

UVA Teen Health Center

Helping Teens Find Answers

Let's face it – teenagers aren't children. Most teens today face adult pressures, temptations, and risks. At the same time, they don't always have the experience or emotional maturity to make well-reasoned and insightful choices. This lack of life experience makes adolescents vulnerable to a wide range of risk behaviors, including depression, substance abuse, unplanned pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and other medical conditions.

At the University of Virginia Teen Health Center, our healthcare professionals understand the physical, social, and emotional challenges teenagers face. Our nurses, doctors, and social workers are specially trained and experienced in providing teens with primary health care. Our care is provided in a safe, private, respectful, and comfortable environment. Our professionals work closely with area schools, churches, and community centers to reach out to teens with guidance and support.

Saving Lives, Safeguarding Families

At the Teen Health Center, our services have positively affected thousands of young people and their families. Consider the 14-year-old local high school student who was referred to us by her school nurse. She had an abnormal pap smear that indicated a pre-cancerous condition. At the Teen Health Center, this young woman received information and counseling that enabled her to talk candidly with her mother. As a result, she received proper interventional treatment and is now cancer free.

And we can share many other similar stories: the teenage boy suffering from depression who was a potential threat to himself and others; the 16-year-old girl in need of birth control who did not know how to talk to her parents about it; the teen struggling with alcohol addiction; or the young women we have helped to receive the pre-natal care they needed to deliver healthy babies.

Looking to the Future

The Teen Health Center is an extremely valuable resource for our community's young people. It is unlikely, however, to ever generate a self-sustaining income, with its focus on time-intensive counseling and its youthful client base. Fortunately, we receive support from the UVA Health System and from individual and corporate benefactors. In the past, private generosity has helped to fund a variety of



clinical needs, including emergency contraceptive services, “breathing space” sessions that help teens prepare for talking to parents, and screening for sexually transmitted diseases.

Our current fundraising focus is:

- **Expanding our Adolescent Advocacy and Outreach Program.** This program provides information and counseling to teens at schools, churches, community centers, and other locations. As advocate and educator, Mary Sullivan, the program's energetic leader, works collaboratively with local youth agencies and parents, increasing their knowledge and understanding of adolescent development. Gifts for this program also support a statewide Teen Culture Conference focused on addressing the latest issues affecting teens.

Other Center needs include:

- **Space to Grow.** Current space is inadequate to support our needs and our plans to expand community programs, add peer educators, and utilize new tools, such as text messaging, to reach teens.
- **Center Endowment.** A permanent, endowed investment in UVA's Teen Health Center will ensure long-term sustainability and allow us to plan more strategically for the future.

For more information or to make a gift to support the UVA Teen Health Center, please call (434) 924-8432 or (800) 297-0102.