

PROVIDER TIP SHEET

Health Care Transition from Adolescence to Adulthood

The transition from childhood to adulthood is filled with many changes, including a transition from a pediatric to an adult model of care. According to a 2011 American Academy of Pediatrics report, optimal health care is achieved when each person, at every age, receives medically and developmentally appropriate care. The goal of a planned health care transition is to maximize lifelong functioning and well-being for all youth, including those who have special health care needs and those who do not.

This Provider Tip Sheet was compiled to help Community First Health Plans Providers guide teen and young adult patients and their parents/guardians/caregivers through a successful Health Care Transition (HCT), preparing them for an adult model of care.

Health Care Transition Team

A young adult's health care transition team includes:

- Young adult
- Parents/guardians
- Primary care provider
- Specialty care providers
- Other providers or support staff, if appropriate

A Provider's Role

The health care transition focuses on building a teen/young adult's independent health care skills, including self-advocacy, which will prepare them for the adult model of care. Providers should also help patients find new adult providers with experience caring for special health care needs, if applicable.

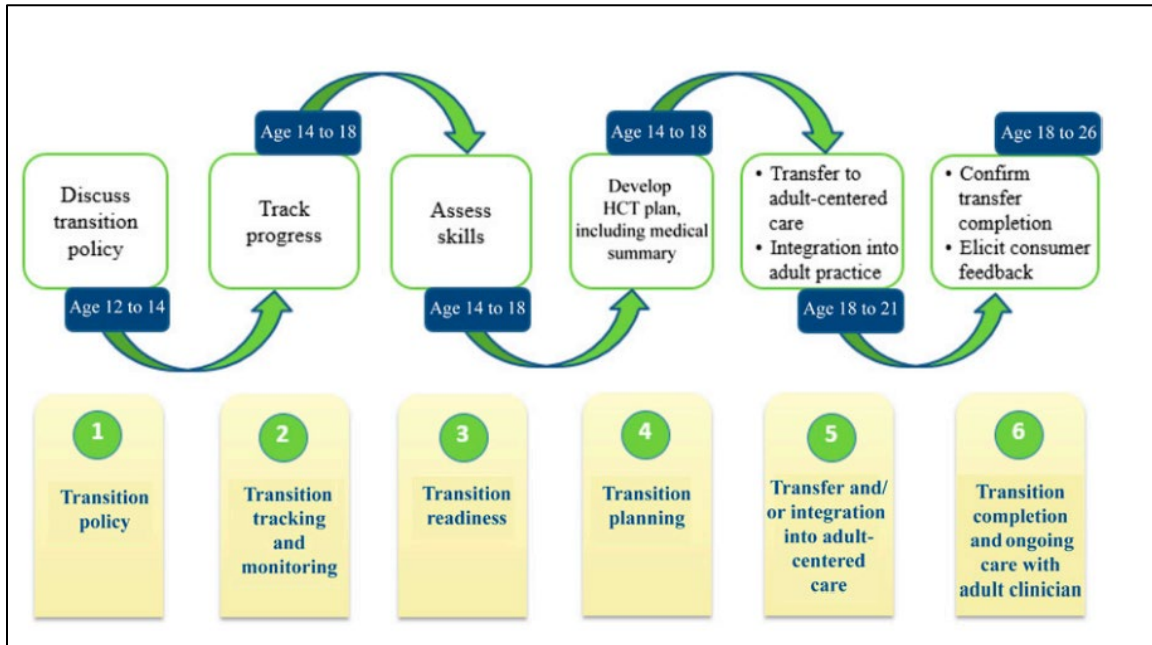
Pediatricians can offer support to patients and their parents by:

- Encouraging them to choose a new doctor with whom they trust and feel at ease
- Encouraging them to stay in touch, especially in the beginning stages of the transition
- Aiding both parent and child in making health care decisions, and until the child feels capable of managing their health themselves, the parent may discuss the possibility of the child granting the parent temporary access to medical records
- Explaining that the adolescent's decision to take responsibility for their actions is a normal stage of growing up and that doing so is a sign of maturity
- Helping parents begin the process of finding a new doctor and transferring the child's records before the child leaves pediatric care

Timeline

The **age** and **developmental stage** of the adolescent are the main factors determining whether it is time to switch to an adult health care provider.

A well-timed transition from child- to adult-oriented health care is unique to each individual and ideally occurs between the ages of 18 and 21 years, is determined with the assistance of a pediatrician, and should begin when the child is 14 or 15 years old.



Reference: White PH, et al. Pediatrics. 2018. PMID: 30348754. Supporting the Health Care Transition From Adolescence to Adulthood in the Medical Home.