

Our story

Centering[®]
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The start of truly transformative prenatal care

In the 1990s, overworked nurse midwife Sharon Schindler Rising found that seeing patients in a group setting was not only more efficient but yielded better experiences and outcomes for her patients – particularly for pregnant people of color. It allowed for more time with patients where normal visits could avoid feeling rushed and impersonal. It was also a more enjoyable, satisfying experience as a provider.

In 1993, she began offering Centering groups, or facilitated, group-based medical appointments and care focused on health assessments, interactive learning and community building. Her innovation took off quickly among colleagues who observed Centering’s profound impact on their patient’s care experience.

Centering Healthcare Institute (CHI), founded in 2001, is now a national nonprofit organization and works closely with healthcare providers from all sectors to improve health, transform care and disrupt inequitable systems through the Centering group model.

Over 20 years, CHI has become the recognized leader in the field, with the expertise and tools to help practitioners implement high-impact group care with fidelity. CHI has developed and sustained the Centering model, including CenteringPregnancy[®], Centering Parenting[®] and CenteringHealthcare[®], in nearly **600 clinical sites in 46 states and territories, with over 500,000 patients served** and in some of the largest health systems in the world.



“Care should be so much more than belly checks. Care should also involve time for discussion and opportunity to make connections with other women and couples.”

Sharon Schindler Rising
MSN, CNM, FACNM
*Founder and President Emerita,
Centering Healthcare Institute
Founding member, Group Care Global (current)*



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CHI's focus, utilizing the CenteringPregnancy model, has been serving vulnerable prenatal care patients: ~80% of Centering sites that currently hold groups offer CenteringPregnancy, and over one-third of current sites are Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and community health centers, which primarily serve communities of color and low-income communities. Centering leverages the power of community-based group facilitation by empowering Black pregnant people and Medicaid-qualifying patients through education and relationship building. Patient-provider relationships are strengthened by bringing patients out of the exam room and into comfortable group settings.



Our vision for impact through CenteringPregnancy is to create a future where maternal and child health outcomes are strengthened across the board, where disparities in outcomes, particularly by race, are greatly reduced and where all birthing people have access to prenatal care that is substantially and equitably improved.

We strive to give parents and their children access to quality prenatal care and the potential to enjoy future life chances, social and economic opportunity and overall wellbeing.