



*THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE
TO ADVANCE ADOLESCENT HEALTH*



The HSC Health Care System
Health Services for Children
With Special Needs, Inc.
(HSCSN)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP TO HELP YOUTH WITH SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS
TRANSITION FROM PEDIATRIC TO ADULT CARE**

Washington, D.C. (June 11, 2013) – The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health, a DC-based non-profit organization, and Health Services for Children with Special Needs, a Medicaid health plan, are partnering to design, evaluate, and pilot an innovative transition model for low-income youth with special needs – making DC the first in the nation to implement a comprehensive transition program within a managed care organization.

Funded by the DC Department of Health, this transition model will be based on the District's successful health care transition quality improvement efforts and best practices from federal and state transition programs for youth with chronic medical, developmental, and mental health conditions. It will address health care as well as insurance and other public program benefits, employment, education, and community supports.

Health Services for Children with Special Needs (HSCSN) serves almost 5,700 youth and young adults, from birth through age 25, with serious and disabling chronic conditions, including intellectual disabilities, ADD/ADHD, mood disorders, sickle cell disease, cerebral palsy, hearing loss, traumatic brain injury, and more. One quarter of these youth are between the ages of 18 and 25, and most are African American and reside in Wards 6, 7, and 8, the lowest resourced and highest poverty neighborhoods in the District. Like other DC youth with special health care needs, HSCSN enrollees face significant barriers transitioning to adulthood. According to the National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs, 80 percent of DC youth who are publicly insured are not receiving needed transition services. As a result, many of these youth will experience adverse and preventable health problems, difficulties accessing care, and significant worry and stress.

In response to DC's critical need for expanded transition assistance, this new collaborative initiative will focus initially on youth and young adults with mental retardation/intellectual disabilities, mental health disorders, and complex medical conditions to pilot the transition model, which will eventually be

available to all HSCSN youth and young adults and youth from other states. Through the next year, the project stages will include the following:

1. *Needs Assessment Phase.* The National Alliance staff will conduct key informant interviews with HSCSN care management staff; youth/young adults HSCSN enrollees; senior officials from the DC Departments of Health, Mental Health, Health Disability Services, and Health Care Finance, and Office of Special Education; and program directors of community organizations serving adults with disabilities to identify opportunities, gaps, and options for assisting HSCSN-transitioning youth and young adults.
2. *Program Development Phase.* The National Alliance and HSCSN staff will review best practices to design an effective and integrated transition model. HSCSN care coordinators responsible for transition will receive training on the model and a transition service plan template and process will be incorporated into HSCSN's care management system. In addition, pediatric and adult health providers and community service partners will receive transition training support.
3. *Pilot Testing and Evaluation.* A subset of HSCSN enrollees will be invited to participate in the transition pilot project and receive an individualized package of transition supports. Evaluation results will be obtained pertaining to quality improvement and patient and partner experiences. The results of the pilot will be incorporated into the transition model so that all HSCSN youth and young adults, and eventually all DC youth with special needs, can benefit from this innovation.

To learn more about transition from pediatric to adult health care, visit the health page at www.dctransition.org.

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[The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health](http://www.thenationalalliance.org) is a non-profit organization that provides education, policy analysis, and technical assistance to improve health care for adolescents, focusing primarily on the needs of low income adolescents. Since 2009, funded by the DC Department of Health, The National Alliance has implemented a nationally recognized health care transition quality improvement project and has partnered with the National Health Care Transition Center on transition research and policy development. (For more information, see: www.thenationalalliance.org.)

[Health Services for Children with Special Needs](http://www.hscsn-net.org) provides care to Supplemental Security Income-eligible youth and young adults in DC through a care management network that provides a comprehensive set of health benefits and coordination of health, social, and education services for its members, from birth through age 25. Part of the HSC Health Care System, which also includes a pediatric specialty hospital, home health agency and a parent organization, The HSC Foundation, it offers a comprehensive approach to caring, serving and empowering individuals with disabilities and complex health care needs. (For more information, see: www.hscsn-net.org.)