

Providers and Teens Communicating for Health (PATCH) Program

Location: Wisconsin
Date Submitted: 10/2017
Category: **Promising**

PROGRAM MISSION

The Providers and Teens Communicating for Health (PATCH) Program envisions an environment in which all adolescents are able to reach their optimal health, safety, and economic security. We hire youth to share their authentic insights into the concerns, fears, and preferences of their generation, and empower them to create positive change by making their voices heard in their communities.

BACKGROUND: THE CORE PATCH PACKAGE

In order to get the best possible care, adolescents need to be open and honest with health care professionals. However, research indicates several barriers that influence their willingness to share personal information. Adolescents often: have a fear of being judged or lectured, do not trust those they interact with in health care settings, do not feel respected, feel overwhelmed by the complexity of the health care system, and lack appropriate health literacy to get the care they ultimately need and deserve. As a result, they tend to either lie by omission or falsify information, which directly affects the quality of care they receive.

The Core PATCH Package provides communities a foundation and platform to improve health care experiences for young people through an innovative, youth-driven, multi-prong, community-based approach. Becoming a PATCH Site encourages communities to engage and connect with various stakeholders; to align resources, policies, initiatives, and strategies within and across systems and sectors; and builds skills for convening, planning, and implementing shared/collective impact efforts.

MAIN COMPONENTS OF THE CORE PATCH PACKAGE

With an aim to improve the communication and overall relationship between adolescents and health care professionals, the Core PATCH Package offers communities three evidence-based intervention components: the PATCH Teen Educator Model, the PATCH for Providers workshop, and the PATCH for Teens: Peer-to-Peer workshop.

TITLE VMCH BLOCK GRANT MEASURES ADDRESSED
#10: Percent of adolescents with a preventive services visit in the last year
#12: Percent of children with and without special health care needs who received services necessary to make transitions to adult health care

PATCH Teen Educator Model

The PATCH Teen Educator Model employs and empowers youth to facilitate PATCH workshops and advocate for change within the community and health care system. We strongly believe that THEY are the experts – offering accurate and authentic insight into adolescent experiences, concerns, and preferences. They gain the appropriate knowledge and skills through rigorous training to deliver peer education workshops and professional development workshops for health care professionals, as well as to advocate for better adolescent programs and policies in schools, communities, and health care systems. Through this experience, PATCH Teen Educators develop lifelong skills, gain valuable leadership experience, and increase their understanding of health and wellness.

PATCH for Providers Workshop

The PATCH for Providers workshop has been developed as a continuing education opportunity for a wide range of health care professionals, including nurses, doctors, clinicians, medical students or residents, therapists, counselors, pharmacists, social workers, and any other front-end or support staff. In this 90-minute workshop, PATCH Teen Educators share their authentic insights into the health care concerns, preferences, and realities of today's young people, offering better ways to connect with young patients and ensure high-quality, youth-friendly services.

PATCH for Teens: Peer-to-Peer Workshop

The PATCH for Teens: Peer-to-Peer workshop is a 60-minute workshop led predominately by PATCH Teen Educators with the assistance and direction of a PATCH Site Coordinator, and is intended to be delivered outside of a typical school classroom setting (e.g., conferences, youth group meetings, student organizations/clubs, and other places young people gather to learn from one another). The workshop aims to empower young people to learn to manage their own health care, and equip them with the

knowledge and skills needed to navigate and advocate for youth-friendly services.

TARGET POPULATION SERVED

The Core PATCH Package has three priority populations: Teen Educators, health care professionals, and adolescents. Additional PATCH programming and resources are available for health care professionals, youth, health teachers, and parents and guardians.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

In Wisconsin, PATCH is seen as a promising and innovative strategy to help address Maternal and Child Health (MCH) priorities and has been a key component of state-based MCH efforts and built into robust Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network (CollIN) strategies.

Communities implementing the Core PATCH Package have reported significant impacts on Teen Educators in the areas of personal and social advocacy and adulthood preparation. Programmatic evaluations have also indicated significant increases in knowledge, self-efficacy, and behavioral intentions of both health care professional and youth audiences. Health care professionals have also demonstrated promising growth in clinical behavior change at 8-weeks post-workshop.

PROGRAM COST

The average cost to start a PATCH Site is \$14,000. This includes the Core PATCH Package licensing fee, initial implementation materials, training, and ongoing coaching. Additional resources needed include staff salaries and stipends, office and meeting space, supplies, transportation, lodging, meals, and materials.

ASSETS

Replication and Coaching Model

As a part of the Core PATCH Package, communities receive all the training and materials needed to form a local PATCH Teen Educator Team, and implement both PATCH for Providers and PATCH for Teens: Peer-to-Peer workshops. Furthermore, each community is assigned a PATCH Coach. Together they work collaboratively to set a solid foundation for successful implementation. This ongoing coaching and mentorship has found to be extremely helpful in program success.

Youth-Driven | The Teen Educator Model

The PATCH Teen Educator Model is an innovative approach to positive youth and community development. The Model engages youth as partners to improve adolescent health outcomes, while aiming to provide the necessary support, encouragement, knowledge, resources, and skills to become healthy, connected, productive, and thriving adults.

CHALLENGES

As a youth-driven program, PATCH Sites often run into implementation challenges related to youth payment procedures, youth engagement, transportation barriers of youth to and from PATCH activities, and more. Being able to troubleshoot with a PATCH Coach has proven to be instrumental in overcoming these challenges in a timely manner. Furthermore, PATCH Coaches and PATCH Sites utilize an interactive, online community of practice forum for collective learning. This space allows PATCH's growing community of PATCH Coaches and Site Coordinators the opportunity to share successes, challenges, best practices, lessons learned, and additional resources.

LESSONS LEARNED

PATCH, originally known as the Wisconsin Adolescent Health Care Communication Program (WAHCCP), began in 2010 with a single \$10,000 grant. Over the years, program staff have been able to capitalize on the lessons learned to grow and sustain this innovative program. Additionally, the committed investment and authentic insights from teens and key stakeholders has led to exponential growth and development. In the 7+ years, the program has changed its name, mission, structure, capacity, and overall work to meet the growing demands of today's youth and society.

Although not an exhaustive list, some of our key lessons learned include:

- The importance of youth engagement and the balance in our employment-empowerment approach.
- The need to develop key community partnerships for program success.
- The foundational program components and necessary steps for successful program replication (e.g., a specific Core PATCH Package community readiness assessment).
- The ability to be creative and innovative in program development, marketing, sustainability, and implementation.
- The importance of pilot projects and overall evaluation, quality improvement, and monitoring of the program.



FUTURE STEPS

Evaluation, monitoring, and ongoing quality improvement is critical due to the innovative and youth-driven nature of the program. As a result, PATCH Staff annually review and revise (as necessary) the program's strategic plan, programming, and materials. We strive to keep the program relevant in an ever-changing society, and aim to meet the growing demands of today's youth. We take into consideration evaluation data, literature, and community/key stakeholder input.

Currently, PATCH Staff is developing a PATCH for Parents & Guardians curriculum, piloting a statewide PATCH Youth Advocacy Fellowship Model (in year 2), and working to offer additional language options for the Core PATCH Package (currently only available in English).

Our original Wisconsin-based PATCH communities serve as our model while we explore ongoing adaptation, pilot new material and programs, and continually improve upon our current efforts.

COLLABORATIONS

PATCH is made possible because of the support from numerous individuals, organizations, and sectors who have rallied around its vision of youth empowerment and advocacy. Local, state, and national stakeholders include youth, health care professionals and systems, public health, policy makers, parents/guardians, schools, and community leaders. The ability to convene such diverse, multi-disciplinary advisory bodies and partnerships has had a collective impact on the implementation, quality, and growth of the program.

PEER REVIEW

Olejniczak, A., Otolora-Fadner, H., Hannah, C., Hudson, E., Tess, J., Royer, H. Evaluation of a Curriculum to Improve Clinician Communication With Adolescents. Wisconsin Medical Journal, 144(5):213-216, 2015 Nov.

Additional publications are forthcoming.

REPLICATION

In 2014, PATCH began its replication efforts by piloting an expansion site in rural Wisconsin. The lessons learned from this pilot led to the development of a full replication site in an urban community in 2016. PATCH went national in 2017 with its first non-Wisconsin PATCH Site. Today, the PATCH Program supports and coaches organizations looking to bring PATCH to their own community. Because the program is community-based in nature, PATCH Staff and communities collaboratively and strategically plan, implement, evaluate, and improve the program based on the vision, goals, priorities, and strengths of the local community.

RESOURCES PROVIDED

www.patchprogram.org

Key words:

adolescent health, health care quality, communication, health literacy, positive youth development

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