



Teen Health Week is March 19-23, 2018

#teenhealthweek

Website - <http://collegeofphysicians.org/thw>

The Global Teen Health Week is an annual week-long designation to raise the profile of adolescent health. With more than a billion adolescents worldwide, this age group comprises one of the largest segments of the world's population. The rapid physical and emotional growth of this age group differentiates it from the needs of children and adults. Health behaviors resulting in illness later in life often start in the teen years.

The idea for a Teen Health Week stems from a movement that began in 2015 in Pennsylvania developed jointly by Real Talk with Dr. Offutt, the Center for Education and Public Initiatives at the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, and the Pennsylvania Department of Health. The PA Teen Health Week went on for two consecutive years since 2016 and the state remained the only one to celebrate Teen Health Week. While there are observances for specific teen health issues (e.g. Teen Dating Violence Prevention Month, Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month, Youth Violence Prevention Week), PA Teen Health Week and now the Global Teen Health Week, are unique in that they focus on a holistic view of teen health.

The 2018 week brings also together the American Medical Association, the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine, the WHO Collaborative Centre for International Child and Adolescent Health Policy at the University of St Andrews, the Health Behavior in School-aged Children study. Teen Health Week is proudly endorsed by the Delaware County Medical Society.

During Global Teen Health Week, activities are focused around suggested overarching themes each day:

- Monday, March 19: Healthy diet and exercise
- Tuesday, March 20: Violence Prevention
- Wednesday, March 21: Mental Health
- Thursday, March 22: Sexual Development and Health
- Friday, March 23: Substance Use and Abuse

Schools and organizations working with adolescents can celebrate any aspect of teen health that is relevant to their work for instance: a short presentation on healthy relationships during the school assembly can support conversations about interpersonal violence in smaller settings throughout the week; a free teen yoga class can be held any day that week or sponsored to support mental health day; healthy snacks can be sold or offered throughout the week or given out for free to those wearing lime green to support healthy eating; or a debate around why the USA is 1 of 3 countries in the world yet to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) can help students understand how international protections like these can enhance their ability to advocate for themselves when it comes to health. Activities can be as big or small as determined by the school community, the important aspect is that they contribute towards increasing awareness and dialogue about adolescent health.

Behaviors of young people are influenced both positively and negatively by friends, family, schools, community, and society. Teen Health Week provides an opportunity across our global communities to emphasize health education and engagement in a positive way. Teens are agents of change and Teen Health Week specifically includes health discussions. In addition to learning the very important skills of health self-advocacy, which they will need as they embark onto adulthood, teens too can positively influence health behaviors in other teens, their own families, and communities.

In Chester or Delaware County: If your school, medical practice or community group would like to participate in the 2018 Teen Health Week – please contact the Chester & Delaware County Medical Society staff at (610) 892-7750 or write to chescomesoc@comcast.net or delcomesoc@comcast.net