

From Pediatrics to Adult Care: A Four-Step Medical Transition Process for Patients With ASD

Presented by Renee Escoffery-Torres, Ph.D. Vice President,
ECW Diocese of Southern VA

ECW Annual Fall Meeting, October 2021

Step One: Inform

- When patients reach 13, inform parents that the child will begin seeing adult providers at age 22.
 - Potential Concern/ Anxiety Common among parents (“Sheer terror rolled over me”)
 - Advance notice initiates the process

Step Two: Plan

- Develop a Plan which outlines:
 - The Role of the Pediatrician
 - The Role of the Patient
 - The Role of the Adult Provider

Step Three: Review & Update

- Once the Plan is outlined and fleshed out, review and update the plan, which:
 - Might include a list of challenges (insomnia, seizure control, self-care, eligibility for adult services)
 - May include the identification of an adult medical home (the doctor may wish to establish communication with that provider)

Step Four: Transition

- The last step is the actual transfer of the patient and his medical information to a family practitioner, or internist. If well-planned, the hope is for a smooth transition.
- The earlier you begin, the greater the likelihood of success

What Should I Do, If My Practice Has Not Mentioned Transitioning?

- Be Proactive
- Ask for Help
- Remember: When a child turns 18, that child is legally an adult.

Facts to Consider About Adults with ASD:

- Twice the rate of depression and anxiety
- 8 times the rate of bi-polar disorder
- 5 times more likely to commit suicide
- Higher rates of diabetes, gastrointestinal disorders, epilepsy, sleep disorders
- Higher rates of high blood pressure, high cholesterol and obesity

Facts to Consider About Adults with ASD:

- More Common in Women with ASD:
 - Drug addiction and alcohol abuse*
 - Higher rates of asthma. Allergy and autoimmune disease

Data from a Kaiser Permanente Northern California Study, conducted on adult ASD patients from 2008 to 2012.

Summary:

- Fourteen percent of youth w/ASD, talked with pediatricians about switching
- Less than half talked about adult health care needs or “appropriate responsibility”
- About twenty-five percent spoke with their doctors about keeping health insurance
- Youth with ASD received “Health care transition services” half as frequently as youth with other special needs

For More information:

- AASPIRE Healthcare Toolkit (for adults on the Spectrum)
- Vanderbilt Kennedy Center
- Nemours Video on YouTube
- Interactive Autism Network at Kennedy Krieger Institute