

ADOLESCENT HEALTH and YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the program?

The purpose of the Adolescent Health and Youth Development (AHYD) program is to enhance the skills and improve the health status of Georgia's adolescents through opportunities and programs developed in collaboration with families, communities, schools and other public and private organizations throughout Georgia.

Why is the program important?

AHYD programs and services provide a network of community-based support to help adolescents succeed as they move into adulthood by focusing on the "assets" of individual youth and their families. AHYD-sponsored programs reinforce positive attitudes, healthy behaviors and activities, and reduce risk-taking behaviors, such as violence, substance abuse, poor school performance and sexual activity.

Who is eligible?

AHYD programs and services target youth age 10 to 19.

How many people does the program help?

In FY 2005, the Office of Adolescent Health and Youth Development provided individual services to 83,275 youth statewide including 45,486 comprehensive health services and 7,950 referrals to community services.

Are services located throughout the State?

Yes, AHYD offer services in communities throughout Georgia and at 31 Teen Centers located in 28 counties, 16 Community Partnership Programs in 13 health districts, and 6 District Medicaid Outreach Programs. AHYD coordinates its statewide program initiatives with the District Adolescent Health and Youth Development Coordinator (YDC). Funded activities are integrated into a comprehensive and coordinated system of District adolescent health and youth development programs and services and implemented as described in the *AHYD Services Work Plan* reviewed by the Teen Center Parent Advisory Council and approved by the District Health Director.

What does the AHYD program do?

The Office of Adolescent Health and Youth Development is located in the Georgia Division of Public Health, Family Health Branch. AYD sponsors services that integrate adolescent health services and youth development activities. AHYD program strategies and activities are an integral part of the Georgia Maternal Child Health System. Programs include:

- **Community Partnership** involves businesses, civic associations, schools volunteers and the faith community in advocating for positive adolescent health promotion and creating opportunities within the community for youth development. Community involvement programs also demonstrate strong local input in the planning process. Community involvement programs represent partnerships among social agencies, schools, and faith organizations sponsoring after school programs, teen resource centers, and summer camps, mentoring programs and other youth development activities.
- **Male Involvement** focuses on teen and young adult males who are at risk for becoming parents too early. The programs offer prevention activities that reduce alcohol and substance abuse, premarital sex, statutory rape/sexual assault, delinquent behaviors and violence among males.

- **Outreach and Case Management** helps young people who need services have accurate information and access. Experienced Resource Mothers and Fathers make home visits, coordinate with youth serving agencies for referrals and support services and encourage abstinence. Former welfare recipients who have first hand knowledge and experience of the challenges faced by many teens at risk fill the majority of these positions.
- **Abstinence Education** emphasizes sexual abstinence as the best choice for all teens to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Abstinence is also the primary prevention method promoted throughout all program components and implemented in conjunction with the DHR Teen Center Pregnancy and STD/HIV Prevention Policy (September 2004).
- **Postponing Sexual Involvement** is abstinence-based reproductive health education that promotes abstinence from sexually activity, abstinence from unprotected sexual intercourse, and avoidance of alcohol and substance abuse. Currently, Grady Teen Services program has trained 1,000 professional and volunteers in the Postponing Sexual Involvement Educational Services for Young Teens.
- **Comprehensive Adolescent Health Services** work to improve the health status of teens by providing comprehensive services in accessible sites staffed by trained professionals.
- **Family Involvement** brings parents and guardians into youth development programs. Each county has an adult and a teen advisory committee. Teens who participate in the programs, along with their parents, have a meaningful way to participate in planning and decision-making about program activities.

What technical assistance is provided for youth development programs?

Technical assistance is a key component of program monitoring, compliance and evaluation for continuous quality improvement. Technical assistance is an on-going, systematic process used to integrate knowledge into day-to-day practice, capacity building and systems change. Technical assistance provided by the Family Health Branch affords expertise and resources to assist and improve program performance.

Why do Georgia teens need "youth development" programs?

Many Georgia counties have high teen pregnancy rates and low high school graduation rates - both have high economic and social costs with negative effects on Georgia's future. Programs and interventions that include both youth development and reproductive health components reduce teen pregnancy over a long period of time, according to research by Doug Kirby, Ph.D., who has conducted two rigorous national studies of teen pregnancy prevention programs. Community programs that focus on building young people's strengths have proven effective in increasing adult independence and self-sufficiency through reducing teen pregnancies and subsequent pregnancies, promoting sexual abstinence until marriage and reducing the occurrence of sexually transmitted diseases. They are also effective in reducing risky behaviors stemming from violence; dropping out of school; and alcohol, tobacco and drug use.

Once they join, do teens stay involved in these programs?

Yes! They stay involved and motivated for many reasons, including character and leadership development, learning new skills, career preparation, connecting with new people and building deeper relationships and commitments to their communities! Young people want to be involved in decisions that impact their lives. Involving young people in the decision-making process of programs designed for them allows the responsibility for preventing teenage pregnancy, violence, substance abuse and other risky behaviors to be shared among the youth, professionals, organizations and the community. Youth development services actively solicit youth participation in identifying problems and designing prevention activities and programs to reduce problems.

What types of programs are available for teens?

Teens can take advantage of many different programs like these:

- Abstinence Education
- Dance Enrichment Classes
- Substance Abuse Counseling
- Health Education Information
- Karate Outreach Program
- After School Tutoring
- Drama Program
- Sexual Assault Survivors Group
- Rites of Passage Program
- Sport and Art Activities
- Computer club
- Peer Educators
- Leadership Training
- After School Enrichment Programs

How can we all help Georgia teens say "Yes! To Tomorrow?"

- Encourage young people to get involved in "youth development" programs and activities, including teen advisory councils.
- Get involved in parent advisory committees, even if you're not a parent. Be the kind of adult who cares about the young people in your community.
- Encourage your neighborhood and community to make these activities available and promote them to all teens.
- Encourage policy makers to support "youth development" programs.
- Encourage local agencies to offer "youth development" programs that focus on teenagers' assets.

Outcome measures are directly linked to national and state goals for reducing welfare dependency, specifically:

- Reduce the percent of repeat pregnancies among adolescents, aged 15 through 17.
- Reduce the rate (per 1,000) of births for teenagers, aged 15 through 17.
- Reduce the rate (per 100,000) of deaths to children, ages 14 years and younger, caused by motor vehicle crashes.
- Reduce the percent of children without health insurance, aged 10 through 19.
- Increase the percent of youth with special health care needs who received the services necessary to make transitions to all aspects of adult life, including adult health care, work, and independence.

Legislative authority

Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, 1996; a federal welfare reform law requiring state initiatives on teenage pregnancy prevention, out-of-wedlock births, and male responsibility.

Contact: Eve Bogan, Team Leader (404) 657-6080
E-mail: ebogan@dhr.state.ga.us
<http://health.state.ga.us/programs/adolescent/>

Revised February 2006

Georgia Department of Human Resources
Division of Public Health
Family Health Branch

