise professionals and AAHP staff that allowed participants to join from the comfort of their homes and get moving. Participants learned how fitness could prevent, manage, and reverse the risk of chronic diseases, such as hypertension and heart disease. Participants continued to maintain or improve their HEDIS measures and make positive behavioral changes in favor of more exercise and a more nutritious diet.

Kick Start Your Health I (Hypertension): Dec 7, 14, 21, and 28	6 pm – 7 pm	Class and Height, Weight, BP, BMI, %BF, cholesterol	This month's class topic was hypertension and cardiovascular health, understanding terminology, and how to reduce risk through education, exercise, and nutrition. Guest speakers led an in-depth discussion on hypertension and medications used to treat it. They answered questions and provided advice on how to save money on medications. Participants continued to maintain or improve their HEDIS measures and to make positive behavioral changes in favor of more exercise and a more nutritious diet.
Health and Nutrition VEGAN, Plant-Based Dec 1, 8, 22, and 29 - afternoons  December 12 - Evening	1 pm - 3 pm	Weight, BP, BMI, %BF, Glucose, and Cholesterol screenings	Class topics focused on healthy eating choices and how food choices can reduce or increase the risk of chronic conditions. AAHP's Food for Life nutritionist/chef continued demonstrating plant-based diet/healthy cooking to the class. Participants continued to maintain or improve their HEDIS measures and make positive behavioral changes in favor of more exercise and a more nutritious diet.
Kick Start Your Health II Online Webinar.  Dec 1, 8, 22, and 29	6 pm – 7 pm	Weight, BP, BMI, %BF, Cholesterol screenings	This month's class topic was hypertension and heart health. Classes focused on high cholesterol, obesity, fitness, and nutrition. The CDMP instructor explained food nutrition labels and demonstrated how to find nutrition charts for restaurants and foods online. She also reviewed an example. Participants continued to maintain or improve their HEDIS measures and make positive behavioral changes in favor of more exercise and a more nutritious diet.

### CDMP Virtual Webinar Attendance Metrics December 2022

	Health and Fitness 11 am – 12 pm				KSYH I 6 pm – 7:15 pm				Health and Nutrition 1 pm – 2:15 pm				KSYH II 6 pm – 7:15 pm			
Date(s)	12/02	12/07 & 12/09	12/14	12/21	12/07	12/14	12/21	12/28	12/01	12/08 & 12/12	12/22	12/29	12/01	12/08	12/22	12/29
Class Size	10	20	9	9	12	18	15	16	20	19	16	19	19	19	12	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>				<b>61</b>				<b>74</b>				<b>66</b>			
<b>Avg.</b>	<b>12</b>				<b>15</b>				<b>19</b>				<b>17</b>			
<b>Natl. Avg.</b>	4-6 (For classes that meet weekly)				4-6 (For classes that meet weekly)				4-6 (For classes that meet weekly)				4-6 (For classes that meet weekly)			

Participants	Health and Fitness: Zumba/YOGA	KSYH I (Diabetes)	Health and Nutrition: Vegan	KSYH I (Diabetes-related)	Total
<i>Male</i>	0	1	1	1	<b>3</b>
<i>Female</i>	48	60	73	65	<b>246</b>
<i>Total</i>	48	61	74	66	<b>249</b>
<i>% African American</i>					

## 1. Diabetes Prevention Program in December

DPP is in the maintenance phase of the yearlong curriculum. Only one class was held on December 13. The Weight Management Lifestyle Coach conducted the session on "When Weight Loss Stalls." Twenty participants were in attendance, including two men.

Participants	December 13	Total
<i>Male</i>	2	<b>2</b>
<i>Female</i>	18	<b>18</b>
<i>Total</i>	20	<b>20</b>
<i>% African American</i>	100%	

## 2. Weight Management Program (WMP)

In December, the weight management program participated in two exercise events. On Saturday, December 2, 2022, the WMP hosted an indoor exercise fitness class at the White Oak Recreation Center. The session was led by a fitness instructor. Twelve people participated. The second event was a 2.5-mile walk through Wheaton Regional in Silver Spring. Twelve participants joined in. Each exercise event lasted approximately one hour and a half, with sufficient time allotted for stretching and cooling down before and after. Also, accommodations were made for individual capacities to allow participants to proceed at their own pace. The walk included slow and medium-paced walking groups. Both exercise events, as well as other community outreach events, serve to recruit new enrollees into the program.

In December, the WMP did not enroll any new members. Thus the total enrolment remained at 45 as in November. The table below shows the breakdown for a rolling 12-month period.

### WMP Enrollment

	Previously Enrolled Clients	Discharged Clients	New Clients	Total Clients
January	26	1	3	29
February	29	0	3	32
March	32	0	2	35
April	35	0	1	36

May	36	0	1	37
June	37	0	1	38
July	38	1	2	39
August	39	0	2	41
September	41	1	5	45
October	45	1	3	47
November	47	2	0	45
December	45	0	0	45

Below is a table of the weight gain and loss for December.

### Reported Weight Gain/Loss

	Weight Loss		Weight Gain		Maintained	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Female	Male
0 lb.					11	
1 lb.		2		1		
2 lbs.	2	5	1			
3 lbs.	1	3	2	1		
4 lbs.		1				
5 lbs.		1		1		
6 lbs.						
8 lbs.						
10 lbs.						

### C. Community Outreach and HIV Testing

Community outreach activities slowed down in December because of the holiday celebrations but did not stop.

Below is the table of screenings and touches resulting from various events in December:

Sites	Date	Number Screened/Information Dissemination	HIV Negative	Normal Blood Pressure	Elevated Blood Pressure	Normal Blood sugar	Elevated Blood Sugar	A1C Normal	Total Cholesterol Normal
World AIDS Day	Dec.1	150 Bags	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Progress Place	Dec.7	18	17	14	3	11	5	2	0
Rainbow HF	December 10	21	0	11	3	7	1	0	0
Women Shelter TC	December 14	15	15	15	3	14	2	4	3

Wheaton Woods Elementary School	Dec 16	34			2				
Women Shelter CB	December 28	17	14	13	4	12	3	2	4
Office	December 28	5	2	5	0	4	1	2	3

Ninety-eight people were screened for blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose, A1C, and weight. Individuals with abnormal values were referred to a physician for further evaluation and the CDMP program for health education. In addition, 48 HIV tests were done, all yielding negative results.

<b>HIV TESTING REPORT</b>		<b>December</b>		
<b>African-American</b>				
	<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	
	<b>1947 -1969</b>	7	8	
	<b>1970 -1989</b>	3	12	
	<b>1990+</b>	1	6	
Total		<b>11</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>All Others</b>				
		<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	
	<b>1947 -1969</b>	1	4	
	<b>1970 -1989</b>	2	3	
	<b>1990+</b>	0	1	
Total		3	8	<b>11</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>				<b>48</b>

#### **D. MENTAL HEALTH SCREENINGS**

In December, 71 mental screenings were completed at three shelter events: Crabbs Branch Women's Shelter, Progress Place Shelter, and Taft Court Women's Shelter. This was an increase from the previous months. AAHP urged individuals to take screenings other than the Wellbeing screening to obtain results that could detect depressive disorders, anxiety, eating disorders, and more. While there remains a stigma surrounding mental health screenings, mental health diagnoses are prevalent in shelters where people are more open to discussing their conditions.

Two interns from Morgan State have been actively assisting SMILE clients who are at risk and need therapeutic support and essential resources like SNAP, childcare, child support, food, and assistance with utilities. They have also set up the SONAR

application for SMILE clients to receive announcements on Mommy Chat and other resources. This has significantly boosted attendance in Mommy Chat.

In December, the social worker completed 51 Wellness screenings with tablet devices. However, fewer events took place in December, and participation was low. To promote engagement, the social worker investigated alternative ways to encourage people to take the screenings and lift participation rates.

In December, the following screenings were completed:

Type of Screens	Number
CD-GAD Generalized Anxiety	16
Hands -Depression	11
Wellbeing Screening	8
Audit Alcohol	5
Eating Disorder	4
Wide Screen	4

The screenings indicate there are cases of potential mental health conditions in the community. The social worker will continue encouraging the community to take other screenings instead of the "Well-Being Screening."

### III. ADMINISTRATION

In December, AAHP's data coordinator continued working with AAHP's social worker and a masters-level social work intern to analyze the mental health data from the previous fiscal year.

In looking toward the future, AAHP staff envisioned new and innovative strategies to drive improved health outcomes. Among the suggestions were the following:

- Improve communication with non-English-speaking mothers
- Improve data presentation
- Improve compliance with RPM (Remote Patient Monitoring) clients
- Integrate RPM into different services
- Capture and generate more actionable data from CMIS
- Move clients from dependency to autonomy by focusing on employment options and reducing the impact of depression
- Use social media to highlight the program and use videos to present to clients
- Transition to Next Gen electronic health record system for SMILE moms
- Implement a successful program with University of Maryland nursing students
- Finalize free doula services
- Focus on HIV prevention/management, specifically in Black/African American women
- Work to expand into other communities and to foster in-person relationships rather than virtual settings and increase the class size for all AAHP classes
- Provide better supervision/ intention for interns and volunteers coming on board
- Expand the frequency of communication

- Integrate climate change and its impact on Blacks/African Americans in programming
- Implement regular programs within the Ethiopian community and establish relationships with Ethiopian businesses

## APPENDIX A – Media Report

AAHP Health Notes - Distributed: Wednesday, December 2, 2022, at 5:10 pm

	November	December
General List Recipients:	7389	7355
Successful deliveries:	6782	6739
Open rate:	30%	34.4%
Click rate	.2%	.2%

The "Celebrating the Gift of Health" newsletter was distributed on Wednesday, December 2, 2022, at 5:10 pm. The feature article focused on World AIDS Day, which is a day of remembrance for those who have died from AIDS, as well as an opportunity to share advances in HIV/AIDS treatment and spread awareness about HIV/AIDS/STI prevention. With the holiday season in full swing, the following article encouraged the reader to consider giving gifts that help loved ones achieve their health and fitness goals. The following article on the Holiday Heart Syndrome advised readers to be aware of the consequences of overindulging during the holidays and practice preventative measures such as drinking only in moderation, eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, and managing stress to help protect the heart. The health hint informed readers that sparkling water can be an excellent substitute for soda and might help a person feel full longer. The featured video is about what happens during a heart attack. The featured recipe was Roasted Chai-Spiced Pears.

December's Health Notes made significant improvements compared to last month's edition. Of the 6,739 people who received December 2022 Health Notes, 2388 people opened the newsletter, which is 373 more people than last month and represents an open rate of 34.4%, higher than last month's open rate of 30%. December's click rate of .2% was the same as last month's click rate, lower than AAHP's average click rate of 2% and lower than the industry average of 4%. The number of successful deliveries decreased by 43, and there were nine total unsubscribers, two more than last month.

### Facebook

AAHP's Facebook page performed well in November, growing its follower count by 5, despite a decrease of 8 posts. Metrics increased for all categories. The top post was an advertisement showing the monthly schedule for the Health and Nutrition class.

### Facebook Metrics – December 2022

	Followers	Posts	Likes/Love	Comments	Shares
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Total	<b>794</b>	18	30	9	9
Change from last month	+5	-8	+3	+7	+1

## Twitter

In December 2022, Twitter metrics showed 447 followers, with -1 new follower since last month. Tweets and profile visits decreased by 2 and 3, respectively, while the number of mentions stayed the same. Tweet impressions decreased by 172, and retweets went up by 7, with ten likes overall.

### Twitter Metrics – December 2022

	Followers	New Followers	Tweets	Profile Visits	Mentions	Tweet Impressions	Retweets	Likes
Total	<b>447</b>	-1	20	208	1	999	3	10
Change from last month		-2	-3	-26	+0	-172	-2	+7

## Instagram

In December 2022, Instagram metrics showed a total of 286 followers, with an increase of 3 since last month. Posts decreased by 6, and there were no stories published. Post likes went down by 13, and there was no change in the number of LinkedIn bio clicks. Impressions decreased by 251 overall.

### Instagram Metrics – December 2022

	Followers	Posts	Stories	Post Likes	LinkedIn bio clicks	Impressions
Total	<b>286</b>	16	0	35	1	476
Change from last month	+3	-6	-1	-13	+0	-251

## APPENDIX B – December 2022 Health Notes



[www.aahpmontgomerycounty.org](http://www.aahpmontgomerycounty.org)



Every year on December 1<sup>st</sup>, AAHP joins individuals and organizations locally and around the world to observe World AIDS Day. This is a day for remembrance of those who have died from AIDS and an opportunity to support those currently living with HIV/AIDS. It's also a celebration of the progress we've made in fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic and an opportune time to spread awareness about HIV/AIDS/STI prevention.

Thanks to incredible advances in HIV/AIDS treatment in recent years, HIV is now considered a manageable chronic illness. With the help of antiretroviral drugs, people living with HIV enjoy long, healthy lives and no longer need to live in fear of transmitting HIV to others. That's because antiretroviral drugs can suppress the virus so much that it cannot be detected in blood, which is referred to as having an "undetectable viral load." An HIV-positive person with an undetectable viral load cannot transmit HIV to their sexual partners. This is a huge breakthrough worth celebrating on World AIDS Day.

The U=U campaign promotes the message that people with HIV who have an "(U)ndetectable viral load" are "(U)ntransmittable." The U=U campaign encourages people to get tested for HIV and to get treatment immediately if they are diagnosed. This powerful message also helps to reduce stigma associated with HIV, promote responsible sexual behavior, and reduce transmission rates.

Learn more about Montgomery County's HIV/AIDS/STI prevention and testing services [here](#).

**Sources:**

[www.worldaidsday.org](http://www.worldaidsday.org)

[www.health.harvard.edu/blog/uu-ending-stigma-and-empowering-people-living-with-hiv](http://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/uu-ending-stigma-and-empowering-people-living-with-hiv)

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## Gifts for a Healthy Lifestyle



The holiday season is a time for giving, and there are many great gifts that can help someone achieve their health and fitness goals.

Consider gifting a loved one with a device that can help them track nutrition, weight, and fitness. Some trackers monitor glucose levels, heart rate, or stress levels, while others track menstrual cycles or body fat percentage. Whatever the tracker's function, it will help your loved one see what goes on in their body and allow them to adjust their diet and exercise habits accordingly.

If you're looking for a gift that will help your loved one stay mentally healthy, consider a **stress relief wearable**. These devices monitor biometrics like heart rate and breathing patterns and provide feedback to help them stay calm and focused. Some wearables even offer **aromatherapy** or **sound therapy** to help them relax. A **smart yoga mat** or aromatherapy diffuser are also great ideas that can promote mental health.

If you know someone who is always on the go, why not prepare for them healthy snack baskets with delicious and nutritious treats they can grab while they're running around? Gift baskets can include a curated selection of nuts, fruits, trail mixes, energy bars, and even some sweet treats like dark chocolate.

Other great options that promote health and fitness include free weights for home use, a **smart scale**, a gym membership, cooking classes, or a cookbook. If you're looking for a small kitchen gadget, consider a **food scale** or a **spiralizer** (to help your loved one make noodles made from zucchini instead of pasta).

These gifts can help your loved one start 2023 on the right foot!



During a time of celebration and togetherness, it's tempting to overindulge in alcohol and food. If you find yourself at a holiday party partaking in salty and sweet treats and drinking adult beverages, take a moment to consider the consequences of overindulging. Holiday heart syndrome can occur during or after periods of celebration and is characterized by heart palpitations (skipped, extra, or irregular heartbeats) as well as dizziness, chest discomfort, or shortness of breath. Extreme physical or emotional stress, common during the holidays, also contributes to holiday heart syndrome. While the condition can simply be an alarming side effect of doing too much, it can lead to serious heart issues, including **heart failure** and **stroke**. While people with preexisting heart issues are more likely to experience holiday heart syndrome, it can happen to anyone, so everyone should be aware of the dangers of overindulging and make efforts to reduce their risk.

First, be aware of your body's response to alcohol. If you experience any symptoms such as chest pain, dizziness, or irregular heartbeat, seek medical care immediately. Second, if you are consuming alcohol, do so in moderation. Chronic excessive drinking increases your risk of developing holiday heart syndrome. Finally, make sure to practice other chronic disease prevention strategies, such as eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly. It is also important to get enough rest and manage stress in a healthy way, such as through yoga or meditation. By taking preventative steps, we can all reduce the risk of developing this condition and help protect our hearts.

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## Health Hint

Sparkling water is an excellent alternative to soda. **Studies** show that sparkling water might help you feel full for longer and keep food in your stomach longer, compared to regular or “flat” water. Make sure your sparkling water has no added sugars to ensure you’re not trading one bad habit for another. Also, citric acid, phosphorous or sugar in sparkling waters can erode the enamel on your teeth, so choose sparkling waters without those ingredients.

Source: [www.clevelandclinic.org](http://www.clevelandclinic.org)

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## Featured Video

Every year, nearly seven million people worldwide die of heart attacks. Cardiovascular disease, which includes strokes as well as heart attacks and other health issues, is the world's leading cause of death. This TED-Ed discusses the causes and therapies for this lethal condition:



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## Featured Recipe: Roasted Chai-Spiced Pears



### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1/2 cup fresh ricotta
- 1/4 cup real coconut cream or coconut milk (must be 100%)
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom
- 2 large pears
- 2 tablespoons chopped roasted pistachios

### Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Mix one tablespoon of the maple syrup with the ricotta and coconut cream in a medium-size bowl. Sprinkle in half of the nutmeg and half of the cardamom and mix well. Place the bowl of cream in the fridge for about 15 to 30 minutes to firm up.
3. Slice the pears in half lengthwise and use a melon baller to scoop out the seeds, which creates the perfect little vessel for our ricotta cream. Place the pears in a baking dish, cut sides up.
4. Mix the remaining nutmeg and cardamom with the remaining maple syrup and brush the spiced syrup over the top of the pears, reserving the extra. Bake the pears for 15 minutes or until they are tender, but not mushy.
5. You can serve the pears hot, but you can also let them cool completely so that the coconut cream doesn't melt. Dollop the ricotta cream into the hollowed-out pears, top with pistachios, and drizzle with the reserved spiced maple syrup.

Source: [www.onegreenplanet.org/vegan-recipe/roasted-chai-spiced-pears-vegan/](http://www.onegreenplanet.org/vegan-recipe/roasted-chai-spiced-pears-vegan/)

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The African American Health Program is funded and administered by the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services and implemented by McFarland & Associates, Inc.

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