



Adolescent Health: Think, Act, Grow (TAG)

A National Call to Action for Adolescent Health

#TAG42Mil

We can all make a difference in the health and healthy development of the nation's 42 million adolescents. Adolescence is a time of rapid change and development and it is a critical time for intervening to set the course for lifelong health. TAG is a call to action for adults and all organizations that serve youth to promote adolescent health.

Most of the nation's adolescents are generally healthy, but challenges such as mental health problems, alcohol, tobacco and drug misuse, obesity and violence sideline too many young people.

*"These behaviors and conditions have a serious impact on the health and development of adolescents today but devastating effects on their health as adults tomorrow."*¹

The leading causes of death and disability in adolescents and young adults are largely **preventable**. Families, communities, educators, youth leaders, healthcare providers, and young people can take concrete steps to promote the overall health of adolescents.

What is TAG?

Adolescent Health: Think, Act, Grow – TAG – is a national call to action to improve adolescent health in the U.S. TAG specifically aims to reach and engage a wide array of professionals who touch adolescents' lives, as well as parents and adolescents themselves. TAG calls upon organizations and individuals working with teens to prioritize activities that improve adolescents' physical, social, emotional and behavioral health. Led by the Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), TAG is focused on supporting achievement of the Healthy People 2020 adolescent health objectives.

Research to Action

TAG builds on previous strategic initiatives in adolescent health and national health promotion efforts. It includes both protective and behavioral risk factors and emphasizes building on young people's strengths. To help develop TAG, OAH engaged national organizations in the fields of health, public health, social services, after-school and community groups, faith-based communities, and education; and youth- and parent-serving groups. These groups identified five essential elements for adolescent health and action steps for youth-serving organizations to help make them a reality.

Five Essentials for Healthy Adolescents

Adolescents should have:

1. Positive connections with supportive people,
2. Safe and secure places to live, learn, and play,
3. Access to high-quality, teen-friendly health care,
4. Opportunities for teens to engage as learners, leaders, team members, and workers, and
5. Coordinated, adolescent- and family-centered services.

¹ World Health Organization (2014) Health for the World's Adolescents, A Second Chance in the Second Decade

What's Ahead?

Organizations, agencies, and individuals working with and guiding adolescents are invited to join TAG to raise awareness and take action to promote adolescent health. The *TAG Playbook* includes descriptions of what it takes to help adolescents grow to be healthy, strong, resilient and ready. It also outlines specific actions for improving adolescent health. OAH has developed a [website](#) with resources and ideas to help organizations implement TAG. Working together, OAH hopes to spur actions at the national, state, community and family levels that build on protective factors, prevent risky behavior, promote health, and support healthy adolescents.

Next Steps

- Promote the *TAG Playbook*
- Promote the TAG website to support partners
- Continue to engage partner organizations
- Expand a focus on youth engagement

Desired Outcomes

- Increase awareness of adolescent health priorities
- Put adolescent health on the nation's agenda
- Spur action to promote health for adolescents now and into the future
- Support the health of the nation (Healthy People 2020)

OAH is grateful to the many stakeholders who have contributed to TAG to date.



About the Office of Adolescent Health

The Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of adolescents to enable them to become healthy, productive adults. First funded in 2010, OAH supports and evaluates evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention (TPP) programs and implements the Pregnancy Assistance Fund; coordinates HHS efforts related to adolescent health promotion and disease prevention; and communicates adolescent health information to health professionals and groups, those who serve youth, parents, grantees, and the general public. OAH developed a strategic plan for the office to guide its work over the next five years. OAH is the convener and catalyst for the development of a national adolescent health agenda.