



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO MEDICINE

Med-Peds PATHways

Program for Adolescent and Adult Transition to Health

There are 500,000 youth with special health care needs that reach adulthood each year in the United States.

Unfortunately, as many as 60 percent of these patients, experience gaps in medical care, health insurance coverage or both as they move from adolescence to adulthood. Through consultation, referrals, education and research, the University of Chicago Med-Peds Program for Adolescents and Adult Transition to Health (PATHways) will help patients with childhood onset diseases and disabilities successfully transition from pediatric to adult care.

Preventing high-risk patients from falling through the cracks

Children with chronic or complex medical conditions – such as congenital heart disease, cystic fibrosis, diabetes, renal failure or sickle cell disease, as well as those with mental illnesses or developmental delay require intensive medical care involving both primary care and care from several medical specialists on a long-term basis. Med-Peds PATHways targets a wide range of adolescents and young adults (primarily ages 14 to 25 years) through outpatient and inpatient consultation services. The program facilitates transitions from pediatric to adult medical care by focusing on four key areas:

-Providing referrals to adult-centered primary and specialty care. Some children and parents are reluctant to shift to adult healthcare because they fear losing access to known providers and support systems sensitive to their needs. Others require help identifying appropriate resources for complex healthcare needs. Med-Peds PATHways is developing a comprehensive network of resources – both within UCMC and in the community – through which these patients may be referred for medical and psychosocial needs as they become adults.

-Maintaining health insurance coverage. Many health-insurance programs include age limits that affect how long children are covered by the plan. When adolescents and young adults lose health-insurance coverage, they lose access to necessary healthcare resources and medications. Med-Peds PATHways works with families to assess medical needs and refer patients to potential sources of coverage, including Medicaid and other public programs, to support those needs.

-Developing effective self-care skills. During childhood, most parents act as primary caregivers in the home, handling tasks such as administering medications, scheduling medical appointments and monitoring diet and exercise. Transitioning these tasks from parents to children is often difficult for chronically ill children and those with cognitive or developmental problems. Med-Peds PATHways staff provide patient self-care education and also referrals to community-based organizations offering disease-specific self-care classes.

-Connecting to educational and vocational training resources. An important aspect of patients' well-being is their willingness and ability to engage in school and work. In addition, many patients rely on their jobs for health insurance coverage. To assist in this area, the program works with social work and legal advocates to help with school advocacy, referrals to educational and vocational programs and connections to job resources.

Training the next generation of physicians in both pediatric and adult medicine

A goal of UCMC Med-Peds PATHways is to advance medical education and resources for physicians serving this complex patient population. The program is unique because of the key role played by residents under the supervision of faculty members with expertise in transition care. Working closely with faculty, social workers and legal advocates, the residents receive comprehensive medical training and experience dealing with financial and psychosocial issues important to patients. Residents from the combined Internal Medicine and Pediatrics program staff the outpatient Med-Peds PATHways clinic and the inpatient consult service. An elective rotation in our clinic is open to all residents and internal and external medical students.

For more information, view our website at <http://transitioncare.uchicago.edu>

For inpatient or outpatient consultations page MPTT (X6788) and fax our referral form to 773-834-3950