



Youth Transitioning Into Adulthood
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NOTES FROM “Let’s Talk Thursday” via Zoom – July 2, 2020, hosted by Brenda Lee Knowles and Mary E. Valdez, YTIA Co-Founders.

Guest Presenter: **Allison Cochran-Fennel**, LMSW, Transition Coordinator, STAR Health (Superior Health); 7990 IH 10 West, San Antonio, Texas 78230; office – (866) 912-6283 x82779 or cell – (512) 516-5666 Below are a few of the notes from Ms. Cochran-Fennel’s presentation. For more specific details, please feel free to call Ms. Cochran-Fennel directly.

Allison works with 14 to 21 year olds, but more closely with 17 to 21 year olds to attempt to ensure that their Medicaid coverage remains intact as youths leave foster care. She can provide multiple services and assistance to youths who request it (like information on how/where to obtain housing, food, clothing, etc.); she’s like PAL on the insurance side. Apart from contacting her directly, she is at the BCFS/PAL Transition Center every other Thursday (except for now, of course, since we are in the middle of the pandemic and the Center is closed, anyway). Because they have been in foster care, many youths do not realize that they have this tremendous benefit available to them after leaving care, and she can help with a better understanding of this great benefit!

TIP: Update your personal information on a regular basis, especially as you reach your 18th birthday month, by calling 2-1-1 or by visiting www.yourtexasbenefits.com. If a youth becomes homeless after leaving care, and they are registered at the BCFS/PAL Transition Center (located at 4346 NW Loop 410, San Antonio, Texas 78229) the youth may be able to use the Transition Center’s Post Office Box address to get their Medicaid card and other correspondence.

TIP: Whenever a youth moves, at any time, be sure to change the address (unless the youth has his/her own post office box or has access to the BCFS/PAL Post Office Box). Usually, any kind of government mail does not forward to a new address, even if an official change-of-address card has been submitted. Just call 2-1-1 or visit www.yourtexasbenefits.com to update the address.

Allison can attend a youth’s Circle of Support, especially the last one before the youth reaches age 18, just to make sure that the Medicaid benefit continues uninterrupted for them. (Youths, be sure to ask the Circle of Support Coordinator to include Allison Cochran-Fennel in the invitations sent out for your Circle of Support.)

STAR Health can also give youths information regarding documents like a “Supportive Decision-Making Agreement,” a “Power of Attorney,” and a “Health Care Power of Attorney,” among other things. STAR Health can show youths how to make a little money just by making and keeping health and dental appointments (some limitations apply).

If a youth will be attending college, or a junior college, and needs a meningitis shot in order to attend school, the “Foster Care Center of Excellence/UT Health/Wellness 360 Pediatrics,” may be able to help. They see youths in car up to age 21. They are located on the campus of the University of Texas Health Science Center in the Medical Center located at 7330 Floyd Curl,

San Antonio, Texas 78229; (210) 567-2788 [office hours: Mon & Thurs 8a to 8p and Tues, Wed, & Fri 8a to 5 p].

Alexa Salazar who is a Case Manager at the BCFS/PAL Transition Center (who can be reached at office - (210) 733-7932 or cell – (210) 649-6487, mentioned the reasons why a youth would want to register with the Center and be assigned a Case Manager. The Center works mainly with youths ages 18 to 21, but even after age 18 there were some benefits that can be offered in the office such as access to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) liaison (who can assist with creating a resume and applying for jobs) and the Education Specialist, Alejandra Quesada, (who can assist with applying for FAFSA and other financial aid). The Center offers fun activities throughout the year and special events during the Fall holidays.

NOTE: At this time the Transition Center employees are working from home (probably through July) but a youth can still contact the Center by calling the number shown above or by calling the phone number posted on the Center door.

Christopher Hansen who also works for BCFS, when asked whether the Center offers “personality profiles” to assist a youth in deciding where his/her strengths might lie with regard to finding a job/career, said that they do offer that sort of testing. In addition to offering the test, they also discuss the results of the test with the youth, and then direct the young person to job training or suggesting a career path.

Kaylah Topasna is the Youth Specialist who coordinates the “Youth Leadership Council/Committee” (YLC). She discussed the activities in which youth can engage through her program. She mentioned that every other year youths participate in “Youth In Action” an opportunity for youths to examine and discuss proposed legislation that affects them; they visit with legislators in Austin and discuss the proposed bills with State Senators and Representatives. In addition, YLC provides support for youths in care as well as opportunities for volunteerism. YLC and YTIA are collaborating on “Let’s Talk Thursdays”.

TIP: Kaylah mentioned (with regard to health care, our topic of the day) that when a youth gets a job they should be very careful about agreeing to health care offered by the employer because those programs are not free; the participant pays monthly premiums for the health care but they do not need it since they are already covered by Medicaid!

FRIENDLY REMINDER: Our next “Let’s Talk Thursday” via Zoom is on **Thursday, July 9, 2020 at noon.**

