

Turning 18 isn't so sweet: The critical gaps in health care for young adults with disabilities

Turning 18 should be a celebration, but for youth with disabilities, it signals "aging out" of the pediatric health-care system and it's no piece of cake. Holland Bloorview's [Turning 18 isn't so sweet](#) report provides an analysis of survey results highlighting the experience of youth with disabilities as they transition to the adult health-care system in Ontario.

The survey, conducted by Leger and commissioned by Holland Bloorview, was completed by 802 young adults with disabilities and caregivers from across Ontario. Questions and analysis were developed in partnership with clients and families and Holland Bloorview's transitions teams.

Results from the survey reveal critical gaps in the adult health-care system, with a staggering majority of respondents reporting unmet medical needs. The most alarming finding: young adults with disabilities are being left behind. Below is a summary of the findings.

Challenges in the adult health-care system

2/3 of young adults
with disabilities

report their health-care
needs are not being met



50% of caregivers
continue to rely on pediatric
health-care providers due
to the lack of health-care
providers in the adult system



1/3 of young adults
with disabilities
wait over 3 years to get
a family doctor



Over 1/4 of young adults
with disabilities
aren't confident their health care
providers understand their disability



41% of caregivers
aren't confident our health system
will support their adult child
should they not be able to one day

Barriers to access

77% of young adults with disabilities

face one or more barriers when accessing medical care



49% experience attitudinal barriers when accessing health care



32% experience informational barriers when accessing health care



23% experience physical barriers when accessing health care



14% experience transportation barriers when accessing health care



11% experience technological barriers when accessing health care

Participation and quality of life implications



64%

of young adults' participation in life is limited by their health-care needs

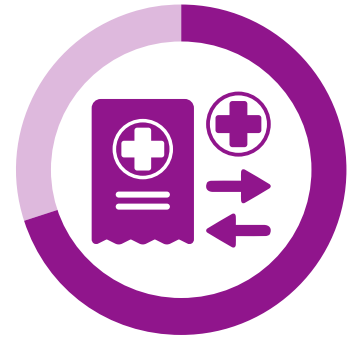
38% of young adults report they can rarely or never access care services such as life skills development or day programs



87% of young adults with disabilities don't always have the supports they need to safely go out and socialize with friends/peers



Financial implications

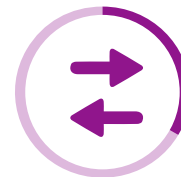


70%

of young adults with disabilities face increased medical costs after transitioning to adult care



Over 1/3 say that costs have increased by over \$6,000 each year



1/3 of young adults with disabilities have had to change their education or employment status



1/2 go outside of the public health care system to access the care they need