

New York-Presbyterian Community Health Plan

PROVIDER ALERT

-- July 2006

The Importance of Adolescent Screening

In 2006, New York State introduced a new Quality Assurance Reporting Requirement which focuses on the often-overlooked adolescent population, specifically those adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18. The actual measure included the following specific indicators. Preliminary QARR data show that NYPCHP providers need to better document the provision of services in order to be compliant with these indicators.

	% compliant
<i>BMI (Body Mass Index) screening</i>	27
Assessment, counseling or education on <i>nutrition and exercise</i>	48
Counseling or education on risk behaviors associated with <i>sexual activity and preventive actions</i>	59
Assessment for <i>depression</i>	20
Assessment, counseling or education about <i>risks of tobacco use</i>	57
Assessment, counseling or education about <i>risks of substance abuse</i>	56

The importance of screening, assessing and educating adolescents is evident given the results of the 2005 Youth Risk Behavioral Survey. Based on protocols designed by the CDC, the latest survey was conducted in the spring of 2005 and included responses from 8140 students in grades 9 through 12, in 87 public high schools across the country. The survey was a self-reported anonymous 99-item questionnaire that assessed risk behaviors in several of the areas noted above. Highlights of the results include the following:

	Overall US Results	New York State Results
Percentage that were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight	15.7	17.1
Percentage that ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times and who drank 3 or more glasses of milk per day	20.1	21.7
Percentage that ever engaged in sexual intercourse	46.8	42.0
Percentage that felt sad or hopeless and made a suicide plan	28.5	27.3
Percentage that actually attempted suicide	8.4	7.1
Percentage that ever smoked	54.3	47.3
Percentage that drank alcohol	74.3	75.9
Percentage that smoked marijuana	38.4	34.7
Percentage that used inhalants, steroids or hallucinogenic drugs	12.4	8.6
Percentage that used drugs initially by age 13	16.0	11.2

As a general rule, adolescents do not regularly visit physicians, so when the opportunity does present, the most must be made of it. It is important for PCPs to take the time to screen adolescents appropriately when they are in the office. Documentation of this screening is critical. Any patient that is felt to be at risk should be referred to a specialist if the PCP is not comfortable treating the patient.

Assistance with referrals or in identifying participating specialists may be obtained by calling the Provider Services Department at 212 297-5510.

Additional information regarding the 2005 Youth Risk Behavioral Survey may be found on the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene website (www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/home/home.shtml)