



Greetings from IWS Family Health!

Thank you for your continued investment in Chicago's next generation.



How Donations Transform Lives: Hector Ocegueda, LCSW, Probation Program Director, Therapist

A Steady Presence for Chicago's Youth

For over 11 years, Hector Ocegueda has been a source of guidance for Chicago's youth at IWS Family Health. As Probation Program Director and Therapist, he supports adolescents aged 13-18 on probation, many who face generational trauma and poverty. "My mission is to help young people navigate challenges while ensuring they know someone is advocating for them," says Hector. His ability to build trust has made him a go-to resource for local probation officers.

Overcoming Challenges

Inconsistent attendance is one of Hector's biggest hurdles. To address this, he meets patients in spaces where they're comfortable, meeting them at home, school, libraries, and often at McDonald's, sometimes covering the cost of a meal himself. Attendance alone isn't the goal—engagement is. A child showing up on time and ready to participate signals progress. Hector also addresses basic needs like hunger by tapping into Janie's Kitchen, IWS's food pantry. "When kids are hungry, it's hard for them to focus on therapy," he explains.

Client Story: Confronting Loss and Finding Strength

A 16-year-old client, convicted of carjacking, arrived with sadness and anger. Over time, Hector learned that the boy had lost seven friends to gun violence, plus a best friend to asthma. Asked what trauma meant to him, the boy replied, "Trauma puts me out of character." Through counseling, he developed coping skills like talking to trusted people, listening to music, and exercising. Hector's work also extended to the boy's family, connecting them with community support services.

The Heart of Hector's Work

Hector's work goes beyond therapy—it's about changing lives. By connecting with teens who feel lost or misunderstood, he transforms families and provides hope where there was none. "I want them to know someone is advocating for them," he says. His advocacy also ensures families have access to food and other essentials, offering critical support when it's most needed.

Support Hector's Work at IWS Family Health

Without Hector's guidance, many youth would remain isolated and misunderstood, stuck in cycles of trauma. But Hector shows up, and because of that, lives change. Your support ensures that Hector can keep offering teens a second chance and the tools they need to build brighter futures. Together, we can keep showing up for families, transforming lives and empowering futures.

A Legacy of Care: Dr. Staisz Gifts Her Pediatric Practice to IWS Family Health



Dr. Maria Staisz, Pediatrician

For over 45 years, Dr. Staisz has dedicated her life to caring for children in the Dunning neighborhood. Recently, Dr. Staisz made an important decision—entrusting her practice at 6416 W Belmont Ave to IWS Family Health to ensure her patients continue receiving the care they need. On March 3, 2025, Dr. Staisz' practice officially became IWS Family Health - Dunning.

The practice cares for approximately 1,600 pediatric patients, mostly from families with low income—families who face significant challenges accessing health care and need more than Dr. Staisz could provide alone—behavioral health services, dental care, same-day medical visits, and basic necessities like nutritional food, diapers, and formula.

The Growing Needs of Pediatric Patients

Dr. Staisz has seen a significant increase in anxiety and depression among her young patients, with three adolescents experiencing suicidal thoughts or attempts recently. With therapy wait times exceeding a year, Dr. Staisz has had to prescribe antidepressants to children as young as 11.

A lack of access to healthy food is also a growing crisis. Obesity and high cholesterol are rising concerns, affecting 20% and 30% of her patients, respectively. Families with low-income struggle with food insecurity, often relying on inexpensive, processed foods that contribute to chronic health issues. Medicaid does not cover nutritional counseling or food, leaving families without the critical support needed to improve their children's diets and long-term health outcomes.

“It’s heartbreaking to see my patients struggle because I can’t provide everything they need—behavioral health support, access to healthy food, or even the basics like diapers and formula,” Dr. Staisz says. “These gaps in care weigh heavily on me, which is why I am so delighted to partner with IWS Family Health.”

Many families also struggle to afford basic items like diapers and formula. Preventable dental issues persist due to a lack of access to routine check-ups, and working parents find it difficult to access same-day care. “It’s heartbreaking to see my patients struggle because I can’t provide everything they need—behavioral health support, access to healthy food, or even the basics like diapers and formula,” Dr. Staisz shared. “These gaps in care weigh heavily on me, which is why I am so delighted to partner with IWS Family Health.”

“My dream was for my patients to receive whole-person care—dental, same-day medical visits, a food pantry, and behavioral health—all in one place.”

A New Future with IWS Family Health

This transition was not just about a change in ownership—it was about ensuring her patients receive comprehensive care. “My dream was for my patients to receive whole-person care—dental, same-day medical visits, a food pantry, and behavioral health—all in one place,” she said. “Community healthcare creates better citizens, reduces violence, and builds stronger families.”

IWS Family Health-Dunning patients now have access to the full suite of services available at IWS Family Health 3600 W. Fullerton Ave location.

Help Continue Dr. Staisz’s Legacy

Dr. Staisz passed the torch to IWS Family Health with confidence. Her story is an invitation to make a difference—because philanthropy has the power to transform lives and help build a healthier future. Consider making a gift today to ensure every child has access to the care they deserve.



L-R: Dr. Paula Portela, CMO; Margaret Walkowiak, Patient Support Specialist; Denise Gonzalez, COO; Cindy Herrera, Dunning Site Manager; Heidi Ortolaza-Alvear, CEO; Dr. Maria Staisz, Pediatrician; Maribel De Leon, Patient Support Specialist; Aaron Esparza, IT Support Specialist



Quick Facts

IWS Family Health - Dunning
6416 W Belmont Ave
Chicago, IL 60634
Opening date: March 3, 2025

Providers

- Maria Staisz, MD
- Cathy Alvarez, APN
- Emeline Ramos, MD
- Marixa Alvarez, APN

Patient Population & Numbers

- Estimated 1,600 patients in the first year
- Serving children from birth to age 18

Types of Care Provided

- Pediatric Primary Care
- Developmental and Mental Health Screenings
- Immunizations
- On-site lab
- Health education

Clinic Hours of Operation

- Monday, Wednesday: 9:30 AM – 6:00 PM
- Tuesday, Thursday: 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM
- Friday: 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Saturday: 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM

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Donor Spotlight



J.D. and Avery Bryant welcomed their daughter, Maisie, in December 2024.

Welcome Miss Maisie Jean Bryant! A New Chapter in a Family Legacy

For over 113 years, IWS Family Health has been a trusted partner in nurturing healthy beginnings for Chicago families. Today, we're thrilled to introduce the newest addition to our IWS family: Maisie Jean Bryant.

Born on December 2, 2024, at 12:41 AM, Maisie Jean Bryant weighed 7 lbs. 6 oz. and measured 20.5 inches long. Both Maisie and her mother, Avery, are healthy and thriving.

The Bryant family's connection to IWS Family Health runs deep. Maisie's grandmother, Kelly Bryant, is a former member of the Clarendon Hills Auxiliary, and her grandfather, David Bryant, previously served on IWS's Board of Directors. Her parents, Avery and J.D. Bryant of Avondale, continue their family's legacy of generosity and support.

To celebrate Maisie's arrival, Avery and J.D. transformed their baby shower into a call for kindness.

To celebrate Maisie's arrival, Avery and J.D. transformed their baby shower into a call for kindness. Instead of traditional gifts, they invited loved ones to support IWS Family Health with

donations of diapers, baby wipes, baby books, and monetary gifts in Maisie's name. Their efforts raised over \$4,000, providing essential items and resources for families served by IWS Family Health.

This thoughtful gesture reflects IWS Family Health's ethos: supporting children and strengthening families. On average, IWS Family Health delivers 250-300 healthy babies annually, many to families facing tough financial decisions. Thanks to the generosity of supporters like the Bryant family, IWS Family Health ensures families don't have to choose between basic needs like prenatal



Avery, J.D., and Maisie Bryant at home.

care, food, or diapers.

Early prenatal care plays a critical role in

delivering healthy babies. At IWS Family Health, we aim to ensure 100% of new expectant mothers have early entry into prenatal care, allowing for timely detection and management of health risks. This proactive approach increases the likelihood of a healthy pregnancy and birth. As a result, 98% of newborns at IWS Family Health have a healthy birth weight, compared to a rate of 80% across Federally Qualified Health Centers and Look-Alikes nationwide. These outcomes underscore the importance of comprehensive prenatal care.

Maisie's story celebrates new life and highlights the enduring power of community. Her arrival symbolizes compassion, generosity, and the shared commitment that

defines IWS Family Health's 113-year mission. The Bryant family's legacy continues as Maisie's story becomes part of a larger narrative of care and community impact. Join us in welcoming Maisie Jean Bryant and celebrating the ongoing legacy of love and support from the Bryant family. Their kindness will ripple through the lives of the 12,000 children and families served by IWS Family Health every year, delivering hope, love, and compassion to every family that walks through our doors.

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Celebrating Life's Milestones by Giving Back

Join Avery & J.D. in making a meaningful impact! As you celebrate life's special moments—weddings, birthdays, and baby showers—consider asking friends and family to donate in your name to IWS Family Health. Your generosity will help provide vital healthcare services for children and families in need, ensuring a healthier future for our community. To learn more or make a donation, visit <https://iwsfamilyhealth.org/give/>, or contact Denise Ashurst at 773.782.5068 or AshurstD@iwsfamilyhealth.org.

Thank you for being part of our mission. Together, we can achieve great things!



We Love Our Donors!

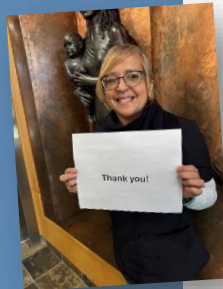
Thanks to your generosity, 2024 was truly remarkable! Your unwavering support helps children grow into leaders and changemakers—an investment in the future that benefits us all. Here's what we accomplished together:

A Historic Gift from Our Auxiliary

Our steadfast partner of 112 years, the Auxiliary of IWS Family Health, continues to be our single largest donor year after year. In FY 2024, they made a remarkable contribution of \$737,109, and already in FY 2025, they have generously donated \$651,580. Their unwavering commitment continues to uplift countless families, ensuring access to vital healthcare. We are profoundly grateful to the Auxiliary for their ongoing support.

A Challenge Met—and Exceeded!

We are truly humbled by the generosity of our community. Four anonymous donors created a \$135,000 year-end challenge, and thanks to the more than 100 donors who stepped up to meet it, we not only reached our goal but exceeded it. This unlocked an additional \$135,000, bringing the total to an incredible \$284,575.55. Your kindness and commitment inspire us every day, and we are so grateful for the trust you place in IWS Family Health's mission.



Ronald L. McDaniel Foundation

We are incredibly grateful to the Ronald L. McDaniel Foundation for providing \$50,000 in grant funding to support our Family Services program. Family Services offer essential support—short-term/crisis counseling, long-term therapy, developmental delay assessments, speech therapy, and care coordination—services that address needs beyond standard medical care, which are often either non-reimbursable or reimbursed at very low rates. Your support is vital to ensuring holistic health and well-being of our patients. Thank you!

Would You Consider a Gift from Your Donor-Advised Fund?

Your Donor-Advised Fund (DAF) is a powerful way to support IWS Family Health and help provide essential health care to children and families in need. With donor support, we've expanded dental fluoride treatments to protect young smiles and strengthened behavioral health programs for at-risk adolescents. Your DAF gift can help us continue bridging gaps and ensuring every child receives the treatment they deserve. IWS Family Health is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization (Tax ID: 36-2167752). To direct a gift, visit www.iwsfamilyhealth.org. Thank you for considering this impactful way to give!

Frequently Asked Questions



You've asked and we're answering! If you have a question that you'd like to see answered in an upcoming quarterly issue, please reach out to Denise Ashurst at AshurstD@iwsfamilyhealth.org or 773.782.5068.



Is Janie's Kitchen Food Pantry open to the public?

No, Janie's Kitchen is a closed food pantry serving only IWS patients. Weekly food donations are provided free of charge by the Greater Chicago Food Depository, and volunteers help welcome and assist our patients.



What volunteer opportunities are available at IWS?

Janie's Kitchen, our Food Pantry, welcomes volunteers to help sort, stock, and distribute food to IWS families. To sign up for a volunteer opportunity, scan the QR code or go to <https://volunteer.bloomerang.co/web-admin/app/#!/join-party?k=j87n6jtf236z6a>.



What types of in-kind donations are currently needed?

- Baby diapers (sizes 4, 5, & 6)
- Baby wipes
- Baby sleep bags S, M, L, and XL (new)

Bringing Holiday Cheer in 2024.



Left: Wheaton-Naperville Chapter members Nancy Lange and Laura Gates deliver nourishing soup kits for IWS patients, sharing warmth and care with every meal. **Center:** Former Near North Auxiliary Chapter members reunited for a festive Christmas dinner, celebrating 50 years of impact and lasting friendships. **Right:** New Trier Powerlifting Coach Jim Davis and his daughter Emmie spread holiday cheer, delivering toys and sports balls for 'Santa' to surprise IWS Family Health patients.

Calendar of Events



Save the Date!

April 17, 2025 | 4pm-7pm (ribbon cutting at 4:30pm)

IWS Family Health-Dunning Open House & Ribbon Cutting

Location: IWS Family Health–Dunning
6416 W Belmont Ave, Chicago, IL 60634

Details: Join us as we celebrate the grand opening of our newest location, IWS Family Health-Dunning, expanding access to essential pediatric care for 1,600 children.

RSVP: Contact Denise Ashurst at AshurstD@iwsfamilyhealth.org or 773-782-5068.

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

Annual Rooted Luncheon | 11:30am

Location: Maggiano's Little Italy
516 N Clark St, Chicago, IL 60654

Details: Celebrate the connections that drive our mission at our annual luncheon, Rooted. Meet Heidi Ortolaza-Alvear, CEO of IWS Family Health, and our Board of Directors. Heidi will share the FY 2024 Year in Review and unveil details of planning for the future.

Friday, July 18, 2025 | 12pm-1pm CST

Virtual Lunch with our CEO

Location: Online (link will be provided upon RSVP)

Details: Connect virtually with CEO Heidi Ortolaza-Alvear to hear updates on FY 2025 plans, the FQHC application process to transition from Look-Alike to fully qualified FQHC status, strategic planning updates, and other organizational developments.

RSVP: Contact Denise Ashurst at AshurstD@iwsfamilyhealth.org or 773-782-5068.



Let's Connect!

I'm eager to meet you and hear your story with IWS! What first brought you here? What makes this organization meaningful to you? These stories inspire me as we work to expand our care and compassion. Let's connect, share stories, and discuss how we can continue supporting the families we serve!

**~Heidi Ortolaza-Alvear, CEO,
IWS Family Health**

Follow IWS Family Health on social media.

