



## Office for Children with Special Health Care Needs: Health Care Transition Policy

Our office is committed to helping children and youth with special health care needs smoothly transition from pediatric to adult health care. We understand that this process requires extra planning and support, and we are here to help every step of the way.

We begin the transition process between ages 12 and 14, depending on each child's needs. During this time, we work closely with patients and their families to assess, plan, and implement the shift from a pediatric model of care—where parents or caregivers take the lead with more support from their care team—to an adult model of care, where young people and their families are supported in becoming more independent in managing their health. Some patients will have families and caregivers be more involved in their adult healthcare, and we can provide guidance for this type of transition as well.

At age 18, young people legally become adults. We respect that many young adults with special health care needs continue to involve their families in health care decisions. However, once a patient turns 18, we must have their written permission to share personal health information with parents or caregivers. If a young adult has a condition that affects their ability to make medical decisions, we encourage families to explore legal options (such as guardianship or supported decision-making) to ensure continued involvement and support in their care.

We aim to transfer care to an adult provider by the patient's 21st birthday, but we understand that timing may vary depending on the individual's needs. We will support this transition by:

- Teaching health care management skills appropriate to the individual's abilities.
- Helping to identify adult health care providers who are experienced in caring for individuals with special health care needs.
- Sending medical records and care plans to the new provider.
- Creating and reviewing a summary of the patient's medical history with the patient and family.
- Communicating with the adult provider to ensure a smooth hand-off of care.
- Helping patients and families access the financial, educational, vocational, and support resources they need to manage their health and overall well-being.

If you have any questions about this process or your child's readiness for transition, please reach out to our office. We are here to support you.

*-Your OCSHCN  
Care Team*