

Family Health Team

The iGeneration Goes to Grade 9: Resources to Promote Adolescent Health & Well-Being

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BACKGROUND

The passage from elementary school to high school is a challenging transition especially for students already at risk. Reduced academic achievement, the onset of depression and anxiety as well as interpersonal difficulties often occur. Today's iGeneration must also contend with the demands of social media, increased exposure to drugs and alcohol, as well as personal struggles to form their own identity within a new school culture.

Resource materials were developed to support these young patients based on 10 key issues (listed below) that were important to these students and their parents or caregivers. The value of this project is found in the evidence that one of the best predictors for overall high school student success is a positive Grade 9 experience.



- School Engagement
- Social Life
- Wired World
- Alcohol, Drugs, Parties
- Bullying
- Stress & Academics
- Anxiety & Depression
- Extra-Curricular Activities
- Healthy Living
- Youth Culture Today

PROCESS

In order to create a mailing list for patients of this demographic, the team's program assistant used Nightingale EHR's Health Maintenance tracking and letter generating capabilities for each physician's target group. Target groups included all patients, both male and female, ages 14 to 16 at the time the reports were run. A two year margin accounted for children having birthdays throughout this process.

Prior to the mail out, a soft launch of the Grade 9 resources took place in July with posters displayed throughout the clinic as well as displays on the waiting room TV monitors. In August, the mail out to patients included the "Are You Ready for Grade 9?" brochure and two parent handouts (a long and abbreviated one). In addition to the August mail out, these resources were also distributed by different team members (e.g. social workers, chronic disease nurses) at various times throughout the year to patients attending appointments at the clinic. One physician uploaded these resources to the iPads she provides for her patients who are waiting for appointments as well as uploading the materials to Twitter and Facebook.

OUTCOMES

- Patients demonstrated positive reception and interest
- Resources have increased overall awareness and prompted discussions of noted themes between physicians/AHP's and patients
- Team members have included resources as part of their "talks" to teens during their physical exams prior to start of school
- Response to mail-out for one team member resulted in almost 100% of students booking booster shot appointments
- Social workers were able to use the material as part of preparing more vulnerable families for this transition

NEXT STEPS

As a continual stakeholder in the lives of these students, FHT's can play a significant role in engaging them in their own care by helping them to early identify and strategize to manage these challenges. Future goals include:

- To collate for all team physicians, rosters of these patients and data regarding their immunizations
- To use more economical and effective online tools and networking strategies in order to provide these resources to patients and the community
- To work more collaboratively with schools and other community services to complement their own initiatives to help students transition to Grade 9
- To identify best practices for enhancing the FHT's interdisciplinary approach of delivering services to high risk students during their transition to high school as well as post-secondary life.

ENGAGING THE PATIENT IN THEIR CARE

Protective Factors in the Transition from Elementary to Secondary School

