Transitioning:
Passing the Torch to the Adult

Pediatric Gastroenterology 2012

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Setting Goals*:

- Transitioning is a process not a single act.
- The goals of transitioning are self management and smooth passage into adult care.
- Transitioning programs should promote autonomy and personal responsibility.

- Preparation is vital for a successful outcome.

"Before anything else, preparation is the key to success."
Alexander Graham Bell

*Transitioning still takes place even if the patient is mildly or severely delayed but the transition goals are directed mostly or solely to the parents/caretakers.

Lighting the Flame:
(Starting the Process)

- Encourage patient independence starting in early adolescence, no later than **15 years of age**.
- Develop & document a transition plan. Discuss this plan with the patient/family at every visit –at least once a year.

The Individual Journey:

- Every patient will travel the pathway to independence at their own pace.
- Many factors will influence the patient's success but motivation is key; it is the drive that moves a person in the direction of their goal.
- Transitioning plans should be customized for each patient's individualized needs.
- Our job is not to carry the patient to the finish line but rather to give the patient the necessary tools for them to get there on their own two feet.

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step". ~ Lao-tzu

Hurdles to Success:

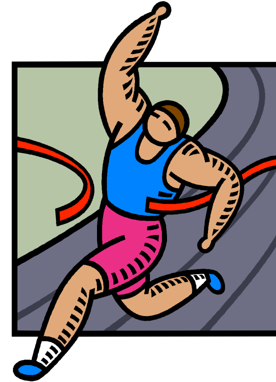
- The Patient:
  - Non-compliance-not showing up for appointments and/or not following treatment plans.
- Lack of or inconsistent family support
- Insurance Issues
  - Coverage runs out or limits choices of MDs &/or treatment
- Special situations:
  - Complex medical history; special devices i.e. G-buttons; cecostomy tubes, etc. This may limit the choices of adult care MDs.
  - Different services transitioning the patient at different ages.

Team Support:

- Transitioning a patient requires a multidisciplinary team approach:
  - Family, providers, nurses and specialists must all work together to help the patient succeed in achieving independence.
    - Everyone can be a coach by giving continued guidance and education.
    - Everyone can be a fan by cheering the patient on and providing positive support.

Keeping up the Momentum:

- At **17 years of age** the patient should be encouraged to start looking at insurance options and searching for adult care physicians.
- By this age the patient should be familiar with their own medical history.



- At **18 years of age** the patient is an adult.
  - This in itself comes with patient independence * including signing consent forms and requiring patient consent for us to speak to others-including their parents (HIPAA).

*unless the patient is delayed

Crossing the Finish Line:

- The department preference is that by the 19th birthday patients will be transitioned to an adult provider.
- This is not a formal clinic policy. Providers will not be required to transition their patients, but it is a preference.
- No matter what age the patient is when they leave our service, the transitioning process needs to follow the same course as previously described.

Celebrate their Victory:

- Treat transitioning as a positive milestone like a graduating high school or receiving an award.

We have **Transition Diplomas** for these patients

The Closing Ceremonies:

- The patient should have an office visit with the Pediatric GI provider before transitioning to the adult provider.
  - Review medical history, medications and treatment plan.
  - Give transition handout (Binder for IBD patients).
  - Meet with ancillary staff if needed.

- Write a transition letter for the new MD including medications, course of disease, complications, goals of treatment, special concerns and special devices.
  - smart phrase: .transition letter

Tools for Success:

Staff:

- **“Transitions”** folder on shared drive
  - Forms; handouts; guides; diplomas
- **Transitioning** (Red) **Binder** for staff
  - Staff guides
  - Originals of forms, handouts

Patient:

- **Transitions handout**:
  - **Generic:**
    - English/Spanish: Transitioning Binder/”Transitions” E-folder
  - **IBD:**
    - English-**IBD Transition Notebook**
    - Spanish-Handout on Transitions folder on shared drive

- http://www.gottransition.org/
- http://www.gastrokids.org/files/documents/resources/Checklist_ONLYHealthcareProdiver_TransitionfromPedtoAdult.pdf
- Supporting the Health Care Transition from Adolescence to Adulthood in the Medical Home" published