

Making Health Referrals in the Health Resource Room A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE



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MAKING HEALTH REFERRALS IN THE HEALTH RESOURCE ROOM

What is the Health Resource Room?

Health Resource Rooms are easily accessible, private, and confidential spaces in the school building where trained staff can provide students with health information and resources. Health Resource Rooms may also be available online to ensure that students have continued access to health information and resources no matter their location. Whether in person or online, Health Resource Rooms are designed to be safe, supportive, and inclusive places for all students.

High School

As part of the mandated [NYC DOE HIV/AIDS Prevention Program \(opens in new window\)](#), high schools are required to offer a [Condom Availability Program \(opens in new window\)](#), where free condoms, health information, and health referrals are made available to students in grades 9-12 in the Health Resource Room.

Middle School

Middle schools may choose to establish Health Resource Rooms where students in grades 6-8 can access free health information and referrals to school- and community-based health services. Currently, middle school students cannot receive condoms via the Condom Availability Program; however, they may access condoms from other school-based and/or community-based clinics.



Why do Health Referrals Matter?

All New York City students need access to teen-friendly, trusted sexual health service providers and services so that they may establish and maintain healthy behaviors. In fact, increasing the proportion of adolescents who access preventive health care visits is a high-priority public health issue in [Healthy People 2030 \(opens in new window\)](#), the federal government's ten-year agenda for improving the nation's health. Another national priority in the Healthy People initiative is increasing the proportion of adolescents who have a trusted adult they can talk to about serious problems. Helping students access the services they need helps them take care of their bodies, supports positive academic outcomes, and leads to reductions in health disparities.

Quick Facts

- Teens in the United States are less likely than adults and younger children to receive recommended preventive health services. ([CDC \[opens in new window\]](#))
- Early adolescents (young people ages 10 to 13) experience body changes that can increase curiosity and even anxiety because they may not know what to expect, or wonder what is normal. ([Healthy Children \[opens in new window\]](#))
- New HIV diagnoses have fallen to historic lows in New York City, but disparities persist. ([NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene \[opens in new window\]](#))

Your Role

By making health referrals available to your students, you agree to be a trusted and reliable advocate for students' health, well-being, and success. Your work will help to increase student access to high-quality, low-cost, teen-friendly and LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning)-affirming sexual health services. In this role, you pledge to be a good listener, non-judgmental, friendly, honest, and committed to connecting students to accurate health information and services.

Prior to referring students to health services, be sure to meet with your principal. It is important that your principal knows, understands, and supports your school's plans for building new relationships or leveraging existing relationships with clinics. Keep your principal updated as your work progresses.

We recommend that you work closely with the principal, health education teacher, guidance counselor, School Wellness Council members, other key school staff, and families to ensure that students have continuous access to health services.



Purpose of This Guide

This step-by-step guide and checklist aim to help you:

- Identify, track, and build relationships with health service providers inside and outside your school community
- Refer students to high quality, low-cost, teen-friendly and LGBTQ-affirming sexual health services

Please work through this guide and fill out the information to the best of your ability, and share this information with other key staff.

STEP 1

FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH MINORS’ RIGHTS

Before referring students to sexual health services, it is important to familiarize yourself with minors’ rights to confidential care. It is also important to recognize the large role that parents and caregivers play in shaping young people’s values around sexual health topics, including accessing health services. Ideally, parents and caregivers would support young people with accessing health care; however, this is not always the case. Fortunately, in New York State, young people under the age of 18 can consent to different types of confidential care to protect and maintain their health (i.e., young people do not need parental consent to receive select health services). These services include but are not limited to:

- Mental health counseling
- Sexual, reproductive, and prenatal care
- Alcohol and substance abuse counseling
- Emergency medical care

A wide range of confidential services are available to young people interested in accessing sexual health, reproductive, and prenatal care, including:

Birth control	Pregnancy Testing	STI (Sexually Transmitted Infection) testing and care	HIV testing and treatment	Sexual assault care
Emergency contraception	Prenatal care	HPV vaccination	PrEP and PEP	Abortion services

Some groups of minors can consent to other types of health care services without parental consent. These groups include, but are not limited to:

- Parenting Minors: Can make all decisions relating to medical, dental, health, and hospital services for themselves and their children.
- Currently or Formerly Married Minors: Can consent to all health care services.
- Pregnant Minors: Can consent to medical, dental, health, and hospital services relating to prenatal care.
- Emancipated Minors: Can consent to all health care services.

For detailed information on minors’ rights to confidential health care, see the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) [Guide to Minors’ Rights in New York State \(opens in new window\)](#). For a summary of minors’ rights to confidential health care, visit the NYCLU [Minors’ Rights to Confidential Health Care in New York brochure \(opens in new window\)](#).

Tip: Tell students that health information or resources from you, including referrals you make, are confidential. Remind students that if there is suspicion of abuse, self-harm, or harm to others, you and other providers are mandated to report directly to the State Central Register.



STEP 2

IDENTIFY RESOURCES AT THE SCHOOL AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Learn whether your school has any of the following programs

- [Condom Availability Program \(CAP\) \(opens in new window\)](#) (high school only)
- [Connecting Adolescents to Comprehensive Healthcare \(CATCH\) \(opens in new window\)](#) (high school only)
- [School-Based Health Center \(SBHC\) \(opens in new window\)](#)

Note: CAP is required for grades 9-12, so some schools may have CAP and CATCH **or** CAP and SBHC.

If your school has none of the programs listed above, move on to Step 3. If you are unsure whether your school has any of the programs listed, email [CAP2@schools.nyc.gov \(opens in email window\)](mailto:CAP2@schools.nyc.gov).

Get background information

Connect with members of your school team to see if anyone already has a relationship with the CAP, CATCH, or SBHC staff. Ask them how they have worked with these staff in the past.

Take Notes

Call or visit

All CAP staff provide health information, resources, and referrals to health services to students in grades 9-12. Below are sample scripts you can use when reaching out to CATCH or SBHC staff to identify the services they offer. On the following pages are templates to record what you learn from your conversation.

CAP staff can say...

"Hi, my name is [name] and I am part of the Condom Availability Program team at [school name]. In this role, I confidentially provide students with free condoms, health information, and health referrals. I'm reaching out to learn what services you provide and to which ages/grades so that I may potentially refer students to your program/center."

Non-CAP and middle school staff can say...

"Hello, my name is [name] and I am a [school role] here at [school name]. I've been trained to provide students with confidential health information and referrals. I'm reaching out to learn what services you provide and to which ages/grades so that I may potentially refer students to your program/center."

During the conversation: Ask and record

Date of conversation:

Name of staff person you spoke with/have a relationship with:

Role of staff person listed above:

Location and days/times staff person is available:

Languages spoken at clinic/center:

Walk-in policy:

Age range they provide services to:

Check all services provided by CATCH/SBHC:

Contraception

Birth control pills (oral contraception)

Depo shot (Depo-Provera)

Patch (Ortho Evra)

Vaginal ring (NuvaRing and/or Annovera)

IUD (Mirena, Liletta, Kylena, Skyla, and/or Paragard)

Implant (Nexplanon)

Emergency contraception (Plan B, ella, and/or Paragard)

Dental dams

Condoms (latex and/or non-latex)

Pregnancy testing

Pregnancy options counseling (if a person is pregnant and not sure what to do)

STI testing

STI treatment

HPV vaccine

HIV testing: rapid test or standard test

HIV treatment

PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis)

PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis)

Sexual assault care (in-house or referral)

Mental health counseling (in-house or referral)

Healthy relationship counseling

LGBTQ-inclusive services

Hormone-replacement therapy (in-house or referral)

Telehealth visits

Well visits

Additional services

Support groups for:

Peer educators

Clinic tours

Health educators available for brief class presentations, interactive class workshops, or after-school workshops with students/parents

If yes, how do you schedule one?

Take Notes

Post-conversation

- Visit the clinic, if you haven't already.
- Create and display signs promoting the clinic in your Health Resource Room. Consider working with students to create signs.
- Share what you learned with the health education teacher, School Wellness Council members, and other key staff at your school. Remind staff that you are available to make student referrals to sexual health services.



STEP 3

IDENTIFY RESOURCES IN THE COMMUNITY AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Bookmark and explore the following directories

- [NYC HealthMap \(opens in new window\)](#): Search for local teen services, sexual health services, LGBTQ health services, and more.
- [Generation NYC \(opens in new window\)](#): Search for local teen health services and programs, and learn about various health topics.
- [NYC Unity Project's LGBTQ Coronavirus Resources \(opens in new window\)](#): Search for up-to-date information on LGBTQ resources available during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Familiarize yourself with the clinic visit

- Watch Planned Parenthood of Greater New York's [CRIBS video \(opens in new window\)](#)
- Watch select NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) [Teens in NYC videos \(opens in new window\)](#)
- Review NYC DOHMH's [What to Expect at the Clinic webpage \(opens in new window\)](#)
- Review the CDC's [A Teen-Friendly Reproductive Health Visit infographic \(opens in new window\)](#)

Locate and call clinic(s) near your school

Below are sample scripts you can use when reaching out to clinic staff. On the following pages, you will find tools to record what you learn from your conversation.

CAP staff can say...

"Hi, my name is [name] and I am part of the Condom Availability Program team at [school name]. In this role, I confidentially provide students with free condoms, health information, and health referrals. I'm reaching out to learn what services you provide and to which ages/grades so that I may potentially refer students to your program/center."

Non-CAP and middle school staff can say...

"Hello, my name is [name] and I am a [school role] at [school name]. I've been trained to provide students with confidential health information and referrals. I'm reaching out to learn what services you provide and to which ages/grades so that I may potentially refer students to your program/center."

While we recommend that you build at least one relationship with an outside community clinic, it is best practice to develop relationships with multiple clinics so you can provide students with options. Please see additional clinic service questionnaires at the end of the toolkit.

During the conversation: Ask and record

Date of conversation:

Name of staff person you spoke with/have a relationship with:

Role of staff person listed above:

Location and days/times staff person is available:

Languages spoken at clinic/center:

Walk-in policy:

Age range they provide services to:

What confidential services do they provide? Which of these services, if any, have age requirements?

Check all services provided:

Contraception

Birth control pills (oral contraception)

Depo shot (Depo-Provera)

Patch (Ortho Evra)

Vaginal ring (NuvaRing and/or Annovera)

IUD (Mirena, Liletta, Kylena, Skyla, and/or Paragard)

Implant (Nexplanon)

Emergency contraception (Plan B, ella, and/or Paragard)

Dental dams

Condoms (latex and/or non-latex)

Pregnancy testing

Pregnancy options counseling (if a person is pregnant and not sure what to do)

STI testing

STI treatment

HPV vaccine

HIV testing: rapid test or standard test

HIV treatment

PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis)

PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis)

Sexual assault care (in-house or referral)

Mental health counseling (in-house or referral)

Healthy relationship counseling

LGBTQ-inclusive services

Hormone-replacement therapy (in-house or referral)

Telehealth visits

Well visits

The following services are free

The following services have associated fees

Are there sliding scale services?

Services accept Medicaid or enroll students in the Family Planning Benefit Program

Tip: Review and familiarize yourself with the public health insurance program for New Yorkers, [Family Planning Benefit Program \(opens in new window\)](#), which is commonly offered to adolescents to increase access to confidential family planning services.



Additional services

Support groups for:

Peer educators

Clinic tours

Health educators available for brief class presentations, interactive class workshops, or after-school workshops with students/parents

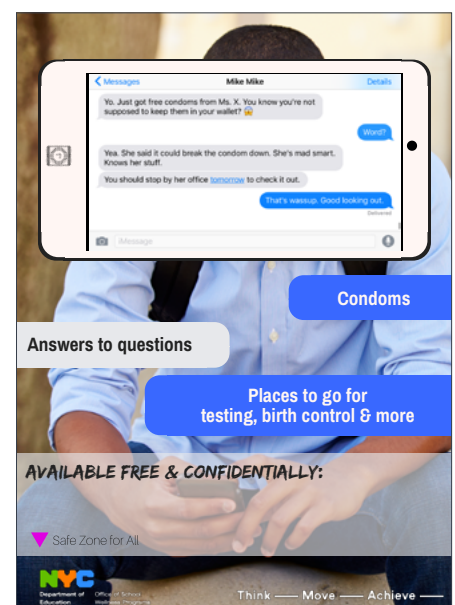
If yes, how do you schedule one?:

The clinic provides MetroCards to students

Take Notes

Post-conversation

- Visit the clinic, if you haven't already.
- Create and display signs promoting the clinic in your Health Resource Room. Consider working with students to create signs.
- Obtain MetroCards to provide when making referrals. This is a great opportunity to collaborate with your School Wellness Council to fund this project.
- Share what you learned with the health education teacher, School Wellness Council, and other key staff at your school. Remind staff that you are available to make student referrals to sexual health services.



STEP 4

MAKE THE REFERRAL

Learn how others make referrals to other services

In addition to learning about the school-based and community-based health services available to your students, you may want to identify whether your school has a process for making referrals to other social services, such as housing or counseling. Ask your school's principal, guidance counselors, or social workers to share their referral policies with you. Write notes (if any) about this process here; it may help you develop a more formal policy for providing sexual health service referrals.

Take Notes

Steps to an Effective Referral

Before the referral

- Build rapport with students. This helps students view you as a trusted adult and come to you with questions and concerns.
- Promote your ability to refer students to health services. Consider displaying posters, sending school-wide emails, making announcements over the loudspeaker, and more.

During the referral

1. Whether in-person or online, actively listen to the student and the information they share to identify potential needs for services. Use open-ended questions to gather information that will help you understand the student's needs. While listening, give the student your undivided attention and be mindful of your body language and facial expressions.
 - If providing referrals remotely, be sure to use an online platform approved by your school. Consider turning on your video, which can help make the interaction between you and the student more personal. The student may or may not feel comfortable turning on their video; invite them to do what makes them feel most comfortable.
2. Discuss confidentiality, informed consent, and minors' rights to services, and take time to answer questions the student may have.
3. Inform student about the service(s) and provider(s) that can help meet their needs.
4. Provide support in scheduling the appointment:
 - Offer to call the clinic with the student to set up the appointment.
 - Share the clinic address along with bus, train, or walking directions. If possible, provide a MetroCard for the student (and a friend, if the student feels more comfortable going with someone).
5. Demystify the clinic visit:
 - Verbally walk students through what they can expect when they visit the clinic.
 - Make sure the student knows what to bring to their appointment (e.g., identification card), if anything.
 - Consider sharing any of the clinic visit resources referenced in Step 3 (page 9):
 - Watch Planned Parenthood of Greater New York's [CRIBS video \(opens in new window\)](#)
 - Watch select NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) [Teens in NYC videos \(opens in new window\)](#)
 - Review NYC DOHMH's [What to Expect at the Clinic webpage \(opens in new window\)](#)
 - Review the CDC's [A Teen-Friendly Reproductive Health Visit infographic \(opens in new window\)](#)

Tip: Review and familiarize yourself with emergency contraception, PrEP, and PEP. Keep in mind the time sensitivity when making a referral for emergency contraception and PEP.



After the referral

- Follow up with the student to ensure that they received the services they needed.
- Informally assess any barriers they came across in making or keeping their appointment.
- Find out if they had a positive experience at the clinic. This information will help you decide whether you continue to refer students there.

STEP 5

COUNT THE REFERRALS

Counting referrals is important because it shows how together we are achieving our goals in connecting students to the services they need. Please be sure to track the number of referrals made each month and how the referrals were made. Please use the count log below and **do not** document any names. The Office of School Wellness Programs will send you a quarterly online survey to collect this information.

Month	Direct referral made to CAP* (high school only)	Direct referral made to CATCH (high school only)	Direct referral made to SBHC	Direct referral made to community-based clinic	Student self-referred**
September					
October					
November					
December					
January					
February					
March					
April					
May					
June					
July					
August					

* Referral made by non-CAP staff to CAP staff

** Provided student with resources to help them identify a clinic on their own

STEP 6

REFLECT ON THE REFERRALS PROCESS

Update other referrals staff

Be sure to check in with other referrals staff to share what you learned about the school- and community-based services. Referrals staff include Condom Availability Program (CAP) staff and non-CAP staff who attended a Helping Students Access Health Services webinar. If you would like to know who is a part of your school's referrals team, email CAP2@schools.nyc.gov ([opens in email window](#)).

Share information with your School Wellness Council

A [School Wellness Council](#) ([opens in new window](#)) is an advisory group concerned with the health and well-being of students, staff, and the school community. A wellness council functions best when there is representation from across the school community, including students, parents, teachers, school nurses, administrators, school food staff, custodians, mental health providers, and community-based organizations.

If you have a School Wellness Council, bring the members together to share the information you learned when meeting with CAP, CATCH, SBHC, and clinic providers. Brainstorm with them about how to promote and increase student access to health services.

For more information about what a School Wellness Council is and how to start one, visit the [Wellness Council Manager](#) ([opens in new window](#)) page and the [Support Center](#) ([opens in new window](#)) in the Wellness Hub.



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APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL CLINIC SERVICE QUESTIONNAIRES

During the conversation: Ask and record

Date of conversation:

Name of staff person you spoke with/have a relationship with:

Role of staff person listed above:

Location and days/times staff person is available:

Languages spoken at clinic/center:

Walk-in policy:

Age range they provide services to:

What confidential services do they provide? Which of these services, if any, have age requirements?

Check all services provided:

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Pregnancy options counseling (if a person is pregnant and not sure what to do)

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Additional services

Support groups for:

Peer educators

Clinic tours

Health educators available for brief class presentations, interactive class workshops, or after-school workshops with students/parents

If yes, how do you schedule one?:

The clinic provides MetroCards to students

Take Notes

Post-conversation

- Visit the clinic, if you haven't already.
- Create and display signs promoting the clinic in your Health Resource Room. Consider working with students to create signs.
- Obtain MetroCards to provide when making referrals. This is a great opportunity to collaborate with your School Wellness Council to fund this project.
- Share what you learned with the health education teacher, School Wellness Council, and other key staff at your school. Remind staff that you are available to make student referrals to sexual health services.

