

Physical Health

Young people are often considered to be in good physical health in comparison to other cohorts. However, poverty, lack of education, poor nutrition; and lack of food, accessible health care and housing are all contributing factors to the various health concerns young people face. Certain cohorts of young people are alienated from the health care system and often go without their health care needs being met, which impacts on their overall health and wellbeing. This is particularly true of Aboriginal young people, young homeless people, young people from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds and young people from rural and remote areas.

According to the Foundation of Young Australians, respiratory conditions, eye conditions and musculoskeletal problems are some of the long term health concerns young people are facing. For young women in particular, asthma is a significant concern to their physical health. The rise of obesity, paired with the declining fitness levels and participation in physical activity, is concerning as it can cause additional health concerns such as diabetes, high blood pressure, some cancers and stroke.

Access to health services for some young people is a concern with many not having access to affordable health services. Services need to be youth friendly and free. Physical activity has been shown to improve other health areas. Recent research at Menzies Research Institute found that regular physical activity is beneficial in both the prevention and treatment of clinical depression in young people. Given the multiple ways physical health is important to overall good health promoting positive physical health to young people, and ensuring they have access to the health services they need, is vital.

YNOT is committed to:

- Advocating for improved access to a range of appropriate and affordable generalist, youth specific and alternative health services for young people.
- Promoting healthy lifestyle programs for young people that advocate for balanced diets, good nutrition and healthy amounts of physical exercise.



- Advocating for appropriate and informative information about body piercing and tattooing, associated health risks and care instructions so they can make informed decisions.
- Advocating of increased participation of young people in physical education while engaged with education.
- Advocating for youth health services to be established in rural and remotes regions of the State.

Future Vision

In Tasmania, young people will have access to health care needed to maintain their physical health and support and assistance when dealing with health concerns and managing illnesses. Additional youth health services will be established to ensure young people have the access to free or affordable health care when they require it.

References

Department of Human Services (2001), *Statistical profile of children and young people*, Adelaide.

Foundation of Young Australians (2004), *Profile of young Australians: Facts, figures and issues*, Melbourne.

Menzies Research Institute (2013), *Physical activity may prevent suicidal symptoms in young adults*, retrieved from www.menzies.utas.edu.au/article.php?Doo=Redirect&id=1644