

PHYSICIAN'S GUIDE

Assisting Adolescents with Cerebral Palsy in Transition to Adult Healthcare

Adolescents with cerebral palsy (CP) often face difficulties transitioning from pediatric to adult primary and specialty healthcare providers willing/able to manage routine and complex care effectively. The recommendations below provide guidance for medical professionals to minimize the frustrations and stresses of adolescent patients and to support continuing good health and quality of life as they mature into adults.

1 EXPLAIN and discuss special healthcare needs your patient has and may have in the future.

2 INSTITUTE concrete plans for transition to adult healthcare services by mid-adolescence.

3 IDENTIFY adult primary (e.g. Internal or Family Medicine, OBGYN) and specialized (e.g. Physiatry, Orthopedics, Therapeutic) healthcare options.

4 INFORM of possible changes in healthcare insurance coverage.

5 CONSIDER emotional attachments to past providers and build bridges to future providers.

6 PROMOTE independence and personal responsibility for healthcare when feasible.

7 DISCUSS sexuality in general and as specific to CP.

8 ENCOURAGE exercise and healthy eating habits, providing specific suggestions to individuals and/or their families and caregivers.

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