

Bridging the Gaps



A Comprehensive Care Approach: Gender Affirming Care, Adult Care Transitions, and Career Development for LGBTQ+ Youth

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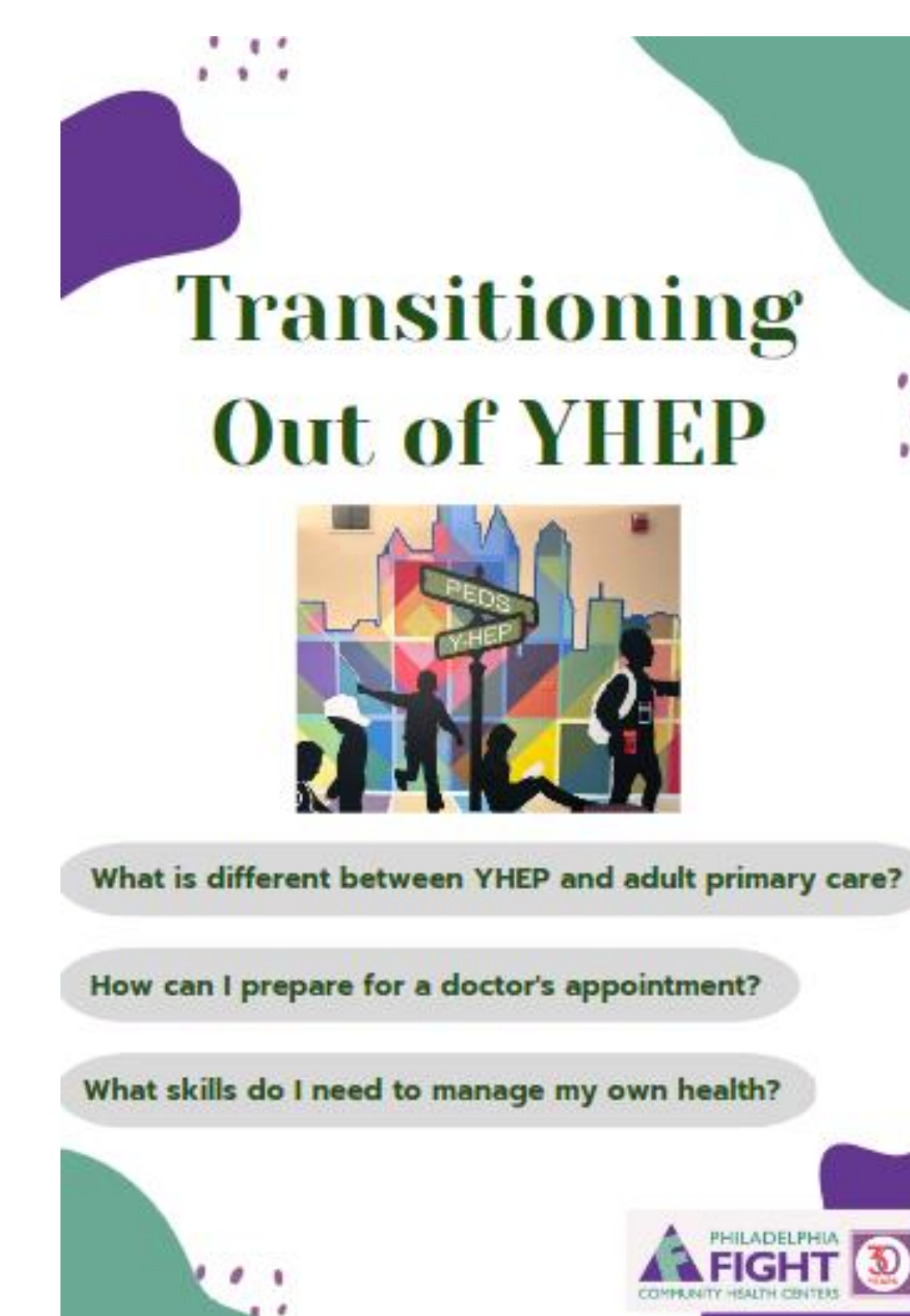
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Community Preceptors: Rebecca Keuch, MSN, CRNP, Philadelphia FIGHT Youth Health Empowerment Project (YHEP)

COMMUNITY PARTNER

Youth Health Empowerment Program at Philadelphia FIGHT

Philadelphia FIGHT Pediatric and Adolescent Health Center, located in Center City, provides high-quality, comprehensive primary care to address the physical and emotional health needs of children and youth up to the age of 27. As a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), FIGHT welcomes patients of all income levels, races, ethnicities, gender identities, sexual orientations, insurance statuses, and nationalities, regardless of ability to pay. <https://fight.org/programs/pediatric-and-adolescent-health-center/>



BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

Founded in 1990 during the AIDS epidemic, FIGHT has continuously demonstrated a commitment to providing holistic care to communities in Philadelphia that are often underserved. In the previous year, Philadelphia FIGHT has served over 2,000 LGBTQIA+ people, including over 500 transgender and gender nonconforming people, with services such as gender affirming hormone therapy, HIV care and prevention, STI testing and treatment, reproductive health services, behavioral healthcare, primary care, and social services. With a national spike in anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation this last year focused on these services, particularly targeting TGNC adolescents, clinics like FIGHT are more necessary than ever to provide comprehensive care for these communities.

TEAM'S EXPERIENCE

The Bridging the Gaps students at Philadelphia FIGHT's Youth Health Empowerment Project (YHEP) focused on three projects this summer based on a patient needs survey they administered during their first week. They updated the clinic's gender-affirming care guide by creating a referral network of other providers doing gender-affirming care, researching resources for social transition like free clothing, name change resources, and hair removal resources, and creating connections between YHEP and other health centers doing gender-affirming care. The interns also worked on a health literacy project about transitioning out of YHEP since YHEP stops seeing patients at 27. This guide included information on what to expect from adult providers, how to find a new provider, and understanding insurance and medications. Finally, the interns worked on improving YHEP's education and career development resources by creating a resource guide and strengthening relationships with local nonprofits that do direct education and career counseling for young people.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/JOYS

- Administered a survey on patient needs
- Updated Gender-Affirming Care Guide
- Created a guide to transition young adults out of YHEP's care and into adult care
- Created health literacy resources on medication, insurance, and more
- Connected YHEP to local health systems and nonprofits
- Got to see an example of affirming and community-centered healthcare!

REFLECTION

Sam Pancoe

Working at YHEP this summer was so rewarding. It was really impactful to see a health center that really prioritizes the patient experience and works so hard to meet the medical and non-medical needs of its diverse patient population. Through my time at YHEP, it became clear how central affirming and inclusive medical care is to building strong and trusting relationships, especially with patients whose previous experiences have made them distrustful of medicine. I hope to use the tools I have learned about community, health literacy, affirming care, and the importance of non-medical support services in my future as a provider.

Owen Parra

I really gained a lot this summer being with FIGHT and with YHEP. Many clinics I know of talk about comprehensive care, but the care that YHEP provides their patients goes far above and beyond that. In every appointment I witnessed, the providers created such an affirming and supportive environment, and they made a point to address the diverse range of needs each patient had. YHEP clearly holds a very special place in the heart of the LGBTQ+ adolescent community in Philly, one that has been fostered over time by this comprehensive care. It has been amazing to be a part of that, to contribute to the care of this community through personal conversations, building of resources, building of referral networks, and resource distribution. I plan to carry what I gained here into my work as a provider.