

Sinai Community Institute

We Make It Personal.



Community Relations (CR) / Health Ministry

Community Relations (CR) partnered with Latinos Progresando, ACLU, Alianza Americas, and other agencies to host a **webinar on civil rights and mental health** to staff members of nonprofit organizations, on January 15. The experts discussed immigration policy proposals, mental health, and the implications to community agencies for better serving our communities. Dr. Beatriz Medina, Psychotherapist with Under the Rainbow, presented on behalf of Sinai Chicago about community anxiety. **The recording of the webinar is here:**

<https://youtu.be/TbtfFQUQ5gQ?si=RhfRJ38EmN3LcX7e>.

Also in January, CR and Dr. Juno Chang, President of Holy Cross Hospital, welcomed a group of Public Health Ambassadors for their **monthly bilingual training and presented on new services**. Claudia Marquez, Sinai's Behavioral Health Liaison, presented on mental health and the Center for Substance Recovery at Holy Cross.



(Left) Dr. Chang with a group of Public Health Ambassadors at Holy Cross Hospital. (Right) Claudia Marquez, Behavioral Health Liaison, sharing information about the Center for Substance Recovery.



Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

WIC (Women, Infants and Children) enrollment for the month of January 2025 was **4,089**. WIC benefits were utilized by approximately **1,136 infants and 1,287 children**. Approximately **420 infants were breastfed**. According to the National WIC Association (NWA), **proposed restrictions on Medicaid and SNAP** would make it harder for families to qualify for WIC through adjunctive eligibility. SCI WIC has partnered with **the MOD Diaper Dollars program**. Eligible WIC participants, less than three years old, will get a monthly \$40.00 stipend to purchase diapers. Sinai WIC has submitted **852 diaper dollar applications!** SCI WIC and Catholic Charities have partnered to sponsor the **"Mobile WIC Grocery Store"**. This service will increase access for WIC participants to obtain healthy food via the Mobile Grocery Store. Instead of families traveling to the grocery store, the store will come to them. The "Mobile WIC Grocery Store" will be outside of the WIC office located at **2653 W. Ogden (SCI) on Wednesday, February 19, 2025, from 10:00am-12:00pm**. The truck will be available for benefit redemption on the third Wednesday of every month.



A family participating in WIC benefits.

Family Case Management (FCM)/Better Birth Outcomes (BBO)

6 FCM clients and **8 BBO clients** gave birth this January. **All FCM women** and **5 of the BBO women** had gestation periods longer than 37 weeks without premature birth. The average weight of the FCM babies born was **7.47 pounds**, and it was **5.19 pounds** for BBO babies. **All the FCM babies** and **5 of the BBO babies** were above the five-pound benchmark for low birth weight. We note that our BBO clients experience higher risks due to medical and social factors.

To kick off the year, **the Family Connects Chicago (FCC) team** hosted **two Community Alignment Board (CAB) meetings** on January 27th and January 28th for Region A (West Side) and Region B (Southwest Side) respectively. These meetings featured presentations from Pastor Micheal Lancaster with Reborn Ministries for Region A and Tayo Mbande with Chicago Birthworks Collective for Region B. The team also conducted a survey of CAB members to assess what's working well and what can be improved, as well as capture information about what CAB members are currently working on and what they think the most pressing maternal and child health (MCH) issues are in Chicago. The survey currently has 36 responses across both Regions – thank you to team member, Yasmeen Santana, for leading these efforts. Beyond the bi-monthly meetings, the team is also focusing on how FCC can support promoting safe sleep education and outreach for FCC in the year. Laura Leon, FCC CAB Co-Director, will help to spearhead this work as one of the Co-Chairs for the **FCC Citywide Safe Sleep Committee** – which will convene next on February 19th. Additionally, the **FCC Pregnancy and Infant Loss (PAIL) Working Group** reconvened on January 29th at 1pm and presented the final Google Sheets version of the **FCC PAIL Resource Directory**. If you would like access to this resource and/or are interested in being a part of the FCC PAIL subcommittee, please reach out to Madison.Offstein@sinai.org. The next FCC PAIL subcommittee meeting will be on February 26th at 2:30pm and feature a presentation from CDPH epidemiologists on a released infant mortality report.

SCI FCM/BBO/WIC Teams and Sinai Chicago Women's Department collaborated to develop **virtual prenatal childbirth education classes**. Classes will resume at the beginning of the new year. At this time, dates are still to be determined. Additional funding will need to be secured to continue this effort. If you are interested in more information, please email Karen.powell-frost@sinai.org.

SCI was **awarded funding** by the Illinois Department of Public Health for a second year **to promote infant safe sleep** in the West and Southwest communities of Chicago. The **'Baby ZZZ' grant** was active from November 1st, 2023 – October

31st, 2024, and has been extended until the end of June 2025. Lead partners for the extension will include Telpochcalli Community Education Project (TCEP), Bean Soup Media, and Sinai Urban Health Institute (SUHI). The team will also be welcoming a new contractor, **Kimberly Lewis**. Activities for this grant include distributing educational materials, hosting trainings and community events, promoting and hosting the national **#ClearTheCrib Challenge**, and collaborating with leading safe sleep partners such as SIDS of Illinois, Rush, and Lurie Children's. Additionally, the **Safe Sleep Collaborative** is meeting with **the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH)**, as the department plans to make Safe Sleep a top priority in 2025. This group will meet next on February 19th.

We would like to highlight these wins from the most recent quarter (November 2024 – January 2025): over 10,000 social media/website likes, shares, and impressions, over 20,000 print and digital materials distributed, and over 2,500 people reached via Clear the Crib events, trainings, community events and prenatal classes. Big shoutout to the SCI team, Kimberly Lewis, and TCEP for all of their work over the holiday season!

SCI's **Baby ZZZ Safe Sleep Collaborative**, including key organizations such as SIDS of Illinois, Lurie's, CPass Chicago, the Chicago Department of Public Health, CountyCare, BrightPoint, the Illinois Department of Public Health, and others, focuses on promoting safe sleep practices. The Collaborative recently learned that their advocacy led to a significant policy change at CountyCare. **Beginning January 1, 2025, CountyCare's pregnant and postpartum members will be able to receive Safe Sleep Kits without the previously required four prenatal visits.** The Safe Sleep Kit includes a Graco portable crib with a fitted sheet, a Halo Sleep Sack, a baby sleep board book, and a pacifier. While CountyCare continues to emphasize the importance of timely prenatal care, they recognized—through feedback from the Baby ZZZ Safe Sleep Collaborative and their care management team—that the prenatal visit requirement created an unintended barrier for members seeking a safe sleep solution for their infants. The Collaborative applauds CountyCare for addressing this issue and implementing this important change!

Lastly, if you and your organization would like to participate in this extension and distribute Safe Sleep informational postcards and posters, please email Laura.Leon@sinai.org and state how many English and Spanish postcards and posters you would like.

SHS OB/GYN and SCI BBO Program Partnership have been meeting bi-monthly since June 2018. The partnership's objectives are 1) to increase client/patient population by generating referrals to SHS OB/GYN and SCI BBO services and 2) to assist client/patient population with eliminating service barriers. The next meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2025, at 9:30am. For more information, please email Laura.leon@sinai.org.

The Outreach Coalition Connectivity Network (OCCN) was developed in February 2016 to collectively maximize providers' efforts to impact better health outcomes for families on the Westside, Southwest and Southside of Chicago. At the last OCCN meeting on February 13th, Mara Ruff, Vice President of Government Affairs, Sinai Chicago gave a legislative update. The guest speaker was Andrea Kovach, Shriver Center on Poverty Law and she gave an update on immigration issues. Presentations included services of Arab American Family Services, CountyCare and Planned Parenthood. The next meeting is to be announced.



First delivery from SIDS Illinois in our brand-new van—proudly serving as Partner of the Year at SCI!

Learn Together After School

There are currently **21 youth enrolled** in the Learn Together After School program. We have **serviced 34 youth** so far during this fiscal year. This January the **total number of hours spent on academic enhancement was 536**.

Prevention Initiative (PI)

This January, parent instructors and case managers with the **Prevention Initiative Early Childhood Education Program** serviced **120 families** with **115 children**. **260 home visits** were completed, and **130 newsletters** were mailed. We referred **4 families** for furniture, car seat, strollers, and baby clothing. **“Parents as Teachers”** early childhood education lessons this month focused on developing fine motor skills, language and communication, and social emotional skills. In January, we hosted our first Group Connection of the year: New Year! New You! Due to rigid temperatures and fear with immigration, attendance was minimal.

Volunteer Services / Sinai AmeriCorps Initiative

Volunteer & Community Services is excited to announce that **21 new volunteers** joined us in the month of January (19 Mount Sinai Hospital student interns and two SUHI Interns). Additionally, two shadow students visited Internal Medicine for Job Shadow experiences.

The **Sinai AmeriCorps Initiative program** is halfway through the program year! AmeriCorps Members hosted their **first service day** on January 20th at Sinai Community Institute. Members packed lunches and assembled hygiene kits for clients of Housing Forward Shelter. Members participated in games, learning about Martin Luther King Jr's vision and connecting to the services provided through competitive games.

Montrell Tanksley is the first member to fulfill his commitment, **completing 450 hours**. In the month of January, AmeriCorps Members completed a **combined total of 2,655 hours**.

We are still recruiting for five minimum time (300-hour commitment) and nine abbreviated time (100 -hour commitment) slots. Reach out to Alexis Smith at alexis.smith@sinai.org if you are or know someone is interested in joining!

Senior Centers

Auburn Gresham had several events for the month of January. The first event was the **“Out with the Old & In with the New”** Celebration to honor one of our beloved participants, **Mr. Michael Figs**. This was a wonderful opportunity for the seniors to share their personal stories about Michael and bring in the new year with positive thoughts and goals for the year!

Our second event was our celebration for **MLK Day**. The senior center was set up like a movie theater, and they were shown the film **“I AM MLK Jr.”**. The seniors enjoyed having nachos, movie theater popcorn, pop, and candy in their own individual movie theater boxes. The seniors reported learning several things from the film.

Our final event for the month of January was **“Dipping in the fountain of Youth Surprise”**. The seniors were able to create a t-shirt with their grammar school, high school, or college mascot or logo. We also took photos for our **“Class of 2025”** Auburn Gresham Yearbook. The seniors dressed in their school outfits, and we had sweet treats from a chocolate fountain, light Hors d'oeuvres, and non-alcoholic mimosas. We had the distinct honor and privilege of having Sinai Chicago's very own President, Dr. Ngozi Ezike, SCI's President Debra Wesley, and Executive Director, Angela Brown- Love join us for an afternoon of fun and music!



Dr. Ezike with our seniors at the “Dipping in the fountain of Youth Surprise” event.

During January, our participants also received information on **“Mental Health & Aging – Depression, Isolation, & Grief”**. Our Pharmacist Lori went over the 4 M's as they relate to Depression & Isolation: What Matters, Medication, Mentation, and Mobility. She also discussed the difference between depression facts and myths, and what medications are used to treat depression.

This month, **Abbott Park** enrolled **3 new participants**. We also hosted a very colorful **Valentine Appreciation Day celebration**, which was a huge success. We shared memories on a variety of topics, and participants expressed how much they cared about the staff and one another. Also, there were a total of **27 participants** present for the **Healthcare**

Fraud Prevention presentation. Everyone was super engaged in the discussion and reported that they felt that the information was extremely helpful.

■ Justice Advisory Center (JAC)

SCI JAC assisted a **total of 97 new clients** during the month of January. There was a **total of 76 referrals** with some clients receiving multiple referrals. Although all clients are not referred to the program, any family member, and every resident is provided with information on how to access trauma related benefits provided by Sinai, and our network of community partners. During the month of January, the JAC staff conducted home visits, and worked with clients to assist with housing, job placement, G. E. D. training, ESL classes, and much more. Staff also worked with the Auburn Gresham Senior Centers to provide assistance regarding education and scheduling appointments for Benefit Access in the State of Illinois. Also, the JAC will have a new team member as our current Case Manager at UCAN. **Evelyn Williams** has been promoted to a **new position at UCAN**. We are fortunate that a **new team member, Ms. Henderson**, will take Evelyn's place and is currently being trained.

■ Adult Protective Services (APS)

APS **initiated 58 investigations**, performed **96 home visits**, and made **substantiation decisions for 25 allegations** in January. Our case managers managed a total of **115 cases** this month.

■ Health Chicago Equity Zones (HCEZ)

SCI's HCEZ Outreach Workers spoke to more than **698 Chicago residents** about community safety and/or Covid-19 prevention this January, including distributing **475 PPE and 764 flyers** noting the resources available from our Equity perspective. On January 30, Sinai Community Institute, in partnership with the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) and New Home Baptist Church, also hosted a COVID vaccination and education event to provide free vaccinations and information on Covid-19 prevention and care.

■ Expanding Healthcare Access: Get Covered Illinois Enrollment Success

Get Covered Illinois serves as the state's official health insurance Marketplace resource, offering Illinois residents the opportunity to apply for coverage online or with the assistance of a certified Get Covered Navigator.

In collaboration with four community organizations, **Sinai Community Institute** worked to enroll residents across **Chinatown, Lawndale, North Lawndale, Little Village, and the South Side**, ensuring greater access to essential healthcare services.

We are pleased to announce that the **2024 Open Enrollment period, which concluded on January 15th, exceeded last year's enrollment numbers statewide!** Our contribution to this success is **1,277 marketplace enrollments and 1,320 Medicaid/CHIP enrollments**. Building on this success, we are committed to expanding our reach and assisting even more residents during the 2025 Open Enrollment period.

Stay connected for updates and opportunities to get involved in increasing healthcare access for our communities.