Queens Healthy Start (QHS) is a federally funded Healthy Start program led by Public Health Solutions in partnership with local community organizations and healthcare providers. The QHS partnership aims to improve outcomes for families in its service area before, during, and after birth (until age two), and to reduce racial disparities related to infant mortality and maternal morbidity.

Since 2015, QHS has served low-income communities of color in Queens that experience health disparities and poor maternal and child health outcomes:

- In 2019, one in 11 babies in Queens was born preterm.¹
- From 2018 to 2020, Queens Village had the second-highest average infant mortality rate in NYC (7.7 deaths per 1,000).²
- In 2020, Howard Beach had the highest percentage of low-birthweight births in NYC.³

QHS convenes volunteer activists called Birth Justice Defenders to educate the community on safe and respectful care at birth for all people.

QHS works in a variety of ways to support and improve outcomes for families:

**Community Action**
Program partnerships with:
- Rising Ground
- Community Healthcare Network
- Jamaica Hospital Medical Center
- Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement
- The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Nurse-Family Partnership Program

A Community Action Network (CAN) made up of community-based organizations, managed-care organizations, elected officials, and community members works together to decrease infant mortality in the Queens Healthy Start community.

**Community Empowerment**
QHS convenes volunteer activists called Birth Justice Defenders to educate the community on safe and respectful care at birth for all people.

**Direct Services**
- Home visiting and case management by community health workers
- Prenatal, birth, and postpartum doula support
- Father support services
- Prenatal and postpartum health education and support groups
- Distribution of diapers, Pack ‘n Plays, and other supplies

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³Ibid.
The Queens Healthy Start Partnership has...

- Served an average of **336** participants per year since 2018.
- Conducted **5,776** home visits since 2019.
- Trained **four** doulas to provide services in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole.
- Distributed Pack ‘n Plays and provided safe sleep education to **1,018** families since 2017.
- Convened more than **100** Community Action Network members since 2022.
- Held **120** prenatal sessions in English and Spanish that provide education on breastfeeding, maternal mental health, and comfort measures during labor since 2019.
- Distributed **685,019** diapers to 5,328 children since 2021.
- Conducted **5,776** home visits since 2019.

QHS Evaluation: Feedback from program participants, staff, and partners

The Center for Evaluation and Applied Research at The New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM) works in partnership with QHS staff to evaluate the QHS Partnership. In evaluation interviews conducted by NYAM...

- Community health workers (CHWs) described how they support clients with regular check-ins; listen to families’ concerns; and equip parents with the information, tools, and referrals to support their families.
- Program partners reported that the QHS Partnership allows them to expand their capacity and access additional resources.
- Participants
  - Described ways the program provides social and emotional support through regular contact with CHWs who support them in becoming a parent.
  - Said they receive helpful breastfeeding information through the QHS Partnership.

- **93%** of QHS child participants received well-child visits.
- **98%** of participating children under one year old were breastfed or fed pumped breast milk, even for a short period of time.

*Data source: 2022 Healthy Start Program Benchmarks
**Among parents who were enrolled prenatally or at the time of delivery.

QHS participants reach important maternal and child health benchmarks:

- **98%** of participating children under one year old were breastfed or fed pumped breast milk, even for a short period of time.
- **93%** of QHS child participants received well-child visits.

For more information about QHS, please email healthystart@healthsolutions.org or call (718) 704-5078.