



## **2021 CGH Health Foundation Annual Appeal Focus Project**

The CGH Health Foundation 2021 Annual Appeal campaign will be devoted to creating a multi-year collaborative approach to reducing childhood trauma for our area children.

One immediate strategy is to provide more outreach for OB patients through the free CGH Ways to Wellness Program counseling service. Some of our pregnant moms have had a particularly hard time during the pandemic. There has been a marked increase in the numbers of OB patients seeking help this past year, along with an increased need by patients overall.

Counselors have noticed a rise in patients seeking counseling for stillbirths, miscarriages, depression, anxiety, failure to thrive, and loss of a support system. Available since 2016, our CGH patients receive free counseling through the CGH Ways to Wellness Program. Patients visit in-person with Sinnissippi Centers mental health professionals or via phone call or Zoom.

Both Christine Romesburg, QMPH, MSW, MBA, and Julie Kirchhoff, BA, MHP, provide services five days a week at the CGH Main Clinic, Downtown Clinic, Dixon Clinic and Morrison Clinic. “We will be adding two more days of staffing to the Ways to Wellness Program starting in May,” said Ms. Romesburg. “The extra days can help augment emotional support for these women as well as the many new individuals seeking help that have never needed it before.”

The fallout from the pandemic has prompted a significant increase in patient visits. From May 1, 2019 to April 30, 2020, there were 763 patients who sought help and in three quarters of the new fiscal year nearly 700 individuals have already sought care. The counselors expect the trend to continue for some time.

Discussion on other ways the Foundation can bolster the overall effort to reduce childhood trauma is still in process. The initiative will involve multiple partners dedicated to bolstering the lives of our youngsters, engaging healthcare providers, schools, social service agencies, non-profits, businesses, government bodies, families and community partners to ensure that every child thrives.

There is a clear link between childhood trauma and health issues occurring later in life, such as obesity, heart problems, COPD, depression, anxiety, substance use and a shorter lifespan. Projects focused on children have long been a focus for the CGH Health Foundation. With the help of our many donors, we will be successful in funding efforts to add or update services and resources for our area children and families.