

Health Systems 101: A novel approach to encouraging transition aged youth to utilize primary care

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TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Community Health Workers / Health Navigators

ABSTRACT: Background: Many people aged 18-24 years old, known as Transition Aged Youth (TAY), are newly covered by Medicaid. This group is unlikely to utilize primary care and may use the Emergency Room for non-emergency health problems, resulting in inappropriate healthcare service utilization. There are limited resources to teach them how to use primary care.

Methods: Two focus group interviews were conducted at homeless youth shelter, one with youth (n=12), one with staff (n=24). Key informant individual interviews from 3 health navigators and one physician were conducted at the Benton County Health Clinic. All interview questions were developed through literature review on TAY and the challenges of navigating the health care system. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed, then thematically coded.

Results: Five themes were generated about areas the TAY needed support. Themes were: Not knowing why primary care is important, not knowing when to seek medical care, feeling lost in the healthcare system, fear of judgment from healthcare providers, not knowing their patient rights.

Outcomes: A 5 session peer-facilitated program was developed to lead TAY through their first primary care appointment. Lessons include: the importance of primary care, when to go to the doctor, healthcare vocabulary, doctor's appointment role play, knowing your patient rights. Future implementation will include assessing effectiveness of Health Systems 101.

OBJECTIVE(S): Describe one barrier Transition Age Youth experience in utilizing their health insurance.

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