Improving Health Care Awareness: Models that Engage and Empower Youth and Families

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

To subscribe to the newsletter, email Karissa Charles at kcharles@amchp.org. We welcome your ideas and feedback, and you are free to unsubscribe at any time.

Engaging Young Adults in Health Care Enrollment and Access

Before the Affordable Care Act was implemented, young adults were uninsured at an astonishing rate of 28 percent. We knew going into the first open enrollment in 2013/2014 that our work was cut out for us in connecting with young adults – a traditionally hard to reach and disenfranchised community in the health care space. Over the past few years, we’ve perfected a few best practices for engaging uninsured young adults and enrolling them in coverage.

Now, heading into the fourth open enrollment period, the uninsured rate for young adults has dropped to 15 percent – showing we still have work to do, but we’ve made tremendous progress.

First and foremost, it’s important to clearly identify who we’re talking about when we talk about uninsured young adults. Young adults of color have higher uninsured rates than their white counterparts, and young men of all races are uninsured at higher rates than young women. Marketplace-eligible young adults who don’t have access to employer coverage may be going to school part-time and working part-time. Others work in lower-wage or contract jobs in industries (e.g., service or retail) that tend to employ young adults but do not traditionally offer health benefits. In engaging young adults, we’ve found that these key messages resonate best:
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News You Can Use

- The National Improvement Partnership Network and the Academic Pediatric Association are collaborating on a national initiative starting in January 2017, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to recruit practices to participate in a 6-month QI intervention. Practices will receive training in QI methodology and implement evidence-based practice changes to increase immunization rates and reduce missed opportunities for HPV vaccine administration. For more information, contact Rachel Wallace-Brodeur at Rachel.Brodeur@med.uvm.edu or 802-656-9025.

- Young Invincibles released the Student Agenda for Postsecondary Data Reform, elevating the student perspective on how we should reform our higher education data systems. See the full article here.

- Affordability: For young adults with limited incomes, health coverage is very much a pocketbook issue. We’ve found that perceived lack of affordability is a major barrier. To motivate young adults to enroll, it’s critical that affordability through premium tax credits and cost-sharing reductions are really broken down to a concrete message. For example, “financial help is available” is not nearly as motivating as saying, “Patrick in Philadelphia was able to get covered for just $54 per month.”

- Benefits: Despite the “invincibility” myth, we know young adults value and want coverage. Another messaging tactic that works is simply breaking down the benefits, consumer protections and comprehensive coverage available in marketplace plans. Learning that preventive care services are available for free with a health plan helps young people to see value in their coverage and make it a priority when they are otherwise generally healthy. For young women, access to contraception and a well-woman visit for no additional cost is especially motivating. With young men, we’ve found that the “care-taker” messaging works especially well: those who may be reluctant to get their blood pressure checked for their own sake can be motivated to do so in order to be there for their family.

- The Penalty: Why Pay Something for Nothing? Young adults disproportionately benefit from the premium tax credit. Young adults just coming out of school, starting entry level jobs or working part-time are more likely than older Americans to be eligible for a large tax credit to lower their monthly premiums. Explaining that opportunity to avoid having to pay for or reduce a fine of $695 or 2.5 percent of your annual income is a no-brainer.

In addition to the right messaging, it’s important to work with the right partners. In order to reach young adults where they are, partner with trusted validators in their communities. This means reaching young adults where they work and go to school, where they socialize, and where they seek information. Below are some key young adult partners we’ve worked with in the past:

- Community colleges
- Peers and young adult leaders
- Bar and restaurant employers
- Faith-based organizations
- HBCUs and Hispanic-serving institutions
- Recreational sports leagues like flag football, kickball, etc.
- LGBT-serving organizations
- Labor unions, trade associations, young professional networks
- Digital influencers

Engaging young adults on health care can be difficult due to the complexities of the system and the misconceptions in the community. We believe that by working collaboratively with partners at the national, state, and local levels; using the right
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messages; and highlighting the importance of health coverage, we can help reduce the uninsured rate of young adults across the country even further and ensure the Millennial generation is the healthiest yet.

To learn more about the information presented in this article, contact Erin Hemlin, MA, Young Invincibles Director of Training and Consumer Engagement, at erin.hemlin@younginvincibles.org.

Navigating the Health Care System: Improving Adolescent Health Care Literacy

Helping young people understand how to use health care effectively (health care literacy) is an important strategy to improve access to care and health outcomes. Yet it’s one that has received little attention; therefore, there are few resources from which to draw.

In response to this, Nemours (a pediatric system of hospitals and clinics in Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Florida) created a health care literacy curriculum for high school students in Delaware. The goal was to educate, engage and empower adolescents to be their own health care advocates and build the necessary skills to navigate the health care system.

Nemours partnered with teens and parents to draft the training, “Navigating the Health Care System.” This was piloted and refined with teachers and school nurses in 35 high school classrooms and 1,200 high school students. The result was a curriculum designed to make it easy for teachers and school nurses to teach and to be engaging to students. Nemours also partnered with the Delaware Departments of Health and Education to integrate the training into the statewide education system.

The curriculum is currently being used by schools, local public health and youth-serving agencies in California, Wisconsin, Alabama, Illinois, Michigan, Florida, Texas and Indiana. Nemours is willing to share the curriculum with others. For more information, contact Kristin Teipel at the State Adolescent Health Resource Center-University of Minnesota, and she will help you connect with Nemours.

Save the Date

❖ Adverse Childhood Experiences: Awareness to Action
Join professionals across sectors to build connections, advance practice and inspire action to improve the health and wellbeing of children impacted by early adversity and trauma.

❖ Blocking Cyberbullying: Findings and Discussion
Oct. 20, 2016. 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. New York, N.Y.
Join researchers, cyberbullying experts, youth and stakeholders as they present groundbreaking research and tackle cyberbullying.

❖ National Trans Conference
Join other providers around the country as they learn how to build capacity through medical cultural competency to interact with and medically treat transgender individuals with care and respect.
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Save the Date

✈️ National Conference on Health Disparities
May 3-7, 2017 New Orleans, La.
Participate with health professionals around the country to learn ways to reduce health disparities through sustaining and strengthening healthy communities.

Quick Links

✈️ AMCHP
✈️ NAHIC
✈️ NIPN
✈️ SAHRC

Latest Resources from AYAH Center

Check out AYAH Center’s Resources on Engaging Youth and Families!

- **Family Engagement in Title V Programs** (AMCHP) is a survey about family engagement policies and practices in Title V MCH and CSHCN programs. The survey findings offer a snapshot of strategies to support meaningful family engagement, effective and innovative practices, and areas for improvement and technical assistance.

- **Reaching and Engaging Millennials in Health Care: Notes from the Field** (AYAH-NRC/Young Invincibles) is a presentation that was given at the first AYAH Center CoIIN Summit in 2015 during Young Invincibles’ *Healthy Young America* campaign to educate, engage and enroll young adults into health insurance. Additional information on this campaign include key messaging and outreach best practices.

CoIIN Corner

Stay Informed with Our State-by-State CoIIN Updates!

**Iowa**
The Iowa CoIIN Team is moving ahead with analysis and application of the findings from its focus group research among parents and young people. Iowa has engaged national AYAH Center partners and a few colleagues in adolescent health to collaboratively develop an outreach campaign to promote the well-visit. Efforts will
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include a communications strategy and media plan that will be used to develop communications materials as well as an evaluation plan to assess results.

Mississippi

In early October, the Mississippi CoIIN Team hosted a site visit and state partners meeting. There, team members and potential partners highlighted areas of collaboration to move their work forward around adolescent preventive services and school based health centers (SBHCs). Representatives of the CoIIN team, AYAH Center staff and the School-Based Health Alliance gave presentations and facilitated activities around quality improvement strategies, adolescent development, stakeholder engagement and action planning. This meeting generated an inventory of future collaborative activities focused on improving the system of care for adolescents and young adults on both a local and state level.

New Mexico

New Mexico and clinic partner El Centro have provided training to all locations with an emphasis on adolescent and young adult well-visits. The training included best practices, the HEADS Model and essential elements for interacting with adolescents and encouraging a youth-friendly clinic. El Centro SBHC staff members – who are well versed in working with adolescents – had an opportunity to share their expertise with their fellow peers. El Cento is also incorporating the Just Health Assessment Tool that was adapted from the NM SBHC School Health Questionnaire (SHQ) to be implemented with young adults ages 18-24. Apex Education is working with us to provide a limited number of iPads and the Just Health app to El Centro sites.

Texas

In Texas, three pilot sites are in the process of developing marketing strategies to improve adolescent well-visit numbers. They are working with their local youth-adult councils to produce messages that resonate with youth in their communities. Each council includes youth, parents and professionals who together provide input and feedback to the clinics. Their goal is to have the campaigns be youth-driven – using youth ideas, youth in development and youth in implementation while ensuring that parents and professionals have the opportunity to provide their perspectives as well.
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Vermont

The VT CoIIN team is compiling reports for practices from its site visits. The reports provide practices with feedback in the three areas assessed during the site visits: accessibility, environment and routine screening. The VT faculty is compiling resources for each of these areas to distribute with the reports to support practices’ improvement efforts. The VT team has also been supporting the planning of a statewide meeting of providers to improve the quality and uptake of Adolescent well-care visits. Project faculty from the VT team will be presenting the VT CoIIN work and strategies to engage youth.

From the MCH Community

Check Out these Studies, Tools, State Examples, and More on Engaging and Empowering Youth and Families!

- **Sexual Health Education for Young People with Disabilities: Research and Resources for Parents/Guardians** is a publication from Advocates for Youth that dispels sexual health myths and provides useful resources to empower parents and guardians to have open conversations with their youth about sexuality.

- **Youth.Gov** is a U.S. government website that aims to help create, maintain and strengthen effective youth programs. This website provides a wealth of resources, events and programs that prioritize youth engagement and partnership.

- **The Alliance for a Healthier Generation** focuses on efforts to reduce childhood obesity and on engaging youth to make positive social change. Resources that they provide include: a youth engagement guide, lesson plans, a playbook for leading a youth-hosted forum and guidance on how to plan community events.

- **TeensHealth** is a website developed by Nemours in English and Spanish to provide a safe space for teens who need honest, accurate information and advice about health, emotions and life. Topics range from sexual health, food, fitness, diseases and infections to school and jobs.

- **Youth Health Literacy: A Toolkit to Strengthen Health Literacy** is a resource developed by the New Mexico Department of Health to highlight activities to improve adolescent health literacy.
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- **Youth Engaged 4 Change** is a website designed to inform and empower adolescents and young adults to seek resources and openly talk about their challenges and successes around a variety of topics such as community service, LGBTQ issues, mental health, education and violence.

- **National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy** is an action plan developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services with achievable objectives to create and sustain health literacy.

- **Youth Tech Health (YTH)** is an organization that aims to advance the health of youth and young adults through technology. YTH has developed of variety of resources on topics such as sexual health, cyberbullying and medication management to educate and encourage youth to take charge of their health.

### Upcoming Newsletter Issue

Stay tuned for our upcoming issue!

*Strategies to Engage Important Stakeholders to Promote Preventive Care and Screenings to Adolescents and Young Adults*

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