



# TeenScreen Primary Care

## Guide to Referral

TeenScreen<sup>®</sup> ✓ Primary Care

TeenScreen<sup>®</sup> ✓ National Center for  
Mental Health Checkups  
at Columbia University



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# Providing Mental Health Checkups to Adolescent Patients in the Primary Care Office: Guide to Referral

## Overview

This Guide to Referral is designed to give primary care providers (PCPs) helpful information for referring 11-18 year old patients who are identified with a mental health concern as a result of screening. This guide includes information about establishing a mental health referral network, compiling a list of referral resources, and additional referral-related resources.

A key component of screening is the process that occurs after you have identified a patient with a potential mental health concern. In some cases, identified patients can be served by their primary care provider, however in most cases they are referred to local mental health professionals for further assessment. Ensuring that you have a variety of referral resources to share with families of identified patients is of paramount importance.

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## Establishing a Referral Network

Building collaboration and establishing relationships among mental health providers and stakeholders in your community is key when offering screening to the adolescent patients in your practice. Not only will it help to promote communication among community leaders in the health and mental health fields, it will also help to facilitate the referral process for families, creating a range of solutions to support your patients and their families.

The first step you can take is to identify and reach out to potential referral resources in your community that provide a range of mental health services; gather support from and build relationships with these providers. When reaching out to them, inform them of your efforts and plans to offer mental health checkups and confirm that they are willing and able to accept referrals for identified patients. After learning about your efforts, some mental health providers may be willing to see patients identified through screening as priority cases for further assessment. Compile a list of mental health professionals and agencies in the community that can serve as a resource and share that list with parents of adolescents that receive a referral.

The unavailability of mental health resources and low referral completion rates have both been cited as being a barrier to identifying mental illness in primary care settings. This underscores the importance of identifying a variety of providers and groups in the community that are qualified to provide mental health services, and building relationships with them to utilize them as a resource for your efforts. The providers that you identify should have the ability to address the full spectrum of problems that may be uncovered by screening and the capacity to accept referrals in a timely manner.

## Identifying and Securing a Variety of Resources

You may already have access to mental health services on-site or be familiar with or connected to other mental health services available in your community. Identifying these connections early and seeking their participation in your screening efforts as a referral resource will significantly enhance the quality of your referrals. Below are several additional suggestions that may help with identifying and securing a variety of referral resources.

- When screening is implemented routinely, patients with mental health conditions and risk factors can be identified early in the course of illness. In many cases, patients will require only minimal mental health interventions that can be delivered by the PCP, a social worker, counselor or psychologist. Some patients may require more intensive psychiatric supports. Because of the range of mental health issues that will be uncovered through screening it is important to identify a variety of health and mental health professionals in your community to which you can refer patients, including, but not limited to:
  - ▶ Hospitals and mental health agencies
  - ▶ Local universities or community colleges
  - ▶ Support groups, nonprofits
  - ▶ Drug and alcohol services
  - ▶ Schools – schools are a leading provider of mental health services and can be a great resource

- You may consider searching the internet for national mental health agencies and their local affiliates. The web sites on page 4 provide a comprehensive list of resources and tools to help identify mental health professionals in your area.
- You may also consider referring to the yellow pages to contact local professional mental health organizations, family service agencies, crisis centers, psychiatric hospitals and/or hospitals with outpatient mental health services.

Once you have identified a variety of potential mental health referral resources (including contacts from national and local organizations, trusted local professionals, and culturally and economically suitable resources) it may be helpful to reach out to these groups to inform them of your efforts and, if needed, to secure their role as a referral resource for your screening efforts. Appendix A provides a sample letter that may be used to reach out to local mental health providers.

## Compiling a List of Referral Resources

Below is a sample information sheet that you may find helpful to reference as you begin to organize referral resources into a packet to share with your patients and their families. When compiling your referral sheet, be sure to include phone numbers, hours of operation, emergency information and other relevant information for parents.

### Sample Referral Resources Information Sheet

**Insured:** Please contact your insurance company to check your behavioral health coverage/benefits. After setting up the appointment, please contact your physician to make sure the referral paperwork is complete.

- ▶ **List out the major mental health service providers here.**
- ▶ **Include a complete listing with contact information.**

**Non-Insured:** The following resources may have individual requirements to qualify for services and may have sliding-scale fees associated with them. Please contact the individual program or office for more information.

- ▶ **List other mental health providers or treatment programs here.**

When possible, include a variety of providers/programs that deal with substance abuse, sexual abuse, family counseling, domestic abuse, etc.

- ▶ **Include a complete listing with contact information.**

## Working with Patients' Existing Insurance Benefits

Most insured patients will have mental health coverage through their insurance carrier. We encourage PCPs and their staff to contact the current insurance provider, using the information on the patient's insurance card, to obtain assistance with identifying mental health providers who accept the patient's insurance. By calling this number, you can also learn about any assistance the insurance provider offers to link patients to mental health service providers. Typically, both medical providers and members can obtain an appropriate referral or referral resources for a mental health concern from the patient's health plan.

## Release of Information

To ensure a seamless referral to a mental health service provider, it is helpful to obtain written permission from parents to allow for the transfer of information between the PCP and the mental health professional who accepts the referral. Specifically, obtain permission from the parents to allow the release of the patient's completed screening questionnaire and screening results to the mental health provider. Also obtain the parent's permission to allow the mental health provider to share information with the PCP.

PCPs may also wish to follow-up with referral resources, such as the patient's insurance carrier, to make sure that the patient was successfully referred and to confirm that they have received the appropriate follow-up. In this case, parents should be asked to sign a second release of information agreement allowing the referral resource to release information about the patient's referral back to the PCP. Please see Appendix B for a sample release of information form.

## Federal Policy Changes Will Expand Access to Mental Health Screening and Follow-Up Services

Beginning this year, the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) of 2008 will significantly expand access to mental health and substance abuse services. MHPAEA requires that large group health plans offering coverage for mental health and substance abuse services to do so in a way that creates an equal footing with medical/surgical coverage. In other words, the traditionally more restrictive limitations on coverage for mental health and substance abuse services are no longer permitted. This applies to both financial requirements, i.e., co-pays and deductibles, as well as to treatment limitations, such as visit limits or medical management techniques. MHPAEA protections went into effect in 2009. However, regulations detailing how to comply with the law were not released until 2010 and did not go into effect for most plans until the start of the new plan year on January 1, 2011. Enhanced access to mental health and substance abuse services can be expected now that the regulations are in force.

Signed into law on March 23, 2010, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has expanded access to health coverage and extended numerous, new consumer protections. Several provisions will specifically address access to mental health screening and necessary follow-up services. For example, the ACA requires that all new health plans offer a recommended set of preventive services to beneficiaries without cost-sharing. These free preventive services must include all screenings recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, including adolescent depression screening. Health care reform also established mental health services as an essential benefit for new health plans and extended federal mental health parity protections to new types of plans. Taken together, these provisions will significantly expand access to mental health screening and services.

## Helpful Resources for Identifying Mental Health Resources & Addressing Mental Health Concerns

The following resources provide information and tools for identifying potential mental health resources available in your community and addressing mental health issues in adolescents.

Organization/ Resource	Website/ Link
Mental Health America (MHA)	Homepage: <a href="http://www.nmha.org">www.nmha.org</a>
	Choose a local affiliate for information on service providers in your area: <a href="http://www.nmha.org/affiliates/directory/index.cfm">http://www.nmha.org/affiliates/directory/index.cfm</a>
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)	Homepage: <a href="http://www.nami.org">www.nami.org</a>
	Information Helpline: 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) or email <a href="mailto:info@nami.org">info@nami.org</a>
	Family Guide on Adolescent Depression: <a href="http://www.nami.org/Content/ContentGroups/CAAC/FamilyGuidePRINT.pdf">http://www.nami.org/Content/ContentGroups/CAAC/FamilyGuidePRINT.pdf</a>
American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)	Homepage: <a href="http://www.aap.org">www.aap.org</a>
	Mental Health Web Site: <a href="http://aap.org/mentalhealth/">http://aap.org/mentalhealth/</a> Find professional information and educational resources, and gain access to the AAP's Addressing Mental Health Concerns in Primary Care: A Clinician's Toolkit
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)	Homepage: <a href="http://www.aacap.org">http://www.aacap.org</a>
	Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist Finder: <a href="http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/child_and_adolescent_psychiatrist_finder/child_and_adolescent_psychiatrist_finder">http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/child_and_adolescent_psychiatrist_finder/child_and_adolescent_psychiatrist_finder</a>
	Find a resource center with information on frequently asked questions and clinical resources: <a href="http://www.aacap.org/cs/resource.centers">http://www.aacap.org/cs/resource.centers</a>
AAP and AACAP's Parent's Med Guide	A newly revised guide from AACAP and the APA on treating child and adolescent depression: <a href="http://www.parentsmedguide.org/">http://www.parentsmedguide.org/</a>
National Library of Medicine (NIM)/ National Institute of Health (NIH)/ MedlinePlus	Homepage: <a href="http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/medlineplus.html">http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/medlineplus.html</a>
	Select Service Providers for teen mental health in your area: <a href="http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/teenmentalhealth.html">http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/teenmentalhealth.html</a>

Organization/ Resource	Website/ Link
Network of Care	Homepage: <a href="http://networkofcare.org/home.cfm">http://networkofcare.org/home.cfm</a> Access information about resources in your community.
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services – Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA)	Homepage: <a href="http://www.hhs.gov/">http://www.hhs.gov/</a>
American Psychological Association (APA)	Homepage: <a href="http://www.apa.org/">http://www.apa.org/</a>
	Find a psychologist and/or referral services in your area: <a href="http://locator.apa.org/">http://locator.apa.org/</a>
	Toll-free phone: 1-800-964-2000
American Psychiatric Association (APA)	Homepage: <a href="http://www.psych.org/">http://www.psych.org/</a>
	Find a psychiatrist in your area by contacting the APA Answer Center, which directs you to a local APA District Branch, medical society, or mental health association: <a href="http://www.healthyminds.org/">http://www.healthyminds.org/</a>
	Toll-free phone: 1-888-35-PSYCH / From outside the U.S. and Canada call: 1-703-907-7300 or email: <a href="mailto:apa@psych.org">apa@psych.org</a>
Anxiety Disorders Association of America (ADAA)	Homepage: <a href="http://www.adaa.org/">http://www.adaa.org/</a>
	Search for a provider in your area who specializes in anxiety: <a href="http://www.adaa.org/GettingHelp/FindATherapist.asp">http://www.adaa.org/GettingHelp/FindATherapist.asp</a>
American Association of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapists (NACBT)	Homepage: <a href="http://www.nacbt.org">http://www.nacbt.org</a>
	Find a mental health professional in your area certified by the NACBT: <a href="http://www.nacbt.org/searchfortherapists.asp">http://www.nacbt.org/searchfortherapists.asp</a>

## Substance Abuse Resources

Organization/ Resource	Website/ Link
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)	Homepage: <a href="http://www.samhsa.gov">www.samhsa.gov</a>
	Find mental health providers in your area: <a href="http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/databases/">http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/databases/</a>
	Directory of Drug and Alcohol Abuse Treatment Programs: <a href="http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/">http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/</a>
	Statewide Family Network & Support Program: <a href="http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/cmhs/ChildrensCampaign/statewide.asp">http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/cmhs/ChildrensCampaign/statewide.asp</a>
Treatment 4 Addiction Online Recovery Resource Directory (T4A)	Homepage: <a href="http://www.treatment4addiction.com/">http://www.treatment4addiction.com/</a> Search by state and find a listing of treatment centers located near you
	Phone: 866-206-8656

## Crisis Resources

Organization/ Resource	Website/ Link
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	Homepage: <a href="http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org">http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org</a> Find the nearest available suicide prevention and mental health service provider for immediate assistance to individuals in suicidal crisis
	Toll-free phone: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
National Hopeline Network	Homepage: <a href="http://www.hopeline.com/">http://www.hopeline.com/</a> Connect to a Contact USA or a AAS certified crisis center nearest your calling location
	Toll-free phone: 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)
Referral Information Evaluation System (RIES)	Homepage: <a href="http://ries.nmha.net/login/default.aspx">http://ries.nmha.net/login/default.aspx</a> Find a listing of crisis centers located near you

## Spiritual Resources

Organization/ Resource	Website/ Link
Certified Mental Health Professionals with Religious and /or Theological Training American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC):	Homepage: <a href="http://www.aapc.org/">http://www.aapc.org/</a>
	Find Pastoral Counseling Centers accredited by the American Association of Pastoral Counselors as Service Centers: <a href="http://aapc.org/content/aapc-accredited-centers">http://aapc.org/content/aapc-accredited-centers</a>
	Find Pastoral Counselors found in private practice and in other settings: Phone: 703-385-6967

## Resources for Minority Populations

Organization/ Resource	Website/ Link
SAMHSA Systems of Care (SOC)	SAMHSA's system of care website is a coordinated network of community-based services and supports that are organized to meet the challenges of children and youth with serious mental health needs and their families: <a href="http://partnersforrecovery.samhsa.gov/rosc.html">http://partnersforrecovery.samhsa.gov/rosc.html</a>
	Find information of cultural and linguistic competence: <a href="http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/%28S%28khunjs55vbbd4s55logoquma%29%29/Resource/Cultural-and-Linguistic-Competency-Standards-18791.aspx">http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/%28S%28khunjs55vbbd4s55logoquma%29%29/Resource/Cultural-and-Linguistic-Competency-Standards-18791.aspx</a>
	For information on specific minority populations visit SOC Partner Links: <a href="http://partnersforrecovery.samhsa.gov/rosc.html">http://partnersforrecovery.samhsa.gov/rosc.html</a>
Office of Minority Health (OMH)	Homepage: <a href="http://www.omhrc.gov/">http://www.omhrc.gov/</a>
	Contact your State Office of Minority Health: <a href="http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=2&amp;lvlID=187">http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=2&amp;lvlID=187</a>
	Find low-cost health care: <a href="http://www.omhrc.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=2&amp;lvlID=18">http://www.omhrc.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=2&amp;lvlID=18</a>
	Find information on a specific minority population: <a href="http://www.omhrc.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=1&amp;lvlID">http://www.omhrc.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=1&amp;lvlID</a>

## Insurance Resources

Organization/ Resource	Website/ Link
Insure Kids Now	Find information on health insurance for infants, children and teens in your state: <a href="http://www.insurekidsnow.gov/">http://www.insurekidsnow.gov/</a>
	Toll-free phone: 1-877-KIDS-NOW (1-877-543-7669)
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)	Find eligibility and coverage information for Medicare or Medicaid services & the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP): <a href="http://www.cms.gov">www.cms.gov</a>
	Toll-free phone: 1-877-267-2323 (TDD: 1-866-226-1819)
NAIC – National Portal Search Tool	Find contact information for your state's department of insurance: <a href="http://www.naic.org/">http://www.naic.org/</a>

# Appendix A: **Sample Outreach Letter to Mental Health Resources**

Dear NAME:

This year, Organization/Practice will be offering mental health checkups to families of adolescent patients (ages 11-18), as part of routine preventative healthcare. This effort is aimed at identifying teens who may be suffering from depression or other emotional problems and who may be at risk for suicide. We then work with identified teens and their parents to link them with resources in the community where they can obtain mental health services.

We are working to develop a comprehensive resource list to share with the families of teens that are identified through this process. Your agency is of particular interest to us because LIST WHAT YOU HAVE RESEARCHED ABOUT THE AGENCY (i.e., provides outpatient services for adolescents and their families, conducts educational workshops, assesses for a variety of mental health disorders, its proximity to the screening location, ability to provide services to adolescents and families, respond to a crisis, etc.) and its past involvement with LIST ANY PROGRAMS THE AGENCY HAS BEEN INVOLVED WITH (i.e., screenings, mental health days, etc.).

We would like to request your support and participation in our efforts, by acting as a referral resource for youth that are identified through the screening process. If you are interested in participating as a referral resource, please take a few minutes to complete the survey below about your organization. Once complete, please return it to: CONTACT INFO.

Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments, or if you would like more information about our efforts.

**Please describe your agency in brief:**

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**What sort of evaluation and/or services does your agency offer for youth and families and what disorders do you treat?**

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**What ages do you serve?**

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**Do you have professionals in your organization that are bi-lingual (if so, what languages do they speak)?**

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**Approximately how many referrals could your agency accommodate each month?**

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**Does your agency have the capacity to accept emergency cases (i.e., actively suicidal teens)?**

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**What insurance does your agency accept?**

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**Does your agency accept Medicaid or offer a sliding scale for uninsured youth?**

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# Appendix B: Release of Information Form

## Behavioral Health Provider/ Primary Care Physician Communication Form

**Member Name** (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of Birth** \_\_\_\_\_

Member Consent to Exchange Information (to be completed by member) Health Plan:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, authorize/do not authorize \_\_\_\_\_  
PLEASE PRINT CIRCLE ONE PROVIDERS NAME

My behavioral health provider, and \_\_\_\_\_,  
PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN NAME PCP ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER

to exchange information regarding my mental health /substance abuse treatment and medical healthcare for coordination of care purposes as may be necessary for the administration and provision of my healthcare coverage. The information exchanged may include information on mental health care or substance abuse care and/or treatment such as diagnosis and treatment plan. I understand that this authorization shall remain in effect for one year from the date of my signature below or for the course of this treatment, whichever is longer. I understand that I may revoke this authorization at any time by written notice to the above behavioral healthcare provider. I also understand that it is my responsibility to notify my behavioral healthcare provider if I choose to change my Primary Care Physician.

\_\_\_\_\_  
I Authorize Communication between My PCP and Behavioral Health Provider (Member's Signature ) Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
I DO NOT Authorize Communication between My PCP and Behavioral Health Provider (Member's Signature ) Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent or guardian (if member is a minor) Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness Date

Provider Information (to be completed by the Behavioral Health Provider) — Please Print

\_\_\_\_\_  
Practitioner Name(s) (Therapist and Psychiatrist if applicable) Facility Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address City/State Telephone Number

DSM IV Diagnosis Code & Name \_\_\_\_\_

Treatment Plan: Type \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency \_\_\_\_\_ Est length of Tx \_\_\_\_\_

Medication(s) Prescribed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



