



Adolescent Medicine and Behavioral Health Services

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OVERVIEW

Teen Health Connection’s mission is to improve the health of adolescents by providing adolescent medicine and behavioral health services, education, advocacy, leadership development, and research through connections among adolescents, parents and the community. Teen Health Connection is the only regional healthcare practice of its kind and is at the forefront of establishing best practices and advancing research to meet the needs of adolescents and their families.

OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPACT

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 31% of local Charlotte Mecklenburg high school students reported feeling so sad and hopeless they stopped normal activities for two weeks (YRBS, 2019). Approximately half of all lifetime behavioral health problems started before age 14 and three-quarters by age 24, yet even then the majority of these problems went undetected and untreated (WHO, 2019). Today, the behavioral health crisis facing our adolescents is even more startling. Since the start of the pandemic, 46% of parents indicated their teens showed new or worsening signs of behavioral health conditions (C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital Poll on Children’s Health). At the same time, 40% of parents reported canceling their children’s routine healthcare due to the pandemic (Pediatrics, 2020), delaying important screening, intervention, and guidance. Teens have experienced increased rates of depression, anxiety, and adversity while simultaneously isolating from their normal peer, school, and healthcare-based sources of support and intervention. Adolescent health is of critical importance to the post-pandemic well-being of the Greater Charlotte Community.

OUR MODEL OF CARE

Teen Health Connection was formed in 1992 in response to concerns by county officials and community leaders that many area adolescents were not receiving affordable, developmentally appropriate healthcare services. Nearly 30 years and 200,000 patients later, Teen Health Connection continues to be recognized as a leader in adolescent healthcare and prevention.

Adolescent Medicine: We provide comprehensive adolescent healthcare and anticipatory guidance for young adults ages 11-25 led by the only two Board-Certified Adolescent Healthcare physicians practicing in the region. Clinical services include well-checks, sports/school/camp physicals, immunizations, acute care, chronic illness prevention and management, nutrition and wellness guidance, reproductive health care and same-day sick appointments.

Behavioral Health Services: In person and virtual individual and family counseling addresses depression, anxiety, adjustment, trauma exposure, eating disorders, and other non-emergent adolescent behavioral health concerns through best-practice and empirically validated treatments specialized for adolescent patients and families. Services are delivered in a teen-friendly, stigma-free healthcare environment.

Parent Education: Parent workshops and individual coaching are available free of charge to the parents of local teens, applying evidence-based training curriculums to improve parent skill and confidence as teens embark on the transition from childhood to adulthood.

Teen Leadership and Prevention Education: Teens participate in intensive leadership education and prevention training through teen-led, adult guided initiatives and community campaigns aimed at achieving personal outcomes and changes to public awareness and policy.

**All photos taken by teens participating in our photography contest*



INNOVATION IN ACTION

- Telehealth services and virtual care were rapidly deployed in the face of COVID-19 regulations, ensuring that no patient appointments were cancelled during this transition.
- Teen Health Connection's embedded model of behavioral health triage within a primary care setting is associated with a substantially higher rate of patient follow through to treatment compared with traditional primary care referrals.
- For adolescents who have become parents, Teens & Tots serves as a primary care provider for both parent and child (0-18 months). Infant well visits paired with a parent visit ensure timely comprehensive medical care for both parent and child.
- Everyone deserves to be their best, most authentic self. The Levine Children's Center for Gender Health, located at Teen Health Connection, is the first gender health clinic of its kind in Charlotte. Our care supports every aspect of a child's gender identity in a setting that helps each feel welcomed and accepted for who they are.
- Providers implement best practices and empirically validated treatments, including therapies such as TF-CBT and current recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control.
- Teen Health Connection's capacity to conduct clinical and community-centered research uniquely enhances understanding of teens' experiences and how our local service systems can successfully support them.

INDICATORS & OUTCOMES

Our mission is to improve the health of adolescents by providing adolescent medicine and behavioral health services, education, advocacy, leadership development, and research through connections among adolescents, parents and the community. Over the past three years we have advanced that mission by:

- 51% of Teen Health Connection's patients who were screened in 2020 experienced 3 or more adverse childhood experiences; 32% reported symptoms of a depressive episode in the past two weeks.
- In 2020, a behavioral health clinician delivered almost 1,700 in-person and phone-based triages to address the immediate behavioral health questions or concerns of patients, community teens, and parents as the community adjusted to COVID-19.
- Demand for outpatient behavioral health services grew by over 2,240 visits in the year following the outbreak of COVID-19 compared to the year prior.
- 90% of teens participating in the Empower: Teen Leadership Summit are committed to being Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Free for at least the next year.
- 93% of parents completing parent education workshops reported greater confidence when talking to their teens about alcohol and drug use.

INVEST



Teen Health Connection receives support through its partners including private foundations, corporate and government grants and contracts, United Way of Central Carolinas, patient and program fees, and individual contributions. An exclusive community collaboration with Atrium Health helps to reduce administrative and equipment costs. Your tax-deductible gift to Teen Health Connection is a direct investment in the health and well-being of our local teens.

- **Your monthly gift of \$25** can cover the cost of prescription medications for teens without insurance.
- **Your gift of \$100** can underwrite the costs of one online parent education workshop, allowing parents to participate in supportive group-based learning at no cost.
- **Your gift of \$500** can provide a scholarship to underwrite a teen in foster care to participate in our Teen Advisory Board and other leadership programs.

Teen Health Connection is a 501(c)3 qualified charity. All gifts are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. EIN# 56-1719715. Our IRS Form 990 may be viewed at www.TeenHealthConnection.org/financials.