



TAG in Action: Minnesota Partnership for Adolescent Health

As part of its national call to action, **Adolescent Health: Think, Act, Grow**® (TAG), the Office of Adolescent Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has identified a number of successful strategies for improving adolescent health throughout the country.

The Goal

The Minnesota Partnership for Adolescent Health engaged stakeholders from across the state in the development of a new State Adolescent Health Strategic Plan.

The Game Plan

The Minnesota Partnership for Adolescent Health (MPAH) was formed in 2014 with support of the Maternal and Child Health Advisory Taskforce and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), Community and Family Health Division. MPAH's mission is to support the health and development of all Minnesota youth and young adults' ages 10-24 years old. The MPAH leadership team includes state advocacy organizations, health practitioners, local public health, community youth serving organizations, and the University of Minnesota Prevention Resource Center.

MPAH began its strategic planning process by hosting regional discussions on adolescent health. MDH used the World Café method for the listening sessions and called them Adolescent Health Café discussions. The sessions were designed to learn about needs in rural and urban communities, identify gaps, and bring stakeholders together to discuss adolescent health. More than 400 individuals participated across the state including young people, school administrators, doctors, nurses, clergy, county staff, community advocates, and local business leaders. In addition to the in-person listening sessions, MDH encouraged people to submit their thoughts via email, an online submission tool, fax, or phone calls.

Throughout the process, stakeholders identified ten adolescent health priorities. As input was compiled into the state strategic plan, staff consulted the TAG Playbook and realized that the Minnesota priorities aligned with TAG's *Five Essentials for Healthy Adolescents*. This reassured the MPAH leadership that they were on the right path. In the final plan, MDH used TAG's *Five Essentials* to organize the priorities and share related resources and examples. MDH plans to support each priority by distributing information on its listserv, developing webinars, and providing technical assistance.

The Winning Plays

Stakeholder engagement was critical to the development of the State Adolescent Health Strategic Plan. The flexible methods of information gathering and the use of stipends to cover young people's time helped ensure broad representation. Julie Neitzel Carr, the State Adolescent Health Coordinator, shared that, "It is important that our communities have buy-in to what we are doing, and have a voice in how MDH supports adolescent health in Minnesota. The stipends were particularly critical because they ensured that youth voice was central in the planning, and that their input was valued. The 139 young people that participated helped make sure our strategic plan aligned with their needs. The listening sessions also helped to identify who was most interested in working on adolescent health, and facilitated conversations among community leaders who work with and on behalf of young people, but don't usually have the opportunity to interact. The process built and strengthened partnerships that can now help us carry out our plan and ensure that all young people in Minnesota *thrive*."

Learn More

Minnesota Partnership for Adolescent Health
Minnesota Department of Health
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/youth/partnership.html>

