

ADOLESCENT HEALTH and YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Teen Centers

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. The focus of the AHYD "Teen Center" initiative is to provide access to comprehensive health and youth development services within targeted communities.

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 *out-of-wedlock* teen sexual activity.

Who is eligible?

AHYD programs and services target youth age 10 through 19.

What does the AHYD program do?

The Georgia Division of Public Health, Family Health Branch, administers the AHYD Program. AHYD program strategies and activities are an integral part of the Georgia Maternal Child Health System. Teen Center activities include:

- *Clinical health services* aimed at reducing risk behaviors and poor health outcomes;
- *Population based prevention and public education activities programs*, aimed at promoting responsible and healthy lifestyle behaviors;
- *Partner collaboration and referral* to link youth and their families to comprehensive, quality systems of preventive, primary and specialty health care and other community resources;
- *Outreach and public education activities* in coordination with Medicaid that create awareness and access among hard-to-reach youth and their families; and
- *Community involvement and collaboration* as the mechanisms for involving parents, youth and others in promoting positive youth development.

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 program strategies and activities are based on best practice approaches and needs assessment data and planned/implemented in conjunction with youth, families, community partners, public health staff. AHYD funds 31 Teen Centers, located in 28 communities, throughout Georgia.

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.

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