



A strategic plan to  
guide adolescent  
and young adult  
health in Minnesota

2019



The Minnesota Partnership for Adolescent and Young Adult Health

# The Minnesota Partnership for Adolescent and Young Adult Health



The Partnership – convened by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) – are stakeholders representing the state, counties, schools, community agencies and faith groups that work for and with young people.

A small leadership team helped shape our path and process for engaging the diverse, multi-sectoral adolescent health

## The Process

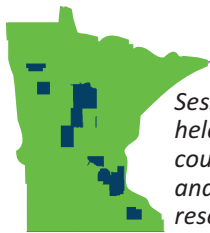
**45** Listening Sessions

**323**

Adults

**139**

Young People



*Sessions were held in seven counties and three reservations.*

community. Listening Sessions were conducted around the state with adults and young people in a variety of settings.

In these Listening Sessions, we worked towards consensus on our hopes and dreams for the health Minnesota's youth and young adults. We documented supports for and barriers to that

vision, then identified bold steps to build on those supports and move around barriers.

Finally, another small leadership team helped MDH frame the recommendations, organize the actions and finalize language.

## The Vision

**Minnesota is a place where all young people thrive.**

The Partnership uses this Vision to reflect our values, inspire action and engage new partners.

While the Partnership consists primarily of professional adults in the field, the perspectives of young people were a formative part of this plan.

Throughout this intergenerational process, all parties acknowledged their roles:

- Systems, communities and youth-serving professionals are responsible for **creating opportunities**
- Young people are responsible for **acting on opportunities**



## Health Goals

The MN Department of Health is grateful to have convened and collaborated with this Partnership. The creation of the plan serves to address overarching adolescent and young adult health goals. MDH is committed to sharing this call-to-action and eager to support the work of communities across Minnesota.



**Improve the health and well-being of all youth and young adults (ages 10-25).**

**Build and maintain strong partnerships with those interested in supporting the health and well-being of young people.**



*Learn more about these photos from the MayDay Celebration on the back page.*

# A Strategic Plan to Guide Adolescent and Young Adult Health

This collaboratively developed strategic plan was created to motivate, engage and inspire action. It recognizes the important contributions and amazing ideas that exist across our great state.

Rather than proposing a formal, rigid set of recommendations, it is designed to support community-based efforts – whether led by health systems, youth-serving organizations or young people – with a unifying vision and collectively agreed-upon priorities.

Descriptions of the Priority Areas include:

- Action Steps
- Community Responses
- Resources



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Adolescent Development ..... 2

National Alignment with Think, Act Grow..... 6

Access to High-Quality, Youth-Friendly HEALTH CARE ..... 7

**Physical and Mental Health..... 8**

**Effective Government..... 9**

Positive CONNECTIONS with Supportive Adults ..... 10

**Families and Caregivers..... 11**

**Adults Who Understand.....12**

Safe & Secure PLACES to Live, Learn and Play ..... 13

**Supportive Schools..... 14**

**Welcoming Communities..... 15**

Opportunities for Youth to ENGAGE ..... 16

**Out-of-School Time..... 17**

**Youth Leadership..... 18**

Adolescent & Family CENTERED SERVICES ..... 19

**Diversity..... 20**

**Social Determinants..... 21**



Adolescence is usually described as 'pre' or 'in between' - a stage between childhood and **adulthood**. It is seen as a turmoil because one moves from a protected state into a state of independence. I prefer to see adolescence as a significant stage in itself, an '**adolescenthood**' with new experiences and new strengths, not merely an interim period and a problem.

**Gisela Konopka, 1985**

## Adolescence: A Critical Developmental Stage

Adolescent development is a process that all youth experience as they move through their adolescenthood toward adulthood. It is second only to early childhood when it comes to the magnitude, significance, and rapidity of physical and cognitive development.

There are specific developmental tasks that all youth need to accomplish in order to enter adulthood well-prepared, yet young people develop in unique ways as they move through adolescenthood. Seeing adolescence in stages yields a better understanding of physical and psychological development and potential problems.

Young people who successfully complete these developmental tasks are better prepared to make a successful transition from adolescenthood into adulthood. Supporting youth as they grapple with the changes and challenges of adolescence contributes to their health and well-being. Young people who are not given healthy outlets for growth are likely to find potentially harmful alternatives.

### Developmental Tasks of Adolescence

1. Adjust to new physical sense of self (including body image)
2. Adjust to a sexually maturing body and feelings
3. Develop and apply abstract thinking skills
4. Define a personal sense of identity
5. Adopt a personal value system
6. Renegotiate relationship with parents and caregivers
7. Develop stable and productive peer relationships
8. Meet demands of increasingly mature roles and responsibilities



### Stages of Development

#### Early Adolescence

10-14 years old • Grades 5-9

A stage in which everything is new! Young people start dealing with all the changes of adolescence with little life experience to make sense of it all.



#### Middle Adolescence

15-17 years old • Grades 9-12

In this stage, young people begin testing and refining as a way to take charge of the changes they experience. This testing is purposeful - the developmental changes of adolescence prime them to take risks and try out new things.

#### Late Adolescence /Early Adulthood

18-24 years old • Post high-school

In this final stage, young people experience a time of feeling "in between" being an adolescent and adult. What they know, what they've come to count on - all changes. And there's no certificate of completion that lets them know they graduated to adulthood.

# BEING, BELONGING, BECOMING: Developmental Approach

The MN Partnership for Adolescent and Young Adult Health believes that it is our responsibility as Minnesotans to support and guide young people during the developmental process. This requires a focus on wholeness and wellness, and seeing our youth as “a promise” rather than “a risk.”

The developmental tasks of adolescence build on the developmental experiences of childhood and lay the foundation for adulthood. The tasks of adolescence are best described by the theme of **being, belonging** and **becoming**:

**Being** refers to *“defining who I am”* (physical, psychological, spiritual) and includes personal values, attitudes, knowledge and behaviors. These developmental tasks revolve around defining a clear sense of identity, a positive sense of self-worth and control over one’s life.



**Belonging** refers to *“finding my place in the world”* and recognizes a young person’s fit with their environment (physical, social, community). These developmental tasks focus on the ability to form healthy relationships with others, using available support systems, finding a valued place in the world and ways to be useful.



**Becoming** refers to *“achieving my personal goals, hopes and aspirations.”* These developmental tasks include mastering social skills, developing lifelong learning habits, developing a sense of curiosity and exploration, seeing a promising future with real opportunities, acquiring skills to participate in our economy and establishing a respect for diversity.



## Healthy Youth Development

A cornerstone of our approach, the phrase *“healthy youth development”* is used in many ways:

- As a goal for the developmental process
- As a characteristic of effective youth programs;
- As an expression of our values and underlying philosophy

Healthy Youth Development is a contrast to “problem-centric” health strategies. Traditionally, health systems have tried to address one “problem” at a time – although research shows that health problems cluster and are inter-related.

This is why healthy youth development is our most basic strategy. It recognizes that young people have fundamental, underlying needs, some of which are unique to adolescence as a time of life. By meeting these needs, we support young people to avoid multiple health problems.

It also ensures that we view young people holistically as multi-dimensional people that live as members of families, schools and communities. To truly support their development, we must acknowledge and address the strengths and weakness within those contexts.





# Minnesota Plays TAG: National Alignment

Created and promoted by the Federal Office of Adolescent Health, **Think, Act, Grow**® (TAG) is a national call to action to improve adolescent health in the United States. TAG calls upon organizations and individuals to prioritize activities that can support the health and healthy development of all of America's adolescents.

The adolescent and young adult health priorities identified through Minnesota Listening Sessions with

young people and the youth serving community aligned with those identified nationally in TAG. To make the most impact and capitalize on resources, the Minnesota Call-To-Action is aligned with this national platform.

Outlined below are TAG's Five Essentials for Adolescent Health. For each of the Five Essentials you will find priorities identified by the MN Partnership.

## Office of Adolescent Health: Think, Act, Grow Essentials

Access to High-quality, Youth-Friendly HEALTH CARE

Positive CONNECTIONS with Supportive Adults

Safe & Secure PLACES to Live, Learn and Play

Opportunities for Youth to ENGAGE

Adolescent & Family CENTERED SERVICES

## Minnesota Priorities & Action Steps

### Physical and Mental Health

Improve the responsiveness of health care for young people.



### Effective Government

Strengthen the systems and structures designed to support the health and well-being of young people.



### Adults Who Understand

Educate adults about adolescent health and development.



### Families and Caregivers

Strengthen the capacity of families and caregivers to provide the supportive foundation for young people's health and well-being.



### Supportive Schools

Partner with schools to ensure all young people are engaged, connected and learning.



### Welcoming Communities

Ensure that communities are a welcoming and nurturing place for all young people.



### Youth Leadership

Increase opportunities for young people to actively influence the issues that affect their health and development.



### Out-of-School Time

Improve opportunities for young people to engage in activities that support positive, healthy development.



### Diversity

Recognize and respond to the diversity, individuality and unique circumstances of young people.



### Social Determinants

Address the social, economic and environmental factors that negatively impact the health of young people.





## Access to High Quality, Teen Friendly Health Care

### Think, Act, Grow Focus



Young people benefit from access to high-quality medical, dental, mental and behavioral health services from health care providers who understand adolescent and young adult health and development. Young people prefer health services that are youth-friendly, culturally competent, affordable, convenient and confidential. Health care that is youth-centered, involves parents and allows for increasing autonomy, is critical.



### Minnesota Response



The MN Partnership for Adolescent and Young Adult Health believes youth-centered health care is essential to meeting the mental and physical health needs of young people and that effective government systems are required to assure that all youth are supported.

#### Physical and Mental Health



Improve the responsiveness of health care for young people.

#### Effective Government



Strengthen the systems and structures designed to support the health and well-being of young people.

## Physical and Mental Health

### Improve the responsiveness of health care for young people.

A targeted approach – youth-centered care – is needed to truly meet the health care needs of young people.



The goal of this recommendation is to strengthen the health care system to better meet the mental and physical health needs of young people. The action steps focus on access to services, increasing the capacity of health care providers to effectively address adolescent

health needs, and providing services confidentially while balancing the need to reach out to parents of young people.

### Do young people consistently access preventive health care?

Preventive care or “well care” visits decline by 20% (or more) between the ages of 10 and 19.<sup>1</sup>

-20%

health needs, and providing services confidentially while balancing the need to reach out to parents of young people.

### ACTION STEPS

- Expand and strengthen youth-focused clinics including increasing the number of School-Based Health Clinics (SBHCs)
- Promote teen-centered health care (youth-friendly care)
- Bring health care to where young people and families are
- Ensure confidentiality in health care for adolescents and young adults
- Enroll adolescents and young adults in insurance
- Increase focus on mental wellness
- Increase access to mental health services and supports

### Are mental and physical health linked?

People with serious mental illness have a lifespan that is shorter by 10-25 years.<sup>2</sup>

10-25 years

### COMMUNITY RESPONSES

#### Get C&TC Marketing Campaign

A statewide emoji-based marketing campaign to encourage youth aged 16-20 to schedule a Child & Teen Check-up visit (covered by Medicaid). The campaign includes outdoor ads in population-dense communities, social media ads (facebook, mobile banners, Instagram, mobile rich media) and a web microsite. The microsite introduces youth to C&TC, explains what to expect from the visit and directs them to schedule an appointment. It also offers online resources on topics identified by youth advisors as top health issues.



Learn about the campaign at [www.getctc.com](http://www.getctc.com)

Learn about the campaign at [www.getctc.com](http://www.getctc.com)

### RESOURCES

#### Psychiatric Assistance Line (PAL)

A free service available weekdays for health professionals to call for mental health triage and referral or consultation with a Board Certified Child and Adolescent Health Psychiatrist. Provided by PrairieCare Medical Group through a grant from the MN Dept. of Human Services.

Learn more <http://www.mnpsychconsult.com/>

## Effective Government

### Strengthen the systems and structures designed to support the health and well-being of young people.

Systems and structures must be well-resourced and coordinated to effectively support young people. The goal of this recommendation is to ensure that Minnesota has a structure that supports a comprehensive network of adolescent health resources. These action steps focus on strengthening commitment to a common adolescent and young adult health agenda through agency partnerships. These actions move Minnesota from systems that foster a piece-meal approach to health to one that is coordinated and comprehensive.



## ACTION STEPS

- Facilitate effective partnerships and collaborations focused on adolescent and young adult health
- Promote evidence-informed healthy youth programs
- Improve adolescent health data
- Strengthen and align youth health policy
- Stabilize funding for youth health

### Do disciplinary policies treat all youth fairly?

Students with disabilities and students from communities of color are disproportionately suspended or expelled by Minnesota schools. Rates can be up to ten times higher than their white peers.<sup>3</sup>

Native American **10x**

Black **8x**

Have Disability **2x**

## COMMUNITY RESPONSES

### Youth Services Network

A network of organizations working together to provide services and supports for young people experiencing homelessness. Their web site provides 1-click access to shelter, counseling, medical assistance, drop-in centers, education, food, employment and more.

Access the Youth Services Network resources at [www.ysnmn.org](http://www.ysnmn.org)

## RESOURCES

### MN College Student Health Survey

A survey designed by the University of Minnesota's Boynton Health Service to provide a comprehensive overview of student health in postsecondary institutions. The survey measures 8 key areas: health insurance and health care use; mental health; alcohol and other drug use; tobacco use; safety; financial health; nutrition and physical activity; and sexual health. The 2018 survey included students on 18 MN campuses.

Learn more at

<https://boynton.umn.edu/surveys>



## Positive Connections with Supportive Adults

### Think, Act, Grow Focus



Young people thrive and flourish when they are surrounded by caring and nurturing relationships with supportive adults (parents, caregivers, elders, grandparents, neighbors, tribal members, coaches, teachers, mentors and more). Youth need a circle of people who listen, provide high expectations, support and guidance



### Minnesota Response



The MN Partnership for Adolescent and Young Adult Health recognizes the need to increase the capacity of adults to build supportive relationships with young people and the critical role of families and caregivers.

#### Families and Caregivers



Strengthen the capacity of families and caregivers to provide the supportive foundation for young people's health and well-being.

#### Adults Who Understand



Educate adults about adolescent health and development.

## Families and Caregivers

**Strengthen the capacity of families and caregivers to provide the supportive foundation for young people’s health and well-being.**



The family plays a significant role in nurturing the health and well-being of young people. Yet, the critical supports for parents of adolescents have eroded. The goal of this recommendation is to support strong, stable families and caregivers. The action steps focus on strategies that reach out to parents and other caregivers to develop strong families from birth through adolescence and into young adulthood.

### ACTION STEPS

- Provide opportunities for parents and caregivers of young people to sharpen parenting skills and gain support from each other
- Create an adolescent version of Early Childhood and Family Education (ECFE) program
- Create online “parents of teens” resource repository
- Include a parent or caregiver component in health programs for young people
- Support teen parents as both developing young people and parents
- Advocate and promote family-friendly policies

#### Do students feel connected to community?

While most 11th graders report strong connections with their family, only half say they are connected to a caring adult in their community.<sup>4</sup>

1/2



### RESOURCES

#### It’s That Easy

Designed for professionals who work with parents/caregivers of children aged birth to 18, this training provides tools and techniques to engage parents in developmentally appropriate approaches to raising sexually healthy children. Participants receive the *It’s That Easy* manual, a comprehensive guide to help professionals work with parents.

Learn about the curriculum at <http://itsthateasy.net/>

### COMMUNITY RESPONSES

#### Families with Teens Program – University of Minnesota Extension

Database of resources for parents and professionals who work with youth on adolescent development and issues.

Access the database at <https://extension.umn.edu/families-and-youth#parenting>

## Adults Who Understand

### Educate adults about adolescent health and development.

Caring adults who understand young people and their development play an important role in guiding and supporting young people through adolescence. These are the adults who “stick” with youth through thick and thin. The goal of this priority is to support adults who work with or make decisions about youth to



#### Who understands development?

47%

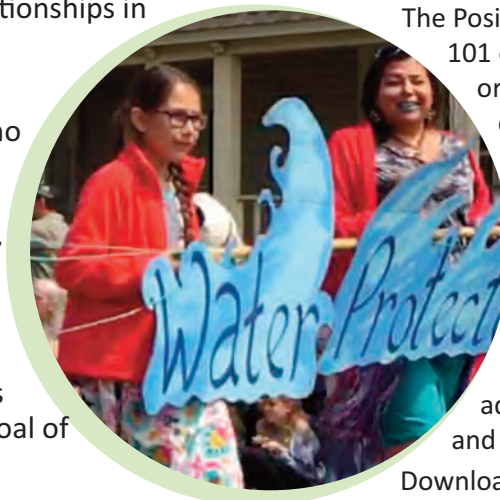
While over 90% of school resource officers receive training in school policies and laws, **less than half** are trained on adolescent or brain development.<sup>5</sup>

routinely create and surround young people with caring relationships. The action steps focus on training these adults in

adolescent development, positive youth development and the foundations of health.

## ACTION STEPS

- Partner with young people to train adults about adolescent health issues
- Include adolescent development and the importance of supportive relationships in adult professional education
- Improve higher education programs for professionals who work with young people to include a focus on adolescent health and development (e.g., health, public health, social work, psychology, education, law enforcement, etc.)
- Make supportive relationships with young people a central goal of youth programs
- Collect and share best practices on building supportive relationships with young people



## COMMUNITY RESPONSES

### Every Hand Joined Cradle to Career, Red Wing

Every Hand Joined is part of the StriveTogether network, a national organization working with communities nationwide to help create a civic infrastructure uniting stakeholders around a shared vision, a common set of goals and measurements of success for every child – cradle to career. Using five goals to reach success, Every Hand Joined works to ensure every child is: prepared for school; supported inside and outside of school; succeeds academically; enters some form of post-secondary education or training; completes their post-secondary education or training and enters a career.

Learn more about Every Hand Joined  
<http://everyhandjoined.org/>

## RESOURCES

### Positive Youth Development Manual

The Positive Youth Development 101 curriculum offers an orientation to the youth development approach for professionals new to the field of youth work. Use this free curriculum to provide professional development to new youth workers, supervisors and administrators, funders, and community volunteers.

Download the manual here.  
[http://actforyouth.net/youth\\_development/professionals/manual.cfm](http://actforyouth.net/youth_development/professionals/manual.cfm)



## Safe and Secure Places to Live, Learn and Play

### Think, Act, Grow Focus



Schools, neighborhoods, and community settings can foster and support healthy adolescent development across the spectrum, including physical and mental health, social interactions, and cognitive growth. Young people also benefit from safe places to congregate, enjoy social, athletic and other recreational activities, and just be with their peers.



### Minnesota Response



The MN Partnership for Adolescent and Young Adult Health recognizes the need for young people to feel like they belong and are valued. How young people are perceived and supported in these environments plays a significant role in their feelings of connectedness and investment as part of the community. Schools, neighborhoods, and communities can foster this sense of connectedness to support healthy development across the spectrum, including physical and mental health, and cognitive growth.

#### Supportive Schools



Partner with schools to ensure all young people are engaged, connected and learning

#### Welcoming Communities



Ensure that communities are a welcoming and nurturing place for all young people

## Supportive Schools

**Partner with schools to ensure all young people are engaged, connected and learning.**

When young people feel connected to school, they feel like adults and peers in the school care about their learning and are more likely to engage in healthy behaviors and succeed academically. Experiencing positive social support creates a sense of safety and

belonging, leading to more school engagement. The goal of this recommendation is to support schools in their work to create safe, engaging learning

### Does school climate matter?

2x

In MN schools where many students feel unsafe, twice as many of them skip school and experience bullying.<sup>6</sup>

opportunities that help young people envision a promising future and a pathway to successfully transition into adulthood. The action steps emphasize collaborating with schools to create environments where young people safely learn, experiment, develop critical social skills and thrive.



### COMMUNITY RESPONSES

#### Project SUCCESS

Project SUCCESS motivates and inspires young people to dream about the future, helps them take steps to get

there and gives them the tools they need to achieve their goals.

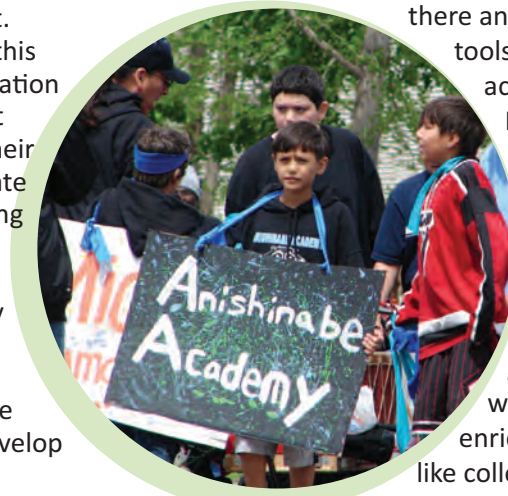
Program activities begin in 6th grade and serve students continuously through 12th grade. Through goal-setting workshops and enrichment activities

like college tours, theatre, outdoor experiences,

and freshman orientation, students build life skills, supportive relationships, confidence, motivation and graduate with plans for their futures.

Learn about the project

<https://www.projectsuccess.org/>



### ACTION STEPS

- Support schools to adopt a “Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child” model
- Create positive and safe climates in schools
- Bring a youth-centered perspective to school improvement efforts
- Partner with schools to align and bring services to students and families
- Support students to be successful in school
- Refine and implement standards for health education

### Do their teachers care?

49%

Only about half of 8th, 9th and 11th graders report that teachers and other adults at school care about them “quite a bit” or “very much.”<sup>4</sup>

### RESOURCES

#### The Minnesota Student Survey (MSS)

The MSS provides insights about students that extend beyond health behaviors to include data about students’ perceptions of school climate including safety, connections with teachers/staff, engagement as well as experiences of discipline.

Access Survey results at

<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/health/mss/index.htm>

## Welcoming Communities

**Ensure that communities are a welcoming and nurturing place for all young people.**

Communities where young people feel like they belong and matter provide a solid foundation for youth to thrive and flourish.

Welcoming communities engage young people in meaningful activities and provide supportive relationships that nurture growth and development. The goal of this



### Do they feel safe?

87%

Most Minnesota students feel safe at home, going to and from school, in school and in their neighborhood<sup>4</sup>

recommendation is to strengthen communities in creating welcoming and engaging environments for youth. These action steps focus on viewing young people as an integral part of

their community, creating safe spaces, and offering opportunities for them to contribute in meaningful ways.

## ACTION STEPS

- Engage young people and adults in efforts to transform and improve communities
- Connect and align youth programs across communities
- Promote inter-generational community activities that bring together people across the lifespan
- Create community-wide transportation for young people

### Does their community care?

2/3

A majority of 11th graders don't think so. Almost half said their community cares about them "a little" or "some" – 15% said "Not at all."<sup>4</sup>



## COMMUNITY RESPONSES

### Making Authentic Connections Initiative, St. Paul-Ramsey County Public Health

Making Authentic Connections (MAC) is a dialogue process designed to help youth and adults connect in genuine ways – to help young people experience belonging and care in their communities and the places they spend time.

MAC is part of public health's work to prevent teen pregnancy & sexually transmitted infection via healthy youth development & community building.

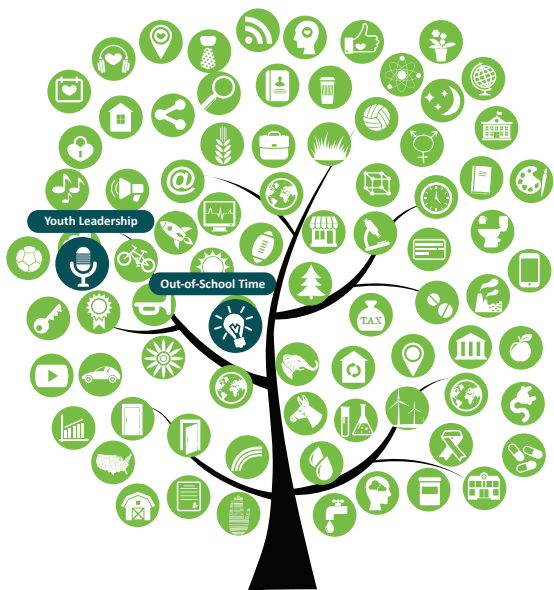
Learn about the Initiative at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/program/mhti/content/document/pdf/htisprc.pdf>

## RESOURCES

### Ideas for Building Developmental Relationships, Search Institute

This resource stimulates thinking about how adults can be more intentional in building developmental relationships with young people. The ideas build on insights from focus groups and interviews, as well as research on the elements of a developmental relationship framework. They are adapted from the Search Institute publication *Relationships First*.

Learn more at <https://www.search-institute.org/#>



## Opportunities for Youth to Engage

### Think, Act, Grow Focus



Active youth involvement with people and programs is an essential part of healthy adolescent development. Activities at school, home or in the community, such as school clubs, sports, music, visual and performing arts, or out-of-school time programs, volunteer or paid jobs, and activities at places of worship all support key developmental tasks.



### Minnesota Response



The MN Partnership for Adolescent and Young Adult Health recognizes that young people grow and thrive best when actively engaged with their community and have meaningful leadership opportunities. Through these experiences, young people learn, have fun, challenge themselves and build relationships. Given a chance to lead, young people gain a stronger sense of self, develop life skills and connect to the communities in which they grow. When youth voices are heard, policies are more effective, programs are more engaging and the community is a better place.

#### Youth Leadership



Increase opportunities for young people to actively influence the issues that affect their health and development.

#### Out-of-School Time



Improve opportunities for young people to engage in activities that support positive, healthy development.

## Out-of-School Time

**Improve the opportunities for young people to engage in activities that support positive, healthy development.**

All young people need opportunities to engage in activities that support positive, healthy development. The goal of this recommendation is to ensure that quality opportunities are available and accessible.

To be effective, these opportunities must provide safe spaces and supportive relationships with adults and peers while being responsive to young people's culture and identity. Out-of-School Time programs support development when they focus on social skills, include meaningful community-based activities and offer chances for healthy

### Who has access?

**+21%**

Students not eligible for free or reduced-price lunch are 21% more likely to participate in out of school time activities.<sup>4</sup>

experimentation and decision making. The action steps focus on growing and strengthening opportunities for recreation, community service and civic engagement.



### ACTION STEPS

- Assess and strengthen the quality of youth-focused out-of-school programs
- Create and support a wide variety of recreational activities for young people
- Ensure communities have accessible youth and recreation centers with transportation for those in need
- Build strong and sustainable mentoring programs
- Offer meaningful employment and internship opportunities



### COMMUNITY RESPONSES

#### Sprockets

Sprockets is a network of many different after-school and summer programs for youth in Saint Paul. It is a collaboration of community organizations, the City of Saint Paul, and Saint Paul Public Schools. Sprockets improves the quality, availability, equity and effectiveness of out-of-school time learning.

Learn about Sprockets and their programming at <https://www.sprocketssaintpaul.org/>

### RESOURCES

#### Ignite Afterschool

MN's Afterschool Network, working to support out of school time programming through policy, quality programs and partnerships.

Learn more at <https://igniteafterschool.org/>



## Youth Leadership

**Increase the opportunities for young people to actively influence the issues that affect their health and development.**

It is important to increase opportunities for young people that allow them to actively influence issues that



### Are leadership opportunities available?

10%

While more than half participate on sports teams, only 1 in 10 students (5th, 8th and 9th graders) participate in leadership activities.<sup>4</sup>

affect their health and development. The goal of this recommendation is to engage young people authentically as leaders to address critical

issues in their communities. The action steps focus on strengthening and improving these leadership opportunities.

## ACTION STEPS

- Create a statewide youth health leadership council
- Engage young people to assess, plan and evaluate programs
- Include youth engagement as part of any grant or funding opportunity
- Provide opportunities for young people to mentor others
- Train adults in how to effectively partner with young people
- Provide opportunities for youth and adult partners to learn from each other

### Can schools increase engagement?

+15%

Students who participated in at least 3 out-of-school activities per week are 15% more engaged in their education.<sup>4</sup>



## COMMUNITY RESPONSES

### Student Engagement and Advancement Board (SEAB), St. Paul Public Schools

SEAB's role is not to speak for students, but to develop and implement strategies that amplify student voice.

SEAB works on multiple initiatives each year to increase student voice in decision making at the School Board and Administration level. The Board, Administration, staff and students may choose to submit a project proposal for SEAB or collaborative work. SEAB decides, as a group, what they want to work on during the year and also design their own projects with input from the student body.

Learn more about the board at <https://www.spps.org/seab>

## RESOURCES

### Strengthening Communities through Youth Participation

Authored by the Center for Nonprofits at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, this study explores how ACT (Assets Coming Together) for Youth communities responded to the challenges of youth engagement, presenting lessons learned and identifying strategies and outcomes at the community level.

Download the PDF at <http://www.youthpower.org/resources/strengthening-communities-through-youth-participation-lessons-learned-act-youth-initiative>



## Adolescent and Family-Centered Services

### Think, Act, Grow Focus



The systems for providing services and supports to adolescents are often fragmented, spread across government agencies, nonprofit organizations, health care providers, businesses, and faith-based organizations. A more coherent, integrated approach to fostering health and healthy development would benefit all young people.

### Minnesota Response



The MN Partnership for Adolescent and Young Adult Health recognizes that the experiences young people have with our systems; the support and opportunities they receive vary widely among young people. In Minnesota, health disparities define our adolescent health challenge. We embrace the challenge of eliminating personal and structural bias through systems reform while honoring the strengths and assets young people bring to our collective efforts.



#### Diversity



Recognize and respond to the diversity, individuality and unique circumstances of young people.

#### Social Determinants



Address the social, economic and environmental factors that negatively impact the health of young people.

## Diversity

### Recognize and respond to the diversity, individuality and unique circumstances of young people.

The resources, experiences and opportunities we provide to young people must be consistent regardless of:

- The place they live
- Their race, ethnicity, culture or faith
- The economic status and health of their family
- Their sexual orientation or gender identity
- Their placement in a justice, foster care or health system



The goal of this recommendation is to broaden our understanding of and approach to diversity. Action steps propose changes to our systems that eliminate bias, reform our work and diversify our professional community.

### ACTION STEPS

- Intentionally recognize and address populations who are marginalized when planning any youth-focused program or policy
- Support and promote the unique strengths, assets and social capital of every community
- Address unique needs of young people in systems (justice, foster care, etc.)
- Ensure staff, decision makers and leadership reflect and represent populations served
- Improve data collection and dissemination by recognizing and addressing bias

#### How are Minnesota's demographics changing?

Trends show that the population of students from Communities of Color increased by 74% from 2000-2014. Population growth for white Minnesotans increased by 2%.<sup>7</sup>

10%



### COMMUNITY RESPONSES

#### KISS (Keeping It Safe and SEXY) at Family Tree Clinic

KISS is a group of high school students that are queer, trans, or allies, who take part in a 16 session program. They receive peer leadership training on communication skills and starting conversations, handling questions in a non-judgmental format and share information in a sex positive way. Students are paid for each educational interaction they have with peers or family members. Participants report increased frequency and comfort level in communicating with their families about sexual health.

Learn about the program at <https://www.familytreeclinic.org/?s=KISS>

### RESOURCES

#### Racial Equity Tools

Designed to support individuals and groups working to achieve racial equity. This site offers tools, research, tips, curricula and ideas for people who want to increase their own understanding and to help those working toward justice at every level – in systems, organizations, communities and the culture at large.

Access these resources at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/opi/healthequity/resources/>

## Social Determinants of Health

**Address the social, economic and environmental factors that negatively impact the health of young people.**

Research continues to document how these factors impact the health and success of young people. Some young people are disproportionately impacted and Minnesota has made little progress in addressing these health disparities. The goal of this recommendation is to expand our partnerships – in both systems and communities – and collaborate to bring a health perspective to all policies. The action steps prioritize the voices and experiences of young people while asking adolescent health champions to address individual and systemic bias.



### ACTION STEPS

- Promote systems change to prioritize addressing social determinants
- Ensure that the basic needs of young people (shelter, food security, safety, livable wages and transportation) are met
- Support young people's efforts to address social issues in their schools, communities and activities
- Recognize and address both individual bias and racism as well as structural bias and racism in public health (and all) systems
- Use trauma-informed care strategies.
- Collect and present data that illuminates how social determinants impact health
- Support and promote the unique strengths, assets and social capital of every community

#### When will we remedy economic inequities?

The poverty rate for young people living in Communities of Color in Minnesota is up to 400% higher than that of their white neighbors.<sup>8</sup>

4x



### COMMUNITY RESPONSES

#### St. Paul Promise Neighborhood (SPPN)

SPPN is a community-wide initiative to provide the academic and social supports youth need to succeed in school and in life. Saint Paul's Promise Neighborhood is in the heart of St. Paul's historic Frogtown and Summit-University neighborhoods. SPPN has a continuum of solutions and a surrounding infrastructure where all children are validated, valued, developed with culture as an asset, and where they can all ultimately be successful. SPPN provides wrap-around supports for children and their families with full-service schools at the center.

Learn about the campaign at <https://www.wilder.org/community-impact/saint-paul-promise-neighborhood>

### RESOURCES

#### Health in All Policies: A Guide for State and Local Governments

This comprehensive Guide provides direction for state and local government public health leaders who are interested in working with non-traditional health partners such as housing, transportation, education, air quality, parks, criminal justice, energy and employment agencies.

Access the Guide at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/opi/healthequity/resources/phi-hiap.html>

# How will YOU support young people to thrive?

## Play with this plan

Use it in what every way works for your adolescent and young adult health programming, policies and investments. It can be a framework, starting point, planning agenda, needs assessment or simply a set of resources.

Community solutions and resources highlighted here are only the beginning – visit [www.adolescenthealth.mn.us](http://www.adolescenthealth.mn.us) for more:

- Detailed action steps that inspire and drive tactics.
- Ideas and solutions from different communities across the state.
- Easy access to local and national resources: programming, research, policies, best practices and more.

[www.adolescenthealth.mn.us](http://www.adolescenthealth.mn.us)

## Reach out

Learn more about how the Minnesota Department of Health and the Partnership can support your work. We are as eager to share our own resources as we are to hear about your work with young people.

Contact:

**Julie Neitzel Carr**  
State Adolescent Health  
Coordinator  
[julie.neitzelcarr@state.mn.us](mailto:julie.neitzelcarr@state.mn.us)

## Stay Connected

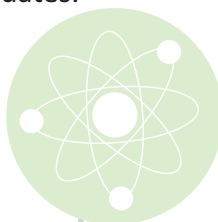
Join the Partnership and share how you are helping Minnesota's young people to thrive. Know that by aligning our efforts, we harness our collective knowledge and resources. We will send you our newsletter for updates.

Reach us at:

[AdolesentHealth@state.mn.us](mailto:AdolesentHealth@state.mn.us)

## CITATIONS

1. Minnesota Department of Human Services (April 2019). CMS-416 FFY 2018 Minnesota Child and Teen Checkups Statewide Participation Report. Retrieved 6/2019 from <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-7103D-ENG>.
2. Improving Mental Health and Well-Being: A Vision for Minnesota's Public Health System. A Report from the Mental Health Workgroup of the State Community Health Services Advisory Committee. MDH, State Community Health Services Advisory Committee. St. Paul, MN 10/2013
3. Minnesota Department of Health. (2018) Minnesota Discipline Data, 2017-18. Accessed 6/2017. <http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/DataTopic.jsp?TOPICID=133>
4. Minnesota Department of Education. (2017) Minnesota Student Survey, 2016. Accessed 6/2017.
5. Hurley Swayze, D., & Buskovich, D. (2014). Law enforcement in Minnesota schools: A statewide survey of school resource officers. Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs.
6. Eisenberg, M., Gower, A., Shea, G. (2016). What Do Minnesota Students Think about School Climate? School Climate Reports. University of Minnesota.
7. Horowitz, B., Goldenrod, C., (2017). Census: Incomes on the rise, but many still struggle to get ahead. Minnesota Budget Bites. Accessed 1/2018. <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ojp/forms-documents/Documents/SRO%20REPORT.pdf>
8. Minnesota Department of Health. (2015) Poverty Data from the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey, 2016. Accessed 6/2017. [https://data.web.health.state.mn.us/poverty\\_basic#race](https://data.web.health.state.mn.us/poverty_basic#race)



## PARTNERS

We thank everyone who contributed and hope that you see your input, feedback, hopes and goals for supporting the health of young people reflected in these pages. We value your work, passion and dedication to young people and know that together we can support young people to THRIVE.

Aqui Para Ti

Division of Indian Work

Evergreen

FamilyMeans Landfall Teen Center

Family Tree – Youth KISS Participants

### Forest Lake Area (FL)

Linwood Group

Timber Bay

FL Police Department

Washington County Public Health

Family Pathway

YMCA Lino Lakes

Lakes Area Community Television

Lakes Area Youth Service Bureau

City of Forest Lake

Allina Health

Willowbrook Church

Fairview

Lakes Life Care Center

Rapid Press

High School for Recording Arts

ISD 2687

Independent School District 15

### Leech Lake (LL)

LL Child Welfare

LL High School

LL Behavioral Health

LL Alcohol and Drug Outpatient

Family Preservation

LLBO

ICWA

LLCW

Homeless Program

LL Alcohol and Drug Program

Health Division

Family Violence Prevention

LL Tribal Police

LL Band of Ojibwa – Human Services and Alcohol and Drug Program

LL Housing

Lutheran Social Services

Meeker County Public Health

Minnesota Fathers and Families Network

MN Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

Norman-Mahnomen Public Health

### Olmstead County Public Health Services

Boys and Girls Club

Community Services

State of MN

Olmstead County-Social Worker

Winona State

Fern Brook

Mayo Clinic

Rochester Public Schools

Doctor

Olmstead County-Probation

Children's Mental Health

Van Wald Shelter

Olmstead County – Violence Prevention Specialist

Planned Parenthood

Raices Youth Development Staff at Centro

### Red Lake (RL)

RL High School

Sexual Assault program

New Beginnings

Community Education

RLES

RL Community Health Services

RL Comp. health Services??

REM Minnesota

Safe Zone

Sauk Rapids-Rice Schools

Sauk Rapids-Rice Middle School

Sexual Assault Program

Sherburne County Health and Human Services – Public Health Division

Sherburne County Health and Human Services – Public Health Division

St. Paul-Ramsey County Public Health

Stearns County Public Health

Stearns County Human Services

Todd County Health and Human Services

### White Earth (WE)

WE Child Care Early Childhood

WE Behavioral Health

WE Child Care Early Education

WE Indian Child Welfare

Circle of Life Academy

WE Community Health

DOVE

Home Health Agency

Circle Back Center

WE Tribal Health



### Special Thanks

The MN Partnership for Adolescent Health recognizes and appreciates the vital contributions from the Leadership Teams who brought wisdom, insight and strength to the preliminary and final stages of the strategic process.

Staff from the Konopka Institute, Glynis Shea (Communications Director) and Kristin Teipel (State Adolescent Health Resource Center Director) facilitated the process, designed and produced this strategy document. Glynis and Kristin extensively shared their skills and access to University of Minnesota resources.



Throughout this document we've included images from the annual MayDay Celebration created by Minneapolis-based Heart of the Beast Theatre (HOBt). These joy-filled photos illustrate how young people – all people – thrive when given the opportunity to connect with community and express themselves.

MayDay comes to life when HOBt staff and volunteers hold intergenerational community planning meetings, collaborate with other youth serving and community-based organizations then host open workshops where costumes, puppets, signs, music are imagined, created, practiced and polished. The Celebration includes a parade through Minneapolis' Phillips and Powderhorn neighborhoods and the Tree of Life Ceremony at Powderhorn Park.

HOBt has produced the MayDay Celebration for 45 years with support from systems, partners, funders, volunteers, students, artists and the community at large.

Get involved at [hobt.org](http://hobt.org)



**The Minnesota Partnership for Adolescent and Young Adult Health**  
A strategic plan to guide adolescent and young adult health in Minnesota, 2019

[www.adolescenthealth.mn.us](http://www.adolescenthealth.mn.us)

