

Abstract Submission

Title

Youth appropriate health care: A position statement from the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP)

Presenting Author

Professor Simon Denny

Biography

Professor Simon Denny is Director of the Mater Young Adult Health Centre, a Paediatrician, and an Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine (AYAM) Physician. He is the past Chair of the RACP AYAM Committee and is the Chair of the RACP Youth Appropriate Health Care Working Group.

Background

The Youth Appropriate Health Care (YAHC) Position Statement is a policy initiative developed by the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) for Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. It has been shaped collaboratively by a physician Working Group and the RACP's first Youth Advisory Group, comprising of 12 young people with lived experience of the healthcare systems in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Position Statement outlines the current landscape of youth appropriate health care, highlights the benefits of delivering developmentally appropriate services, and acknowledges the significant unmet needs of young people. It provides a framework for reforming how health care is designed, delivered, and evaluated for those aged 10-24 years.

Approach

The Position Statement was co-designed through an iterative, collaborative process led by the Working Group and Youth Advisory Group. Multiple virtual meetings were held to gather experiences and identify priority points. Facilitated workshops engaged the young people in activities to articulate a shared vision for youth health care. Insights were incorporated through successive drafts to refine principles and recommendations. Consultation on the draft further strengthened the content and applicability.

Outcome

The Position Statement defines youth appropriate health care as accessible, equitable, acceptable, culturally safe, confidential, and developmentally responsive. It identifies gaps across transition pathways, engagement, and continuity of care, and sets out practical actions to embed youth-centred care across services, including workforce capability, co-design, and measurements for accountability.

Innovation and Significance

The Position Statement places young people as co-authors of policy, establishing a new standard for youth health governance and design. It provides a roadmap for governments, health services, and healthcare professionals to improve engagement, reduce inequities, and strengthen outcomes for adolescents and young adults.