

ASPEN Response to the ISN/IPNA Consensus Statement on the Transition from Pediatric to Adult Care Services for Adolescent Patients with CKD

The American Society of Pediatric Nephrology endorses ISN/IPNA's consensus statement recognizing that transition from pediatric to adult care is an important concern for patients with chronic kidney disease. The statement provides an excellent basis upon which to approach the issues involved. Although several of the committee members involved in drafting the position statement are ASPEN and ASN members, it is important to recognize that the statement is based on general, international concerns. Because geographical differences exist in how health care is provided and resourced, solutions to the problem of transition will be determined at least in part by more local factors.

Given these caveats, we feel that this issue deserves continued discussion and study. For effective transition, it is important for pediatricians to communicate to the internal medicine nephrologists the special issues involved in the care of children who have developmental or genetic kidney diseases, regarding which the internists may not have much experience. Conversely, pediatricians need to learn more from the internists about what information and preparation are needed to support effective transition. We anticipate that nephrologists with combined Medicine-Pediatrics training could play a significant role in transition of specific patients and in developing effective transition programs.

Many of the diseases affecting pediatric patients are syndromic, and require input from multiple specialists, not just nephrologists, in providing their care. Thus, teams of physicians, nurses and others who provide care for patients with chronic or end-stage kidney disease must participate in the transition process. Because of the complexity involved, successful transition requires the investment of extensive planning and time. The preparation of the patient for transition requires attention to the unique developmental status of each patient, accompanied by a developmental perspective recognized by the family and the adult care providers, that is applied to helping the patient acquire necessary skills.

The ASPEN is concerned that the most vulnerable pediatric patients risk the loss of their health care coverage just at the time when transition is occurring. We continue to advocate for programs that protect the patient during this critical time, such as extending the duration of Medicare coverage for antirejection drugs and increasing the age at which children may be covered by their parents' health insurance, as supported by the Affordable Care Act.

Finally, we believe that medical issues are only a part of the scope of transition. Preparation through appropriate education and job training are important for assuring that the patient enters adulthood as a productive member of society who has access to optimal health care.

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