



TAG in Action: Mobile Teen Van

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

The Goal

The Mobile Adolescent Health Services program, known as the Teen Health Van, provides comprehensive, coordinated and adolescent-friendly medical, mental health, and nutrition/fitness care to vulnerable youth ages 10-25.

The Game Plan

The Teen Van is a mobile health unit that travels the San Francisco Bay Area, regularly visiting schools and community agencies in order to reach young people who are homeless, uninsured or underinsured, and who don't have access to health services. The staff includes a physician specializing in adolescent medicine, a nurse practitioner, a social worker, a dietitian, a medical assistant, and a registrar/driver.

Serving as a one-stop shop, the Teen Van focuses on eliminating barriers so that vulnerable youth can get the comprehensive health services they need. Staff is able to draw blood, run tests and dispense medicine, all from the van. If a young person needs specialized follow-up tests or care, the staff help arrange the appointments, and transportation to and from those appointments, if needed. The full-time social worker is able to counsel youth and can also connect them with additional community resources. The dietician, who is also a fitness expert, promotes overall healthy adolescent eating and fitness, and also works one-on-one with youth on issues from obesity to malnourishment.

Every six months the staff compiles data to review both individual and collective progress. They look at everything from whether youth are up-to-date with immunizations to overall health and nutrition to their engagement in risky behaviors. They are also able to review outcomes by subgroups, such as gender, race/ethnicity, and homelessness and have published several peer-reviewed articles on their findings.

The Winning Plays

Dr. Seth Ammerman, the Teen Van's founder and physician, explained, "We take a strengths-based approach very literally. Youth are asked to name their strengths at their first appointment and staff continues to build on that conversation at every appointment thereafter. Our focus on strengths creates a positive atmosphere while also providing us a way to bond with the youth. And because our approach is adolescent-focused, adolescent-friendly, and adolescent-respectful, we are actually meeting the young people where they are both physically and developmentally."

Learn More

Stanford Children's Health
Mobile Adolescent Health Services Program (Teen Van)
<http://www.stanfordchildrens.org/en/service/teen-van>

