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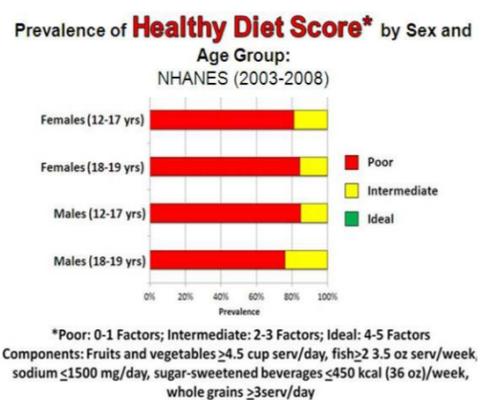
Our monthly e-newsletter, *Adolescent Health News*, is designed to keep you up-to-date about current activities at The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health and related topics of interest to the adolescent health community.

Recent Hill Briefing Highlights the Importance of Medicaid for Adolescents

The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health joined some 40 other child health and advocacy organizations on November 29th in hosting a Capitol Hill Briefing "Weighing the Options for Children's Health Care and Medicaid: First Do No Harm." The purpose of the briefing was to inform lawmakers of the vital role Medicaid is playing for a growing number of children and adolescents. Findings were presented from a report released that day by the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families showing that the uninsured rate for children up to age 18 decreased significantly in most states even as the recession has continued and poverty rates have risen. (Click [here](#) to read the report.) Considerable attention was given to the increasing challenges of meeting the health needs of adolescents, particularly in the area of mental health. Past President of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Dr. O. Marion Burton, noted that we can do far better by adolescents by integrating behavioral health into the primary care setting and ensuring that they have access to these services throughout their lifespan. The National Alliance continues to advocate strongly for integrated, interdisciplinary models of care that can comprehensively and confidentially meet the physical, reproductive and behavioral health needs of adolescents. For examples of centers that offer such integrated, comprehensive care, see the Model Programs section of our website.

Adolescents Found to Have Poor Cardiovascular Health

Poor cardiovascular health in adolescents carries a significant public health threat as behaviors and habits are set during adolescence and carried into adulthood. New results from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, showed that adolescents 12-19 years old have poor cardiovascular health. In the seven categories set by the American Heart Association as criteria for ideal cardiovascular health (diet, body mass index, smoking, physical activity, total cholesterol, blood pressure, and glucose), zero adolescents met the criteria for ideal cardiovascular health. Diet proved to be the category in which adolescents performed the worst, as zero adolescents have an ideal healthy diet score. The data were analyzed by Christina M. Shay from the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center and other researchers from Children's Hospital Colorado, the University of Colorado, and Northwestern University and were presented at a recent meeting of the American Heart Association. The abstract for this presentation is available online [here](#).



New Report: Medical Home Innovations: Where Do Adolescents Fit?

The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health recently published a new report on the medical home: *Medical Home Innovations: Where Do Adolescents Fit?* The report summarizes current activities in 12 innovative medical home programs across the country and discusses how the health needs of adolescents are being addressed. Adolescents benefit from medical home innovations particularly when they focus on improving preventive care, expanding access, and integrating behavioral health specialists and mental health services into the primary care setting. Although some progress has been made in meeting adolescent needs through medical home innovations, much remains to be done. This report describes the progress that has been made in changing primary care practices and plans underway for future improvements.

Read the [full report](#) on the [Publications](#) section of our website.

Contraceptive Coverage Potentially at Risk for Some Adolescents

Under the Affordable Care Act, insurance companies are required to cover 100% of the costs of all FDA-approved contraceptives beginning in 2012. The Act specifies that religious institutions that primarily employ and serve people of the same religion may qualify for an exemption from this rule. The Catholic Church is arguing for a very broad interpretation of the exemption that would include Catholic hospitals and universities. If the White House expands the exemption policy, employees, dependents, and students at these institutions, many of whom are not Catholic, could lose health insurance coverage for contraceptives.



The White House is expected to make a decision about the exemption policy within days. The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health will continue to monitor this issue closely.

Adolescent Male Sexual Health – New AAP Clinical Report

The American Academy of Pediatrics recently issued a clinical report with best practice recommendations for providers to deliver sexual health services to male adolescents. The report, published in the December issue of *Pediatrics*, addresses how male adolescents' sexual and reproductive health needs are often unmet in the primary care setting and stresses the importance of addressing sexual health matters in a confidential manner. Read the [full report](#), available online now.



Additional Funder for Conference on Adolescent Primary Care

The conference on adolescent primary care, announced in last month's newsletter, is also being funded by the Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center. Unfortunately, we had previously omitted this fact.