



For additional information and resources, please **scan the QR code** or visit the **Department of Public Health's Preparing Teens for the Move to Adult Health Care** webpage.

If interested in connecting on this topic, email childrens.medical@dph.ga.gov.

PREPARING TEENS

To Transition From Pediatric To Adult Health Care



STEPS FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

Transitioning from pediatric to adult health care can be a scary time for youth, young adults, and their families.

To lessen their fears, they require support from their healthcare providers. Providers can assist transition-aged youth, ages 12-26, by providing a clear and intentional set of STEPS that incorporates planning to support the successful linkage to adult health care. Healthcare professionals play a pivotal role in supporting, facilitating, and educating youth and their families on the Health Care Transition (HCT) process.

Why is (HCT) important?

- According to the National Survey of Children's Health (2022), only 16.5% of adolescents in Georgia, ages 12-17, reported receiving preparation from their provider to prepare for the transition to adult healthcare
- HCT aims to improve the ability of youth and young adults, with and without special health care needs, to manage their health care, effectively use health care services, promote continuity of care and provide linkages to adult providers.
- Research shows that a planned approach to transition, including planning, transfer, and integration into adult care, results in positive outcomes.
- HCT can prevent interruptions in care for youth and young adults, especially those with special health care needs.

Why should your patients be informed and involved in HCT planning?

- When patients are empowered, they feel confident in managing their healthcare needs, which leads to positive health outcomes.
- Involving patients in the planning process and teaching them about their health helps patients feel included and in charge of their health.
- Providers can empower youth by assessing where they are in this process, addressing their self-care skill needs, providing the necessary education to assist them in managing their health care and encouraging them to learn the STEPS to move from pediatric to adult care.

Follow these STEPS to include HCT planning into your practice:

START EARLY: Establish and display an **HCT policy/guide**, ensure staff are familiar with it, and share it with families and youth beginning at ages 12-14. Also, establish a process to identify and track transition-aged youth's **receipt of transition services**.

TALK: Have regular conversations about HCT with youth and their families and encourage your youth and young adult patients to speak with you one-on-one.

EDUCATE: Each adolescent visit presents an opportunity to assess a **youth's transition readiness** for the move to adult-oriented care, ability to communicate about their healthcare needs, and capacity to advocate for themselves.

PLAN and PREPARE: Provide a **transfer letter** and concise **medical summary and emergency care plan** that includes health maintenance, psychological challenges, addresses economic factors and a social summary that highlights the youth's interests and goals. Assist with identifying an adult provider, as needed, and ensure that this plan is shared with the new adult provider and the youth.

SUPPORT: Champion youth and young adults as they prepare for a successful transition to adult medicine (including specialty doctors) and/or adult care and adulthood. Remember to ask for **feedback** about your process.

Why refer your patients with special health care needs to Children's Medical Services?

Children's Medical Services (CMS) is a Georgia Department of Public Health program that serves families of children with eligible special health care conditions from birth to their 21st birthday. Each family is provided with a care coordinator who assists the family with needs related to their child's health condition, such as linkage to primary care and pediatric specialists, community resources, assistance with health services not covered by health insurance, and transition planning with youth, beginning at age 12, and their parent/caregivers. This ensures these families have the tools for successful and continued continuity of care.