Although adolescence is generally perceived as a period of good health, many in this age group face poor health outcomes and establish unhealthy behaviors that follow them into adulthood. An adolescent’s ability to successfully navigate the transition to adulthood is influenced not only by behaviors and exposure to risk but also by demographic characteristics such as race/ethnicity, geography, family income, and health insurance status, among others. State policies that promote access to high quality services for all adolescents can mitigate the effects of some of these factors and help ensure that adolescents enter adulthood healthy, independent, and ready to thrive. This state profile provides data on Arkansas’s 253,203 adolescents age 12 to 18 and highlights state policy choices in health, mental health, violence and injury prevention, and youth development that improve access to and quality of services and promote the health and well-being of this age group.

Updated: June 1, 2011

Health Insurance Coverage Among Adolescents Aged 12-18, 2008

![Health Insurance Coverage Chart]

1. Family Income Among Adolescents Aged 12-18, 2008


3. Type of Area of Residence Among Adolescents Aged 12-18
**State Choices to Promote Access**

**Promotion, Prevention, and Early Intervention**

- Medicaid [2009]\(^4\)
- CHIP [2009]\(^4\)
- Extend CHIP to cover legal immigrant children [2010]\(^5\)
- Maintain or suspend but do not terminate Medicaid enrollment for youth committed to a juvenile facility [2009]\(^6\)
- Use Chafee funds to provide Medicaid eligibility to foster care youth aging out of the system [2009]\(^7\)
- Require CHIP coverage for contraceptives [2006]\(^8\)
- HIV prevention education [2006]\(^10\)
- STI prevention education [2006]\(^10\)
- Pregnancy prevention education [2006]\(^10\)
- Require physical activity and fitness taught in schools [2006]\(^10\)

**Services in Schools**

- Provide funding for School-based Health Centers (SBHCs) [2008]\(^11\)
  - Medicaid [2008]\(^11\)
  - CHIP [2008]\(^11\)
- Require districts or schools to provide services for HIV, STDs, and pregnancy prevention [2006]\(^12\)

**Chlamydia Rates Among Adolescents Aged 15-19, by Gender per 100,000, 1998-2008\(^13\)**

**Gonorrhea Rates Among Adolescents Aged 15-19, by Gender per 100,000, 1998-2008\(^13\)**
HEALTH

State Choices to Promote Access (continued)

Law and Legislation

- Prenatal care [2010]¹⁴
- Contraceptive and family planning services [2010]¹⁴
- HIV and STI prevention and treatment services [2010]¹⁵
- Medical care for their own children [2010]¹⁴
- Abortion without parental notification or permission [2010]¹⁶

State Choices to Promote Quality

Promotion, Prevention, and Early Intervention

- 5 Screenings for children 10-14 years [2009]¹⁷
- 4 Screenings for children 15-18 years [2009]¹⁷
- Require or recommend that schools make fruits or vegetables available to students whenever other food is offered or sold [2006]¹⁸
- Require or recommend that schools make healthful beverages available to students whenever other beverages are offered or sold [2006]¹⁸
- Have statutory nutritional standards for school meal programs beyond federal regulations [2005]¹⁹
- Specify time requirements for physical education [2006]²⁰

Services in Schools

- Have a program office dedicated to SBHCs [2008]¹¹

Workforce Development

- Require newly hired health education teachers to have undergraduate or graduate training in health education [2006]²¹

Pregnancy Rates Among Adolescents Aged 15-19, by Age Group per 1,000, 2005²²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age 15-17</th>
<th>Age 18-19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abortion Rates Among Adolescents Aged 15-19 by Age Group per 1,000, 2005²²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age 15-17</th>
<th>Age 18-19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Obesity/Overweight Status Among Adolescents Aged 10-17, by Age, 2007²³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age 10-13</th>
<th>Age 14-17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MENTAL HEALTH

State Choices to Promote Access
Promotion, Prevention, and Early Intervention

☐ Have a public school health education curriculum that requires drug/alcohol prevention education [2006]^{10}
☐ Have legislation or board of education policy that explicitly establishes and applies social and emotional learning standards [2010]^{24}

Services in Schools

☐ Counseling for emotional or behavioral disorders [2006]^{25}
☐ Crisis intervention for personal problems [2006]^{25}
☐ Suicide prevention services [2006]^{12}

Law and Legislation

☐ Allow minors to consent to outpatient mental health care [2010]^{26}
☐ Allow minors to consent to care for drug or alcohol abuse [2010]^{26}

State Choices to Promote Quality
Workforce Development

☐ School counselors [2006]^{27}
☐ School psychologists [2006]^{27}
☐ School social workers [2006]^{27}
☐ Provide funding or staff development on emotional and mental health to health education teachers [2006]^{28}

Self-reported Substance Use Among High School Students, 2009^{29}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>Arkansas</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Binge drank on at least one day (previous 30 days)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoked cigarettes on at least one day (previous 30 days)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used marijuana one or more times (previous 30 days)</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offered, sold, or given an illegal drug by someone on school property (during the 12 months before the survey)</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Serious Mental Health Disturbances Among High School Students, by Gender, 2009^{29}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disturbance</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felt sad or hopeless in the last year</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seriously considered attempting suicide in the last year</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self-reported mental health needs of youth in juvenile justice residential placement (not state-specific)[2003]^{30}

68% Easily upset
61% Lost temper easily
61% Felt angry a lot
51% Had nervous or worried feelings keep you from doing things you want to do?
52% Felt lonely too much of the time
70% Had something very bad or terrifying happen to you
67% Seen someone severely injured or killed (in person)
VIOLENCE AND INJURY PREVENTION

State Choices to Promote Healthy Behaviors
Promotion, Prevention, and Early Intervention

- Require injury and violence prevention and safety taught in schools [2006]¹⁰

Law and Legislation

- Require helmets for all motorcycle and low-power cycle (LPC) riders 17 and younger [2010]³¹
- Require bicycle helmets on riders 17 and younger [2010]³¹
- Ban all cell phone use for adolescent novice drivers [2010]³²
- Ban texting while driving for adolescent novice drivers [2010]³³
- Stalking statutes explicitly address cyberslashing, including third party harassment [2006]³⁴

Rates of Motor Vehicle Traffic Occupant Deaths per 100,000, 2007³⁵

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>15-19</th>
<th>20-24</th>
<th>25-29</th>
<th>30-34</th>
<th>35-39</th>
<th>40-44</th>
<th>45-49</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State Choices to Promote Quality
Promotion, Prevention, and Early Intervention

- Require school curricula to address dating violence [2010]³⁶

Workforce Development

- Provide funding for staff development or offered staff development on violence and injury prevention and safety to health education teachers [2006]²⁸

Law and Legislation

- Have laws that protect students from bullying and harassment on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression [2010]³⁷
- Have graduated driver licensing system [2010]³⁸
  - Require learner’s entry age at 16 [2010]³⁸
  - Require learner’s holding period at least 6 months [2010]³⁸
  - Require practice driving certification at least 30 hours [2010]³⁸
  - Require night driving restriction at 9 or 10pm [2010]³⁸
  - Restrict underage passengers to 1 or 2 [2010]³⁸
  - Require that restrictions last until age 18 [2010]³⁸
- Have domestic violence protection laws for adolescents that received a score of B or higher from Break the Cycle [2009]³⁹
  - Allow victims of domestic violence who are dating their abuser to apply for a civil domestic violence protection or restraining order [2009]³⁹
  - Have protection laws that do not exclude same-sex couples, explicitly or by stated intent [2009]³⁹
  - Allow minors to petition for protection orders [2009]⁴⁰
  - Allow victims to petition for restraining order against a minor [2009]⁴¹
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

State Choices to Promote Access

Educational Attainment

☐ Set minimum compulsory completion age of high school at 18 or older [2010]\(^{42}\)
☐ Provide funding for after-school/out-of-school time programs for youth [2010]\(^{43}\)
☐ Fund mentoring initiatives [2010]\(^{44}\)
☐ Allow undocumented immigrants to receive in-state tuition [2008]\(^{45}\)
☐ Provide Educational and Training Vouchers or tuition waivers for foster youth seeking post-secondary education [2010]\(^{46}\)

Transition to Adulthood

☐ Fund a career and technical education office within its education department [2010]\(^{47}\)

State Choices to Promote Quality

Educational Attainment

☐ Fund afterschool/out-of-school time program evaluation initiative for youth [2010]\(^{48}\)
☐ Use the Compact Rate formula to measure graduation rate [2010]\(^{49}\)

Transition to Adulthood

☐ Have a career and technical education office that partners with communities to offer internship programs [2010]\(^{50}\)
☐ Collaborate with private sector to expand job opportunities for youth aging out of foster care [2010]\(^{51}\)
☐ Provide aftercare services to ease transition from juvenile justice system, including education, life skills training, vocational training, and counseling services [2010]\(^{47}\)
☐ Allow foster youth aging out of system to voluntarily retain state guardianship until age 21 [2009]\(^{52}\)

Law and Legislation

☐ Have a legislative youth advisory council or commission [2009]\(^{53}\)

School Enrollment/Employment Status Among Adolescents Aged 16-18, 2008\(^{1}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Arkansas</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Enrolled and Not Employed/Military</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled or Employed/Military</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DATA NOTES AND SOURCES

1. State data were calculated from the Annual Social and Economic Supplement (the March supplement) of the Current Population Survey from 2007, 2008, and 2009, representing information from calendar years 2006, 2007, and 2008. NCCP averaged three years of data because of small sample sizes in less populated states. The national data were calculated from the 2009 data, representing information from the previous calendar year.

2. Race/ethnicity estimates were excluded if the unweighted sample size in the denominator was less than 50.

State data were calculated from the Annual Social and Economic Supplement (the March supplement) of the Current Population Survey from 2007, 2008, and 2009, representing information from calendar years 2006, 2007, and 2008. NCCP averaged three years of data because of small sample sizes in less populated states. The national data were calculated from the 2009 data, representing information from the previous calendar year.


5. State Medicaid agency is looking into feasibility of instituting a suspension policy.


Personal communication with state agency: includes private letters, memos, some electronic communication (i.e. email, personal interviews, or telephone conversations).

6. A small group of foster care children can continue in their U-18 and Medically Needy Foster Care categories and receive Medicaid until they are 21 years old.


A minor may consent to STI services, and implicitly to HIV testing/treatment. The physician may be able to inform parents.

Except in cases of medical emergency, sexual abuse or incest by a member of the family, or judicial bypass.

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a number calculated from a child's weight and height and is a reliable indicator of body fatness for most children and adolescents. BMI for children and adolescents, also referred to as BMI-for-age, is gender and age specific because their body fatness changes over the years as they grow and differs between males and females. Adolescents in the 85th to 94th percentile BMI-for-age were classified as overweight. Those in the 95th percentile or above BMI-for-age were classified as obese.

No explicit policy, but minors can generally consent to most care if they can provide informed consent.

Many states generally allow emancipated minors, married minors, pregnant minors, minor parents, or other subgroups to consent for their own health care.

Data not available.

32. Secondary enforcement only.


40. Many states do not explicitly specify.


41. Data not available.

Many states do not explicitly specify.


Personal communication with state agency: includes private letters, memos, some electronic communication (i.e. email, personal interviews, or telephone conversations).


47. Personal communication with state agency: includes private letters, memos, some electronic communication (i.e. email, personal interviews, or telephone conversations).

48. Data unavailable for many states.


50. This also includes apprenticeships, job shadowing, and work-based learning opportunities.

   Personal communication with state agency: includes private letters, memos, some electronic communication (i.e. email, personal interviews, or telephone conversations).

51. Data not available.

   Personal communication with state agency: includes private letters, memos, some electronic communication (i.e. email, personal interviews, or telephone conversations).

52. Status subject to changes due to the provision in the Fostering Connections to Success Act which will allow states to claim Title IV-E funding for foster youth until age 21, beginning Oct. 2010.


   Dworsky, Amy; Havlicek, Judy. 2009. Review of State Policies and Programs to Support Young People Transitioning Out of Foster Care. Chicago: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.


   Individual state legislature homepages.