



Vermont Child Health Improvement Program



Improving Pediatric to Adult Care Transitions: The Patient and Family Perspective

Danielle Bevins

Keelen Boisvert

Erica Frost

My Healthcare Transition Journey

Presentation By: Keelan Boisvert, NBC-HWC, CHW

My Journey From Pediatric to Adult Care

- Originally from Melrose, MA
- Went to UVM for my undergraduate experience
- Started living in VT full time my junior year of college, but not yet 21 so required to stay with PCP in Woburn, MA
- Difficulty with mental health medications across state lines (controlled substances)
- After my 21st birthday, I was “let go” by my pediatrician and not given materials for navigating Vermont Primary Care

My Journey From Pediatric to Adult Care

- My determination and “parental pushing” led me to do some online searching
- Main motivator: my mental health medication
- I sent an email to a PCP office asking if they had availability
- I knew to ask about insurance because of my parents working in healthcare
- Transition to specialty care: Cold Calling Clinics advocating for myself

What I Do Now As A Healthcare Worker

- Currently working as a Community Health Worker at Richmond Family Medicine
- Connecting patients to community resources, coordinating care in intensive cases, advocating for patient needs within and outside of the clinic setting
- Volunteer Patient and Family Advisor through UVMMC
- Vermont Rays Member
- Soon to be MPH graduate from UVM Larner College of Medicine



Parent Perspective of the Healthcare Transition Journey

Presentation By: Danielle Bevins, Mom ❤️

Parent partner on the UVM Children's Hospital Pediatric IBD Quality Improvement Council

Co-leader of the UVM Children's Hospital Pediatric IBD Advisory Council

Member of the UVM Children's Hospital Patient/Family Advisory Council

A little background

	Daughter	Son
Current Age:	22 years old	20 years old
College:	University of Rhode Island	Rochester Institute of Technology
Major:	PharmD	3D Computer Animation
Health:	Healthy - no chronic problems	Diagnosed with Crohn's Disease at age 9
Health Experience	Primary Care: yearly physicals, sick appointments, vaccinations, and recently had blood drawn	Primary Care: yearly physicals, sick appointments, and vaccinations. GI Care: appointments and blood work every 6 months. Experience with infusions and scopes. Weekly, injections.

Pediatric Primary Care

- Both started with the same pediatrician at birth.
- Both transitioned within the practice to different providers based on preference and comfort (Daughter: Female Nurse Practitioner, Son: Male Doctor).
- As they aged, both their providers would have me step out of the appointment towards the end to wait for them in the lobby.
- Both had the option of going to their appointments without me once they had their driver's license. My daughter eventually did go without me. My son still wants me at all his appointments.

Turning 18

- Daughter: turned 18 in 2020 (COVID). Her pediatrician assured her she could still stay on through college but started to discuss looking towards adult primary care.
- Son: turned 18 in 2023. His pediatrician never mentioned transitioning to adult care. However, the receptionist at the pediatrician's office encouraged transitioning to adult primary care and suggested a possible place accepting new patients. (*encourage = felt pushed*)
- Son: Pediatric GI discussed college plans and offered to continue keeping him as a patient during college. (*huge relief*)
- Me: In 2020, I knew my family health office was short staffed and not taking new patients. In 2021, thinking of my daughter, I called my health office to see if anyone was taking new patients. They weren't she stayed with pediatrician. In the beginning of 2023, I looked into the office the receptionist suggested but I didn't feel like it was a good fit. I checked my doctor's office again, still nobody accepting new patients. Started seriously discussing changing doctors more with my daughter and asked her what she was looking for in a new doctor (female, young, etc). In 2024, I called my office again and finally we had practitioners accepting new patients!!! I was able to set both kids up with appointments to meet their new providers.
- 2024 both my children met their new providers. My daughter was happy having a "younger than her mother" female NP. My son liked his new male PA who seemed to share his humor.
- 2025 my daughter's NP has left and she has been assigned a new NP. Thankfully still a female but "older than her mother" so she is already wondering how much she can relate to her and feel comfortable talking openly.

Adulthood



please wait...

College and Health

When helping our children search for a college there were several things I was trying to keep in mind that nobody mentioned to me but have turned out important.

- Is there a campus health center?
- Does the health center have the ability to get blood work done?
- Does the health center have providers who can write prescriptions?
- Where and how will my child get prescription medications?
- If accommodations are needed, what paperwork or support does the college need from our doctors? (Letter from doctor, 504 from high school etc.)
- Do you have an updated list of vaccinations to provide the college.
- Insurance - most colleges have an option to buy insurance through them. Need to consider cost and coverage. If not purchasing, complete waiver.



Parent Perspective as we **begin** our Healthcare Transition Journey

Erica Frost, Mom, Project Manger 

Member of the UVM Patient/Family Advisory Council
IT Manager, UVM Health Network

A little background

	Assigned female at birth, identifies as masculine	Daughter
Current Age:	18 years old	15 years old
School:	Essex Tech, headed to college next year in Boston Receives accommodations in school to access learning	SB High School No accommodations needed to access learning
Health:	Autistic, anxiety, depression, obesity, extreme needle phobia, no chronic problems	Possible long COVID, history with iron deficient anemia resulting in hospitalization, chronic migraine
Health Experience	• Primary care yearly physicals, sick appointments • Child Psych for autism diagnose and med management • IUD and vaccines done with as surgical outpatient. • No tight allegiance to providers • High amount of parent intervention to manage healthcare to date	• Primary care yearly physicals, sick appointments • Childrens Specialty patient for periodic blood check and migraine management • Tight relationship with PCP NP • Low amount of parent intervention needed to manage healthcare to date

Erica's Story

- Professional working full time, Mom, parent caregiver, frequent host of teenagers
- Working with same pediatric group for the duration of both kids lives
- MyChart user for management of all family members health (MyChart DID send a heads up that the 18 year old milestone was coming)
- I've worked hard to teach and encourage independence as much as possible from my children and parents because I don't have bandwidth to manage all of this for them and because both my children want/deserve to be independent
- I own my privilege of access and confidence to advocate for my needs from the healthcare system when I know there are services I am eligible for

Erica's story - Current challenges

- The little transition planning I have done has been self initiated and driven by anxiety (reaction) to conversations. No mention from PCP has occurred.
- Call to Child Psych resulted in “sorry, we can’t see you to talk about a med change due to child's age. Here are some providers who are taking new patients” New psych provider warns he would not be able to treat if college is outside of VT when we called
- 18 year old is excited to be more independent and would like to seek an adult PCP. I worry about finding the right adult provider who has services who can replace my role as a healthcare navigator
- I feel behind and a bit ashamed I’m so ill prepared

What are the most critical challenges
that impact the transition journey?
What are your solutions?

Erica

- I am leading this transition and not super confident/qualified
- Insurance constraints
- Lack of information from college health clinic on how to ensure continuity of care
- The timing of this work comes at an already very busy time for kids and parents

Danielle: Barriers

Life: Juggling many big changes all at once

- Graduating high school
- Deciding future: college/work/military
- Sometimes leaving family/friends
- Adulting



How do you find a new provider that will be a good fit? Do we really just suggest they use Google to find one?

Communication: To make an appointment with a new provider you must call them on the phone. Young adults dread making calls and won't answer calls from unknown numbers. Some providers won't even let parent's make the appointment for them.

Medical Insurance: We all need a college course in understanding insurance!

Self-advocating: Many young adults have a hard time self advocating. How can we help them build confidence in standing up for themselves?

Lack of available support: We can't assume parents or caregivers are able to help young adults through the process



Keelan: Potential Solutions

- Pediatric providers can take on more of a Brazelton Touchpoints role and provide insurance resources as well as materials of a “what to look for in a PCP office” or “important questions to ask”
- Make sure that families with fewer resources and/or less knowledge of the healthcare system are equipped with at least starter materials for transition
- Employ community health workers to assist in transition education (including documents that need to be filled out, scheduling, specialty appointments/offices)
- Community Health Workers on college campuses for health education/transition support

What education or resources have been helpful? What's missing?

Erica

- MyChart message when child turned 18
- The internet
- Front desk staff member who gave me a hint of who was accepting patients
- [Got Transition®](#) website

Danielle: Resources I have found helpful

- As a volunteer advisor with the UVM Children's Hospital I have learned of many resources I never knew existed including VCHIP and VT Family Network.
- A resource which has helped with the process of transitioning to adult care is the Got Transitions website. I found this late in the process and wish I had known about it at the beginning of my kids teen years.
- IBD specific websites that have been endless resources for me are the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation website and the ImproveCareNow website. These sites have been my guide since his diagnosis with IBD. They have provided guidance so I know how to help my son get the accommodations he needs in elementary school as well as in college. I would be lost without them.
- Talking with other young adults and parents who have gone through transferring to adult care.



Danielle: Missing Education and Resources

- Parent healthcare involvement in later years: It makes complete sense that pediatricians have parents step out of appointments as kids get older and eventually parents may not attend appointments once kids can drive. Yet these are the same years which we need to help educate parents about the process and support they can provide to help transition their children to adult care.
- Got Transition website: Lets incorporate this into our pediatric primary care experience or even into health classes in school.
- Tutorials: Are there any video tutorials to help youth through the transition process? Specifically on calling to make an appointment (script included). Tips on understanding insurance. Prescription medications and prior authorizations.

I recognize that there is no one size fits all approach. Both of my kids have had the same upbringing, parents, home, guidance etc but handle life differently. When it comes to doctor's appointments my daughter who is science minded and loves medical things has become more independent in her medical care. My son who has way more experience with doctors offices, procedures, and various forms of medication still prefers to have me with him at all his appointments. He finds comfort in having someone else there to listen and take notes.

How can pediatric providers support this
journey?

How can adult providers support this
journey?

Danielle



Pediatric Providers:

- Help provide a guideline with stages in the process of transferring to adult care
- As patients reach their junior and senior years of high school have conversations about where they expect to be after they graduate and thinking about adult care.
- If patients are staying local, is there something you can provide to help them find a new provider in their area. Talk to them about what they are looking for in a provider (location, gender, age, specialty). I think we forget it is okay to change providers if you are not feeling like you are a good fit but thinking about it in advance could help find a provider who is a good fit.
- Help with insurance and making sure new provider is covered by insurance.
- When the time to transition arises, maybe have someone help walk them through making the first call and appointment.
- Help them fill out forms to have medical records transferred.
- Before they transfer, is there anything they will need for records before they meet their new provider? Vaccination list? Medication list? Perhaps print these for them.
- Give them the tools they need to build confidence to succeed making the change.

Danielle

Adult Providers:

- When a new patient makes an appointment provide them information needed to get medical records transferred.
- Provide directions to the new location.
- Remind them to bring insurance card to appointment.
- When they check in, perhaps an explanation of the office area (waiting area, point out bathrooms, where to go when they check out etc). Better yet, if there is a short video they can watch in advance to their appointment.
- Remember they are coming from a caring pediatric setting they have grown up in, take time to talk and build a relationship with them.
- Welcome parents and caregivers who go to appointments as support.
- Have someone walk through how to use the portal/mychart if they haven't used it before. Show them how to message provider, where to find medication list, how to request a refill, and how to pay bills.

From your perspective, what would
an ideal transition and transfer look
like?

Erica

- Someone at my PCP would initiate a conversation and offer guidance to my 18-year-old to introduce the change and talk about how to prepare
- Assign a healthcare navigator in year 17 to help kids practice independence navigating healthcare, allow for extension past 18 if support is needed
- Onboarding checklist/worksheet for adolescents assigned as part of PCP visit or school health curriculum
- High schools could include some education in Health class on “impact of 18 to healthcare” so its not just the parent voice/nagging that engages them
- Providers / insurance companies could allow tele-video to support continuity of care for kids going to college out of state

Danielle

- Everything Erica said!
- Staggered transfers: One thing that has worked well for us is not being pushed to change all providers at once. We are able to stagger my son's transfers by starting with his primary care pediatrician and later on his pediatric GI.
- My ideal transition for GI would be to have a soft transfer. For my son, I am envisioning having an in person or telemedicine appointment with his pediatric GI and his new adult GI. This would be a time to go over his medical history, current health, medications, and concerns.

Key Takeaways

- Outreach to help prepare and navigate the transition from pediatric to adult healthcare could be improved
- A support resource who could assist 17 – 20's students would be a real asset. The availability of this service would direct our decision when selecting the adult PCP
- Insurance and legal constraints make a lot of work for youth who will temporarily move away at an already very busy time

Presenter's Contact Information

Keelan Boisvert: keelaneboisvert@gmail.com

Erica Frost: Erica.frost@gmail.com

Danielle Bevins: daniellemarinello@yahoo.com

UVMHC Patient and Family Advisory Councils

Vicki Mascareño Nelson (she/her)

University of Vermont Children's Hospital/University of Vermont Medical Center

Patient Experience Partner: Patient Family Advisor Program

Vicki.MascarenoNelson@uvmhealth.org

