

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 a leading voice in adolescent and young adult health, bringing more than 15 years of clinical and research expertise to the sector. As Director of the Mater Young Adult Health Centre, he has championed models of care that genuinely meet the needs of young people during one of the most critical stages of life. Simon co-leads the Health Services Research group at Mater Research, where his work centres on improving health outcomes and wellbeing for young people, so they can lead healthier and happier lives as adults. With over 80 publications, and a career shaped by deep engagement with youth health systems, he has played a pivotal role in advancing evidence-based approaches to adolescent and young adult medicine. He is the former Chair of the Adolescent Health Research Group, The Society of Youth Health Professionals Aotearoa New Zealand (SYHPANZ), and the Royal Australasian College of Physicians' Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine Committee.

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 our 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.