



October 31, 2023

Dear colleagues, allies, and partners,

It is with great excitement that I write to share the release of a new Call to Action that will guide our efforts to support the health and well-being of the more than 64 million adolescents in this country.

Young people in the U.S. are diverse, dynamic, and full of skills, strengths, and potential. They also face well-documented health and well-being challenges—including those related to mental and behavioral health. As a physician and adolescent medicine specialist, I care deeply about working to improve and sustain adolescent health and I want to work together with you in this effort .

Take Action for Adolescents—A Call to Action for Adolescent Health and Well-Being shares the vision that all adolescents in the U.S. should have the safety, support, and resources to thrive, be healthy, realize their full potential. It outlines eight goals that together can help create coordinated systems that empower young people. These goals are:

- 1) Eliminate disparities to advance health equity.
- 2) Increase youth agency and youth engagement.
- 3) Ensure access to safe and supportive environments.
- 4) Increase coordination and collaboration within and across systems.
- 5) Expand access to health care and social services.
- 6) Strengthen training and support for caring adults.
- 7) Improve health information and health literacy.
- 8) Support, translate, and disseminate research.

Take Action for Adolescents is intended for use by people and organizations in positions to drive positive change for youth, including policy makers; health care and human service providers and organizations; youth-serving professionals and organizations; parents, legal representatives, and caregivers; and researchers. It contains a set of initial action steps that communities can tailor to meet the needs of the young people in their communities. These action steps also provide an opportunity for all of us to focus on how we can improve coordination across youth-serving sectors to reduce the barriers young people face when accessing services.

This Call to Action is the result of extensive collaboration and input from a wide range of allies and partners within and outside of government and from across the U.S. It was developed in partnership with a diverse group of young people who generously shared their knowledge and expertise about their own experiences and needs.

We look forward to assisting our allies and partners in adapting and implementing the Call to Action and starting work on developing a new adolescent health and well-being research agenda that will support innovation in service delivery and supports for young people into the future.

Thank you for your continued partnership in this important work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rachel L. Levine, M.D." with a stylized "MP" at the end.

Rachel L. Levine, M.D.
ADM, USPHS