

RAAPS Gives School-Based Health Center a More Effective Way to Assess Teen Risk

Founded in 1915 by auto pioneer Henry Ford, the Henry Ford Health System (HFHS) is one of the nation's leading health care providers. It includes six hospitals, 32 medical centers and one of the nation's largest group practices, the Henry Ford Medical Group, with more than 1,200 physicians in 40+ specialties. The system's flagship, Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, is a Level 1 Trauma Center recognized for clinical excellence.

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Mary Serowoky, a nurse practitioner, is clinic coordinator for the state-funded school based health center at Southwestern High School in Detroit. This center serves adolescents between the ages of 10 and 21.

Short, Electronic Assessment Better for Identifying, Tracking Risk Behaviors than Traditional, Lengthy, Paper Surveys

All adolescents seen in Southwestern's center complete a risk assessment annually. Serowoky, who's worked in school-based health for a decade, has used risk assessment tools her entire career. She knew the paper-based, lengthy forms were tedious and difficult for teens to complete — and for medical providers to review.

Center leaders eagerly joined a state-funded pilot project to use the Rapid Assessment for Adolescent Preventive Services (RAAPS) web application. Electronic and concise in format, the RAAPS is easy to take and review. Serowoky says RAAPS is a proven and validated tool that quickly identifies the most important risk behaviors.

Implementation Easy – Teens Receptive

Implementation "was super-easy," Serowoky said. Training took 10 minutes. Then, it was a matter of determining where youth would complete the assessment and how providers would access and use it. A medical assistant, care manager, and clinical therapist all use RAAPS data to support the teen patients.

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Serowoky says teens respond well to RAAPS. They understand technology and are computer savvy. Thus, they accept the assessment. They are relatively honest online, which builds on the trust staff work to establish with the teens. When the clinic moves to an electronic health record, Serowoky plans to integrate the RAAPS into it.

Electronic Features — Including Comprehensive Reports — Are ‘Invaluable’

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Serowoky says RAAPS’ electronic features make it a “must have.” Teens complete RAAPS faster, more thoroughly and more honestly than they did the former, longer, paper assessment. Health providers supporting a given teen can access that teen’s results, review results more efficiently, and there’s consistent information across the entire patient population. What’s more, RAAPS’ multilingual capabilities are invaluable to students who, in Southwestern’s case, need Spanish or French versions.

RAAPS produces comprehensive reports that Serowoky uses to evaluate top risk areas. She catalogs behaviors by race and gender to advance the team’s understanding of patients, and she will compare the population to a national peer group using RAAPS data. “We love that this is electronic since we can pull all the reports and we have a database of all the kids. This is really good for us,” Serowoky said.

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