Using cross-system partnerships to increase access to healthcare for students in foster care

Tamara Toutant, Seita Scholar
LaToya McCants, DHS Liaison, Western Michigan University
Genanne Zeller, MSW, Fostering Success Michigan

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Welcome!

• Please share your name and organization
Goals & Objectives

• Raise awareness of healthcare challenges faced by young people with experience in foster care
• Explain new benefits made available to young people who aged out of foster care
• Share a student’s experience in obtaining health care
• Discuss how cross-system partnerships streamlined access to health care
“Growth is never by mere chance, it is the result of forces working together.”

In order to best serve students from foster care, we need to develop cross-system partnerships.
Health Care is important!

• Students with experience in foster care have more negative health outcomes than their non-care peers
Let’s Look at Numbers!

• The Midwest Evaluation of Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth – Outcomes at age 26
  – Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

• Purpose
  – To provide first comprehensive view of how former foster youth are faring as they transition to adulthood

• Sample
  – Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin youth who were in public child welfare foster care at age 17 and had entered care prior to their 16th birthday
  – 732 foster youth

Source: Courtney et al, 2011
Alumni of Foster Care Compared to National Sample

Midwest Study
Alumni of Foster Care

Add Health Study
National Sample

Alumni of Foster Care
at Age 26
RED

National Sample
at Age 26
BLUE
## Physical Health at Age 26

### Alumni of Foster Care vs. National Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Condition</th>
<th>Alumni of Foster Care (%)</th>
<th>National Sample (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health excellent/very good</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health fair/poor</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health condition limits daily activities</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Courtney et al, 2011
# Physical Health at Age 26

## Alumni of Foster Care vs. National Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Category</th>
<th>Alumni of Foster Care</th>
<th>National Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical exam within the last year</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental exam within the last year</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance coverage</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Courtney et al, 2011
Mental Health at Age 26

Alumni of Foster Care vs. National Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utilization of mental health services</th>
<th>Alumni of Foster Care Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12%</td>
<td>25% of Midwest Study participants reported feeling depressive symptoms for at least 2 weeks in the last year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. 11%</td>
<td>60% exposed to compounded traumatic events over life course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Courtney et al, 2011
## Pregnancy by Age 26 (Women)

### Alumni of Foster Care vs. National Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Alumni of Foster Care</th>
<th>National Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ever been pregnant</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitely or probably wanted pregnancy</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Courtney et al, 2011
The Affordable Care Act

- Effective January 1, 2014, a provision of the ACA extended Medicaid to youth from foster care up to age 26.

- To qualify, youth must have been in foster care under the responsibility of the state when they reached the age of 18.
Communication is Key!

• Current students notified by campus coach, DHS Liaison

• Letters sent to students at last known address
  – Some youth did not receive notice

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Application Process

• Students advised to go to Health Care Marketplace and apply online.

• Students could also use paper application in Seita Office
  – Paper applications mailed to Kentucky
First challenges

• Online Market Place required account set up.
  – Students were not consistently receiving required link/password

• Some students were successful while others were rejected
  – Students told they were disqualified because of income
  – Students asked to verify employment information
• The only qualifier for students to receive extended Medicaid is that they were a ward of the state at age 18.
Navigating challenges

• In March, the Michigan Bridges website became available and students were instructed to enroll there
• A paper application was now sent to Lansing
• Students who completed the Market Place application were asked to re-apply using the MI Bridges site

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More student Stories

NPR’s State of Opportunity, 4/22/14
Tamara’s Story

• Lost Health Care Coverage
• Didn’t know how to apply
• Learned about the extended health coverage
• Informed about all the problems associated with application
• Applied through the paper application
• Went without healthcare for an extended period of time
• More successful result than most peers
Results

- Stress from not being covered
- Unaware of the process
- Apply then re-apply
- Give Up
Creating Partnerships

• DHS Liaison reached out to FSM for assistance in addressing systemic problems

• FSM reached out to state DHS representatives

• DHS began working with individual cases: created state level contact

  – Leslie Adams AdamsL4@michigan.gov
Persevering!

• Some young female students were still being denied Medicaid because they were dual enrolled in PlanFirst (a women’s health plan)

• DHS Liaison was able to compare denials with information in MI Bridges site to identify this problem
Partnering with Students

• Work to establish an interdependent relationship
  – “At least try it”

• Provide support and encouragement
  – Create safe environment for using a computer
  – Address fear of doing something wrong and having it result in denial

• Teach Self Advocacy

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Partnering with Students

• Students need to be accountable for follow up/providing additional information as needed
• Tell students what to expect; be clear about deadlines and expectation
• Communicate information about timelines to address anxiety about not having coverage. Some students experienced delays as long as 45 days
Skills for Independent Living at Age 26: Social Support and Future Outlook

Alumni of Foster Care Only

• 1/2 to 2/3 of respondents felt they had someone to turn to for social support
• 57% stated they either had too few people or no one to loan them money if needed
• 66% report feeling satisfied or very satisfied with their lives as a whole
• 89% report a level of optimism about their future

Source: Courtney et al, 2011
What are Cross-System Partnerships?

• For a student in foster care there can be a large number of professionals who are involved in a student’s life

• When those people operate in silos, students have difficulty reaping the rewards of comprehensive support

• First step: understanding who was involved and what expertise/information they could provide

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Network Partners: Who are they?

- Postsecondary Education Institutions’ staff and campus champions
- Youth and Alumni of Foster Care
- Middle and High School Educators and Staff
- Community Organizations and Other Service Providers
- Caregivers and Mentors
- The Department of Human Services
- Local College Access Networks,
- The Department of Education
- Courts, Law Enforcement and Juvenile Justice System
- Career and Work Forces Services
- Housing champions
Campus Support Services

- Financial Aid
- Admissions
- Registrar
- Health Services
- Counseling Services
- Academic Support
- Residence Life
- Police & Public Safety
- Academic Support
Foster Care Support Services

- Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Educational Training Voucher (ETV)
- Youth in Transition (YIT)
- Community Mental Health (CMH)
Navigating Multiple Systems

College Student

- Public Assistance
- Residence Life
- Police & Public Safety
- Counseling Services
- Medicaid
- Financial Aid
- Admissions
- Registrar
- Health Services
- DHS
- Foster Care
- ETV
- Non-Foster Care
- CMH
- Academic Support
- College Student Financial Aid
- Health Services Counseling
Weaving Partnerships

• When you receive the yarn...
• State your name and role in your work
• Name one thing you can offer in terms of assisting students with experience in foster care

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Weaving Partnerships

• What is the importance of having cross-system partnerships?

• What new supports have you realized you can offer?

• How would you develop cross-system partnerships?
Continuous Communication

To bridge the information gaps, FSM began communicating via several platforms with all network partners. After reaching out to several different

- The FSM Google Group listserv
- FSM Monthly E-Newsletter
- FSM Regional Network Meetings
- The FSM statewide resource website
- Produced “Getting to Know...The Affordable Care Act” Guide
- Seita Scholars newsletter
What are your strategies?

• Handouts
  – Getting to Know the Affordable Care Act
  – Getting to Know...Students from foster care

• Review FSM Website for network partners
Where are we now?

• Any youth currently in foster care are automatically given Medicaid coverage until age 26

• For youth who are **not** US citizens and over the age of 18, they have to have been in the US for 5 years to receive Medicaid and other benefits

• If less than 5 years, youth will be given “Emergency Only” services

• Medicaid determines, on a case by case basis what qualifies as “emergency”
Where are we now

• Substantial coverage on public radio about the challenges of youth in foster care signing up for extended Medicaid
• DHS created a dedicated staff position to specifically address challenges experienced by youth in foster care
• Despite all of this, there are still glitches that exist in the process
Lessons Learned

• Patience!
• Be Proactive
• Persevere
• Ask for help (students and professionals alike)
• Build your network – create cross-system partnerships

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Thank you for your time!

Questions?
For More Information:

Fostering Success Michigan
(269) 387-8386
www.FosteringSuccessMichigan.com
http://groups.google.com/group/fostering-success-michigan

Seita Scholars, Western Michigan University
269-387-8362
http://wmich.edu/fosteringsuccess/seita