



Building Home Visiting Partnerships with Pediatricians

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CONFERENCE INFORMATION

DATE

September 29-30, 2026

EVENT

[National Home Visiting Summit](#)

An earlier version of this presentation was previously delivered at the [2024 American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\) Conference](#) to an audience of pediatric and medical providers, focusing on the role of integrated referral systems in supporting clinical workflows.

Gwen Walsh, a local leader with the Sangamon HEART IRIS Network (IL), presented at the [National Home Visiting Summit](#) September 29-30, 2026. Their presentation, *Building Home Visiting Partnerships with Pediatricians via Integrated Referrals*, describes how the Sangamon HEART Network fostered cross-sector connections through intentional relationships among medical providers, home visiting professionals, and other community providers to support better family outcomes.

Connecting Home Visiting and Healthcare Providers

As home visiting programs are increasingly operating within broader systems of care, meaningful, sustained partnerships with healthcare providers can be difficult to establish and maintain. Leaders in Sangamon County, IL identified that home visiting was an available but underutilized service that could improve outcomes for children ages birth to three and their families. In response, the Sangamon Home Visiting Education and Referral Team (Sangamon HEART), a collaborative led by the Department of Pediatrics at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine (SIUSOM), united pediatricians, Sangamon County Public Health workers, home visiting programs, and other providers through the Sangamon HEART IRIS Network.

Sangamon HEART IRIS Network

Formed in 2021, the Sangamon HEART Network sought to improve coordination among medical and social service partners. Using IRIS provides a practical bridge between home visiting and healthcare through a shared referral infrastructure that supports coordination, communication, and follow-through for families. In the years since its launch, their IRIS Network has flourished, and integration of an order in the EMR has made it easier than ever for pediatricians to participate. In 2026, their fifth year of using IRIS, they've sent over 2,000 referrals and connected almost 1,700 families to home visiting and other services.

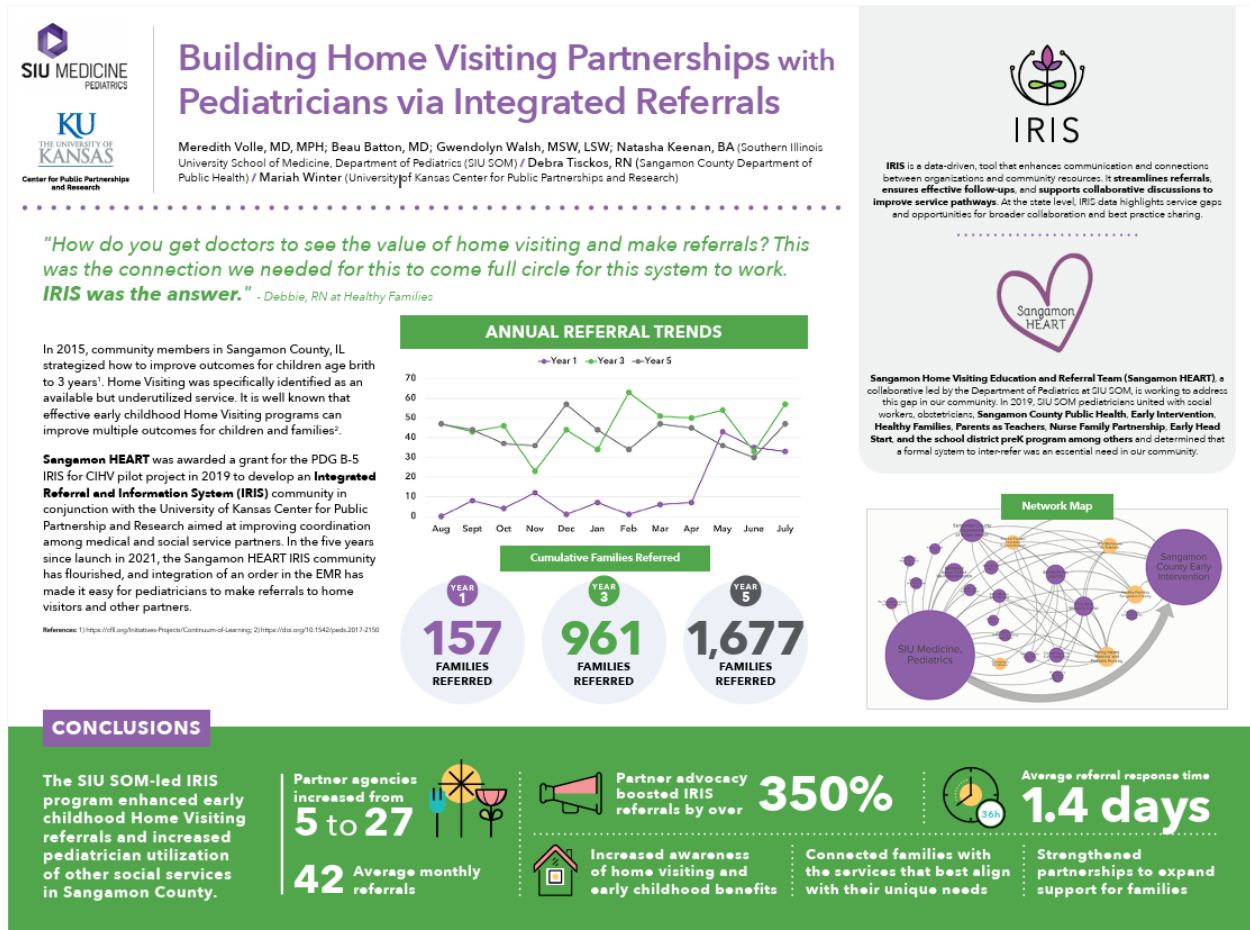


Figure 1.

By building a referral infrastructure that facilitates cross-sector coordination, the leaders of Sangamon effectively identified and addressed the needs of both home visiting programs and pediatric partners. This strategic collaboration ensures that the referral infrastructure enhances coordination while also improving access and connection rates for families.