

1. Reframe adolescent health and wellbeing

The predominant focus for adolescent health in a global context has been around sexual and reproductive health and more recently HIV. Yet all aspects of adolescent health, growth and well-being are interconnected. For that reason we need a broader and integrated approach to adolescent health in policy. A more comprehensive approach extends to other infectious diseases, nutritional deficiencies, injury and violence, chronic physical health problems, mental and substance use disorders as well as risks for later life disease that emerge during the adolescent years. In particular there is a need for:

- An appreciation of the triple dividend of investment in adolescents with reduced death and disability in adolescents today, better health trajectories across the life-course and the best possible start to life for the next generation.
- The development of policies sensitive to gender and evolving adolescent capacities, incorporating new understandings of growth and neurodevelopment across the adolescent years
- An understanding that puberty represents a *second sensitive period* where there are powerful interactions between an individual's biological maturation and the social context. It is therefore a time for *second chances*.

2. Set clear objectives based on national and local needs

Patterns of adolescent health show enormous variation over time, across genders, geographies and socio-economic disadvantage. For these reasons, different actions are needed in different places and with different groups of adolescents. Yet adolescents are the least well served group in existing data systems. There is a need to:

- More effectively use existing data resources to characterise and communicate geographic differences in health problems, risks and determinants between and within countries,
- We should use existing data to determine differences in adolescent health by gender, socio-economic status, and social marginalisation
- We need to accelerate investments in primary data collection either by extending existing platforms for data collection beyond sexual and reproductive health and to different ages; and/or develop new platforms to allow more comprehensive coverage of both health problems and actions for health

3. Reconfigure health services for universal health coverage

Adolescents are also the age group least well served by conventional health services. Achieving universal health coverage will require delivery platforms beyond traditional health-care systems and might extend to school-based and community-based platform delivery models as well as social and digital media. Universal health coverage for adolescents will require:

- A breadth of coverage beyond sexual and reproductive health
- Approaches that extend from preventive care, including contraception for all sexually active adolescents, through to early intervention and care of conditions that may last a lifetime e.g. mental disorders
- The development of financing models that work for adolescents whether they be living with their families or outside of families
- Training of health-care providers to provide confidential, non-judgmental & respectful health care

4. Create protective and empowering social scaffolds through intersectoral partnerships

The most effective actions for adolescent health and wellbeing lie in sectors beyond health service provision. Alignment of health service responses with preventive and promotional actions in other sectors is equally necessary for health service effectiveness. Essential investments by other sectors include:

- Resources to complete quality secondary education with consideration of school as a setting for promoting health and wellbeing
- Training of teachers and professionals in other sectors working with young people
- Laws that empower and protect
- Linkage of adolescent health to policies in diverse sectors including employment, education, family policies, taxation and regulation of the marketing of unhealthy commodities to adolescents.

5. Enhance the engagement of young people

Given the opportunity, adolescents and young adults are powerful agents for social and community change, that includes the promotion of their own health and wellbeing. Until recently, there have been few examples of effective and scalable strategies youth engagement and empowerment. The growing complexity of political and economic systems now presents a growing barrier to their engagement. We need to create different structures and processes to engage and empower young people around their health. This will require consideration of:

- The training and mentoring of youth health advocates
- The establishment of forums for meaningful youth participation
- The development of new understandings of the most effective strategies for youth engagement in an increasingly interconnected digital world

6. Growing knowledge and capacity

Long-standing neglect of adolescent and young adult health has left limited capacity with sectors and across service systems. There is a pressing need for investment in research, training, financing, and technical underpinnings, or progress in adolescent health and wellbeing will remain slow. Essential next steps include:

- Addressing knowledge gaps around effective actions for adolescent health and well-being
- Understand better how to take effective and proven interventions to scalable and sustainable action
- Development of forums and governance processes to hold government to account for investments made around adolescent health and well-being