



**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Adolescent Health
Strategic Framework FY 2016-2021**

*Leading the nation to ensure that America's adolescents thrive
and become healthy, productive adults*

Background

Adolescence is a time of remarkable growth, change, opportunity and risk. It is characterized by decisions that have lifelong health consequences. The transition to adulthood may offer exciting new challenges, but many young people face significant problems, difficult decisions, and altered plans.

More than for other populations, the social determinants of adolescent health lie outside the health care system. Adolescents benefit from positive guidance and support from caring adults including family members, educators, healthcare providers, social service providers, and professional and volunteer leaders. Opportunities to develop leadership and problem-solving skills build confidence and competence and prepare youth for the future.

OAH Mission

The Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of adolescents. OAH leads through promoting strength-based approaches, bolstering multi-sector engagement, and bringing in youth voices to support healthy development and transitions to productive adulthood. Authorized by the Public Health Service (PHS) Act, OAH supports research, services, prevention and health promotion activities, training, education, partnership engagement, national planning, and information dissemination activities.

Strategic Framework

OAH will implement this updated strategic framework for 2016-2021 with specific strategies to improve adolescents' health and wellbeing and continue our work with professionals and communities serving adolescents. The strategic framework will guide management and planning decisions over five years to ensure talents and resources are aligned to achieve OAH's mission. Established in 2010, the HHS Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) also serves as the advisor to the Assistant Secretary for Health on health-related policy and program issues related to adolescents, including teen pregnancy.

Priority Areas: Promoting Adolescent Health, Preventing Teen Pregnancy, and Supporting Expectant and Parenting Young Families.

Strategic Directions: OAH advances knowledge and develops HHS policies related to adolescent health as well as promoting coordination and collaboration within HHS and with stakeholder organizations.

During FY 2016-2021, OAH will:

1. Educate the public and professionals
 - a. Provide parents and families with timely, reliable, and easy-to-access information
 - b. Strengthen knowledge and skills regarding adolescent health and development in the youth-serving workforce
 - c. Develop adolescent health information on cross-cutting topics
 - d. Promote ready access to the wide array of federal resources on adolescent health and development
2. Support evidence-based programs and practices
 - a. Develop and manage national programs that address the needs of all adolescents, especially those who are vulnerable
 - b. Improve access to health care services
 - c. Encourage development of youth- and family-friendly services
 - d. Promote policies and practices that sustain healthy adolescent development
3. Lead through action
 - a. Cultivate innovation and sustainability across all program areas
 - b. Encourage youth engagement in actions that affect their lives and communities; and incorporate user feedback into product and program design
 - c. Develop methods to address the complex and interrelated health needs of adolescents
4. Promote multi-sector partnerships
 - a. Continue to work with HHS agencies on adolescent health activities
 - b. Coordinate with HHS regional offices to support and extend OAH programs
 - c. Engage national youth-serving and professional organizations
 - d. Collaborate with state and local partners in public and private sectors
5. Invest in evaluation and research
 - a. Invest in rigorous evaluation studies of OAH programs
 - b. Translate evaluation results for the public and share results widely
 - c. Promote expansion of research opportunities on adolescent health and development

For more information about HHS Office of Adolescent Health programs and resources see:
www.hhs.gov/ash/oah
