



Engaging Youth in Health Care Improvement Efforts

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News You Can Use

❖ The [Interagency Workgroup on Youth Programs](#), a collaboration of 18 federal departments and agencies, has released a [draft of its strategic plan](#) to promote coordinated evidence-based innovative strategies, youth engagement and partnerships to strengthen programs and benefit youth.

❖ [Youth-Centered Health Design \(YTH\)](#), a new innovative resource, pursues and shares emerging and startling technologies that can reach young people where they are. Take a look at resources, summaries and speakers from the April 2016 YTH Live conference

Greetings from the Adolescent and Young Adult Health National Resource Center (AYAH Center)

Your friends and colleagues are pleased to be sharing our monthly newsletters with you. Throughout the year, we will use this newsletter to:

- Provide information about trending topics in adolescent and young adult health and health care
- Share our resources, including resources from the Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network (CoIIN)
- Keep you up-to-date about upcoming events related to adolescent and young adult health and health care

We welcome your ideas and feedback, and you are free to unsubscribe at any time.

From the Experts

Adolescence and young adulthood is a critical stage of human development. Knowledge, attitudes and behaviors molded during this period endure well into adulthood and can influence one's health and well-being. However, youth voices are often not involved, integrated, or prioritized in the development of policies and programs that impact this population. Programs and interventions are strengthened when they involve and engage youth as valued and equal partners, rather than token representatives of their generation. This equal relationship ultimately provides benefits both for the program and for the involved youth. So, how do we mobilize our Title V field to effectively engage youth as key stakeholders rather than end-users or members of a target audience?

Several states have prioritized and embedded youth engagement in program planning and interventions. In Oregon, positive youth development serves as the cornerstone in much of their youth-related work, as evidenced through their *Positive Youth Development* benchmark, *Youth Participatory Action Research* curriculum and support of youth advisory councils in school-based health centers (SBHCs).

Colorado's youth engagement efforts span a continuum ranging from intermittent participation in specific projects and focus groups to their *Colorado Youth Advisor Model*, in which young people are hired as part-time employees to actively contribute to the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs and policies affecting adolescents and young adults across the state.



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News You Can Use

❖ In March 2015, the Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) released a “[game plan](#)” for engaging youth based on a meeting that helps with youth-serving groups to incorporate in OAH’s initiative, *Adolescent Health: Think Act Grow*.

❖ The National League of Cities – Institute for Youth, Education, and Families developed a new [guide](#) that provides research, theory and best practices in sustainably engaging youth in government to support cities as they work to promote youth civic engagement.

Save The Date

[ANA Native Youth Initiative for Leadership, Empowerment, and Development \(I-LEAD\) grant](#)
(Submission Deadline: June 13, 2016)

Participate in a program that focuses on comprehensive, culturally-appropriate approaches to ensure that all young Native people can thrive and reach their full potential by fostering Native youth resilience, capacity building and leadership.

With support from the MCHB, AMCHP was offered the opportunity to launch a Community of Practice devoted to improving the capacity of MCH professionals and advocates to increase youth engagement in their Title V programming. Typically, a community of practice (CoP) is “a group of individuals who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting [with others who share the same concerns, passions, etc.] on an ongoing basis.”¹ CoPs can foster several functions, such as problem solving, requesting information and discussing developments. For the Youth Engagement CoP, members have identified some overarching priorities to tackle together:

1. Bring experience and expertise together to collectively focus on initiating, accelerating or maintaining youth engagement efforts in states, including understanding the groundwork needed and how to effectively partner with entities that are currently doing this well.
2. Identify, share and apply research findings that support the value added of youth engagement.
3. Replicate and modify tools to help assess the effect of youth engagement in our activities, including both the impact on health outcomes among youth participants themselves and the general Adolescent and Young Adult population as well as programmatic results.
4. Capture and articulate the Return on Investment to key stakeholders with influential authority.

This group of committed MCH professionals meets at least one a month to engage in interactive learning and sharing sessions outlined through a mutually developed curriculum. In addition, a lot of follow-up interaction occurs virtually through our online communications platform. Ultimately, the Youth Engagement CoP aims to develop and share a set of best practices for youth engagement to the Title V field using their experiences and the collaborative learning that is fostered over the course of this year.



For more information about the Youth Engagement CoP, please contact Iliana White at iwhite@amchp.org.

¹ Wenger, E., McDermott, R. and Snyder, W. M. (2002): *Cultivating Communities of Practice*



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Save The Date

[2016 Summer Institute for Adolescent Health: Setting a Healthy Course: Talking about Sex in the Middle School Years](#)

July 25-27, 2016, University of Minnesota

Learn the strategies for effectively engaging young teens and their families in conversations about values and behaviors that set a course toward healthy sexuality.

[2016 Juvenile Justice Youth Summit](#)

August 2-3, 2016, Washington, DC

This event, co-hosted by the Coalition for Juvenile Justice and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, brings together emerging leaders under age 25 who are interested in juvenile justice reform. Participants will learn more about the current juvenile justice system and trending reform topics while participating in skills-building activities.

Latest Resources from AYAH Center



Check out AYAH Center's Youth Engagement Resources!

- [Web-based Toolkit: Youth-Centered Care \(NAHIC\)](#) offers resources and examples related to the eight global standards developed by the World Health Organization to assure receipt of quality youth-centered care.
- [Compendium of State and Local Strategies \(NAHIC\)](#) provides promising practices from "top performing" states related to improving access to health insurance and quality preventive visits among adolescents and young adults through innovative efforts such as creating partnerships, reaching special populations, using social media, engaging youth and more!
- [Youth Engagement Webpage \(SAHRC\)](#) provides guidance and tools on engaging youth in state level program and policy development, including Title V needs assessments.



Other Updates/Resources from the AYAH Center

- [Title V ESM Learning Lab: Adolescent Health \(NAHIC\)](#)
Dr. Charles Irwin presented on adolescent well-visit strategies and evidence-informed strategy measures, including activities and measures to strengthen adolescent and young adult-centered care. Additional measures from the *Strengthen the Evidence Base for Maternal and Child Health Programs* initiative are available [here](#).
- [Resources on Confidential Care \(NAHIC\)](#) is a collection of resources on confidential care, including background information and state action to protect Adolescent and Young Adult confidentiality.



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Save The Date

[ASTHO 2016 Annual Meeting and Policy Summit](#)

September 20-22, 2016,
Minneapolis, MN

Leaders in public health or health care are invited to address strategic public health and leadership issues, with partners from state, territorial and federal agencies; academic institutions and healthcare facilities; industry executives; and leaders from ASTHO affiliates and other public health organizations.

[American Public Health Association Annual Meeting and Expo](#)

Oct. 29-Nov. 2, 2016,
Denver, CO

Registration and housing open 6/1/2016.

Be part of APHA's 2016 Annual Meeting and Expo that brings together more than 12,000 of your peers from across the U.S. and around the world to network, educate and share experiences.

CoIIN Corner



All of the CoIIN states have made efforts to engage adolescents and young adults in their work to get authentic perspectives of the health care system, to incorporate youth in decision-making for improvements to their systems of care and to provide an avenue for youth to be involved in building up their community.

Check out how Xavier Barraza, youth leader on the New Mexico CoIIN, has worked collaboratively with New Mexico to improve its system of care and improve his community.

Interview with Xavier Barraza: Youth Leader on the New Mexico CoIIN

Your official title reads "Public Ally and Positive Youth Development Coordinator" -- how would you describe what you do to folks who don't know you?

The work I do is about building and rethinking community. Because of this, I spend a lot of time thinking about systems and how to transform them through individual and collective efficacy. At the center of all this is relationships. I don't mean just relationships with people but also my relationship (and understanding of) myself, other people both near and far, the environment (water, air, land – even trash!) and my relationships with schools, organizations and institutions. Because of this project, I think about relationships with the health care providers that serve me and how I consume health services. The more I learn about systems-based thinking, the more I begin to feel connected to others. This has given me a new way to think about relationships of all kinds.

What's in New Mexico?

The organization I've been working for, [The New Mexico Forum for Youth in Community](#), is experiencing transition. It's not great news, but it's a perfect moment for me and for others to understand the relationships between nonprofits and funding sources like the state. We had a strong relationship with the state as a funder for many years; when its budget was cut, our funding was cut and we had to close our doors. This isn't about fault, though: it's about relationships, and ours was more than ten years.



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Your New Mexico CoIN team has a lot of traction around youth engagement. Can you talk about your youth programming and that cool logo?

It's transformational. We've done hip-hop and poetry slams across ABQ, Farming In at Rio Grande HS, The [Web and Wellness contest](#) and the Head to Toe conference, which is New Mexico's largest health conference. The logo is another example of the power of relationships. My state friends were looking for a logo and asked me. I had a relationship with [Malcom King](#) – a young visual artist – so I recommended him. He's getting lots of visibility and new business from the project. Everything we are doing is really about planting the seed for young people to do systems-based thinking which boosts their literacy level, influences the system and builds self-efficacy. When they see themselves, their homes, their community and their state agencies as systems that they navigate and have relationships with, they also see the importance of self and collective efficacy. In the contest, we made it about young people creating marketing materials to educate themselves and teach each other. The logo asks them to explore how they define and measure their health in a positive way. Underneath it all is the message that they have the ability to make change – in themselves and in systems.

You can contact Xavier at Xavier@letsmakeawave.com. He also just co-founded the Wave Makers Consulting Collective, a youth-led peer-to-peer consulting agency providing sustainability, professional development, and mediation services.

Stay informed with our state-by-state CoIN updates!



Vermont

Vermont has established its 10 member Vermont Youth and Health Advisory Council. The members, ages 15-22, were recruited through community partners such as Vermont Outright, school liaisons and other stakeholder groups. The council will be meeting monthly starting in June, and it will help inform the work at the five Vermont pilot CoIN sites. The council members will conduct site visits at each practice and write a summary report with recommendations for each site. Members of the council are currently being reimbursed through the CoIN grant and plans are being made on how to sustain the council beyond the CoIN project.

Mississippi

Mississippi's team is partnering with Lanier High School's School Based Health Center (SBHC) to conduct a clinic assessment and create a Quality Improvement (QI) plan. Members have also made efforts to educate and capture the perspectives of youth in the community by hosting a training session on minors' confidentiality and rights for clinicians with Abigail English (Center for Adolescent Health and the Law) and by carrying out focus groups with adolescents and young adults in collaboration with Young Invincibles at Lanier SBHC and community colleges. Thus far, the preliminary findings have indicated that language about preventive care doesn't resonate with youth. However, findings have also indicated that youth do care deeply about health, but they don't connect its relationship to





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health care. In response to these findings, Mississippi's team is planning health literacy events at Lanier SBHC and will partner with student mentors to conduct these sessions throughout the school year.

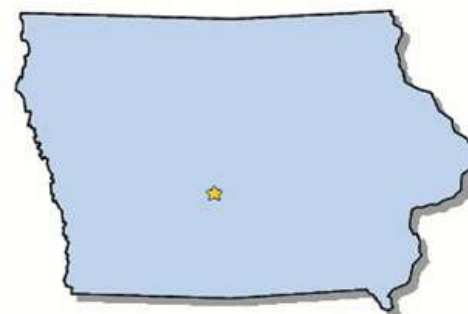


Texas

Texas Pilot Project clinics are developing local Youth-Adult Councils to assist in increasing the number and quality of their adolescent well-visits. Council youth will participate in improvements of clinic practice. Additionally, the Texas Adolescent and Young Adult representative has resources on youth recruitment and retention to share with the CoIIN and clinics. Texas chose to modify Heathy Teen Network's Youth-Friendly Services Self-Assessment Tool to help determine strengths and weaknesses to increase the clinic's youth-friendliness. One clinic even modified the assessment so that Council youth can walk through and note areas that are either especially good or need improvement.

Iowa

One of the overarching goals for the Iowa team is to increase interest and awareness on adolescent health care among parents and caregivers, youth and health care providers. It is using focus groups, including youth and young adults, to identify key content and the most effective communication modes for educating youth and key stakeholders about importance of the adolescent well-visit. The young adult representatives serving on their CoIIN team were instrumental in reviewing the question protocol that was used when conducting the focus groups. In partnership with managed care organizations and other insurance providers, the team will utilize these findings to inform and improve targeted messaging so that more adolescents and young adults seek and receive the recommended preventive services.



New Mexico

New Mexico's youth engagement strategies were on full display at the annual Head-to-Toe School Based Health Center Conference. This 20-year-old conference was attended by over 600 participants and included a track specifically for young people. The CoIIN team used the event to roll out the new "Know Your Health" branding and communications campaign. This campaign, informed by New Mexico's youth focus groups and partnerships, is intended to frame the well-visit as a positive experience and function as a "chat box." The challenge to "Know Your Health" acts as a perfect conversational lead-in for topics like the well-visit, mental health, sexual health and beyond.



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From the MCH Community



Check out these state examples, guidebooks, and studies on improving and increasing youth engagement!

- [Engage Youth! Colorado's Guide to Building Effective Youth-Adult Partnerships](#) (*Colorado 9-25*) provides lessons learned on developing and maintaining successful youth-adult partnerships.
- [Creating and Sustaining a Thriving Youth Advisory Council](#) (*Adolescent Health Initiative*) contains best practices for establishing and sustaining youth advisory councils in school-based and school-linked health centers.
- [What is Youth Engagement, Really?](#) (*Act for Youth*) offers a review of authentic youth engagement, applications for programs and organizations and resources on youth-adult partnerships.
- [Trying Hard: An Investigation of Youth Engagement and Voice in Community Programs](#) (*University of California*) examined practices in eight San Francisco organizations that led to youth having an influential role in organizational and/or public policy decision-making.
- [The Wyoming Adolescent Health Partnership \(WAHP\)](#) is tasked with creating the Wyoming Adolescent Health State Strategic Plan, developing the Wyoming Adolescent Health website and establishing a statewide youth health council. For information, contact Shelly Barth, Adolescent Health Program Manager, at shelly.barth@wyo.gov.

Upcoming Newsletter Issue



Stay tuned for our upcoming issue!

[*Improving Systems of Care for Youth and Young Adults through the ACA*](#)