

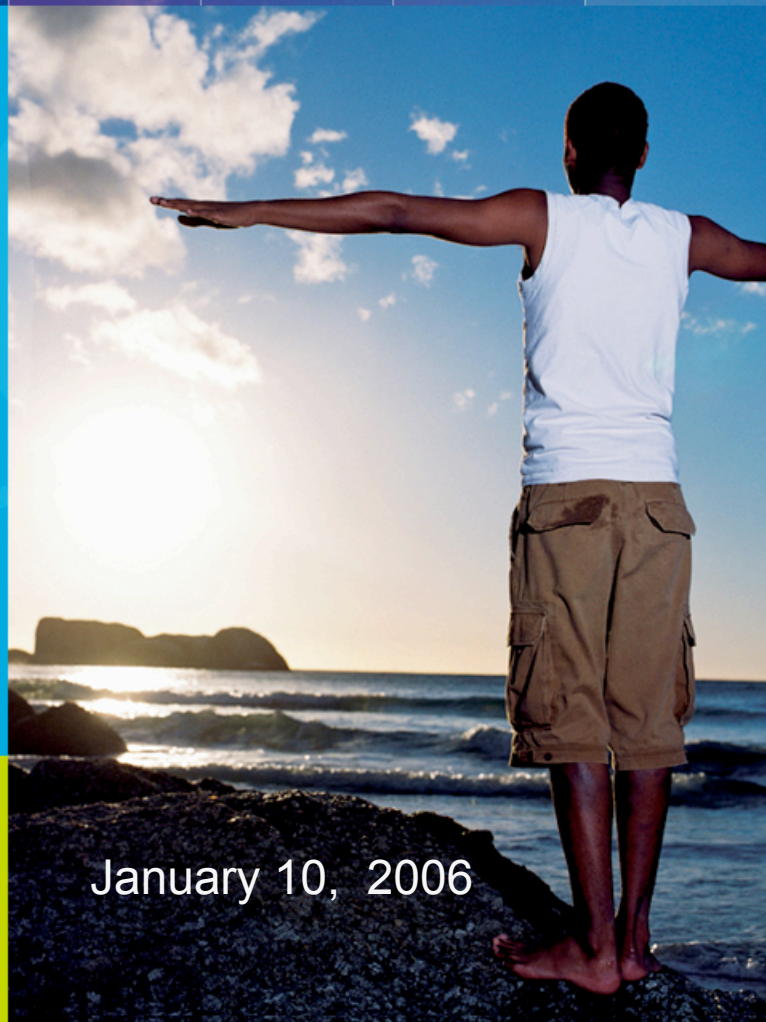
Closing the Gaps in Health Care for Adolescents: Preventive Care

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**BlueCross BlueShield
of North Carolina**

Preventive Care Among Adolescents and Young Adults

Key issues:

- Access to care → Addressing the barriers
- Tobacco Use → Prevention/cessation
- Overweight → Prevention/treatment



Access to Care – 18 to 29 Year Olds

- Who is this group:
 - Majority are single with no children
 - Wide range of incomes – of those insured, a slightly higher percent make <\$30K annually than other age segments
 - Internet users
 - At physical peak, street-smart, hopeful about future, live in a world of heightened fears, believe that change is good
 - Part of the first generation to cite “medical insurance” as a primary employment goal
- BCBSNC coverage behavior:
 - May become a subscriber, but less likely to renew coverage and more likely to terminate coverage



Routine Care – Young Men's Health

- Men between the ages of 18 – 29 were more likely than any other age group to report not having a usual source of care
- Younger men were the least likely to view regular check-ups and screenings as important for preventing illness
- Younger men were significantly more likely to seek preventive care screenings if they knew what screenings were needed for their age and if visits required less wait time

Source: BCBSNC 2004 Men's Health Survey, based on 2,022 respondents



Approaches to Overcoming Barriers

- Extend dependent coverage to age 25 (regardless of whether a full-time student or not)
- Expansion of HSA products to both groups and individuals:
 - More affordable
 - Offers a health savings account
 - Individual consumer has opportunity to make health care decisions based on what they need versus what they can afford
- Appeal to the needs and wants of this age group:
 - Online decision-support tools and information
 - Discounts, incentive programs, value-added services



Online Information for Members

www.bcbsnc.com



- PharmaAdvisor™
- Health Care Cost Estimator™
- Hospital Comparison Tool
- Online Healthy Living Programs



Tobacco Use

- Smoking rates among ages 18 – 24 have increased in recent years
- Physicians are missing opportunities to support tobacco users in quitting. In 2004:
 - 70% of BCBSNC smokers were advised to quit by their physician
 - 24% received medical information about strategies for quitting from their physician
 - 27% discussed medications for quitting with their physician



Approaches to Prevention and Cessation

- Provider Cessation Toolkits for Adult Patients:
 - Clinical practice guidelines
 - Laminated 3 “A’s” pocket counseling card
 - *Starting the Conversation* brochures for waiting and exam rooms
 - Patient “Quit Kits” with educational materials, Rx for quitting and referral to NC statewide telephone quit line
- Pediatric/Family Practice Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Toolkit:
 - Teen “Quit Kits”
 - Parent “Quit Kits” and “Teen Support Kits”
 - Tobacco-use prevention materials



Collaborations

- NC statewide quit line targeting both youth and adults launched 11/9/05:
 - The quit line is funded by the NCDHHS and the NC Health and Wellness Trust (settlement monies)
 - The quit line has a major focus on youth cessation and prevention with dollars specifically set aside for targeted youth marketing, youth counseling and materials for youth
 - Local health plans and others in the private sector have the opportunity to partner with and support the quit line, as has occurred in other states



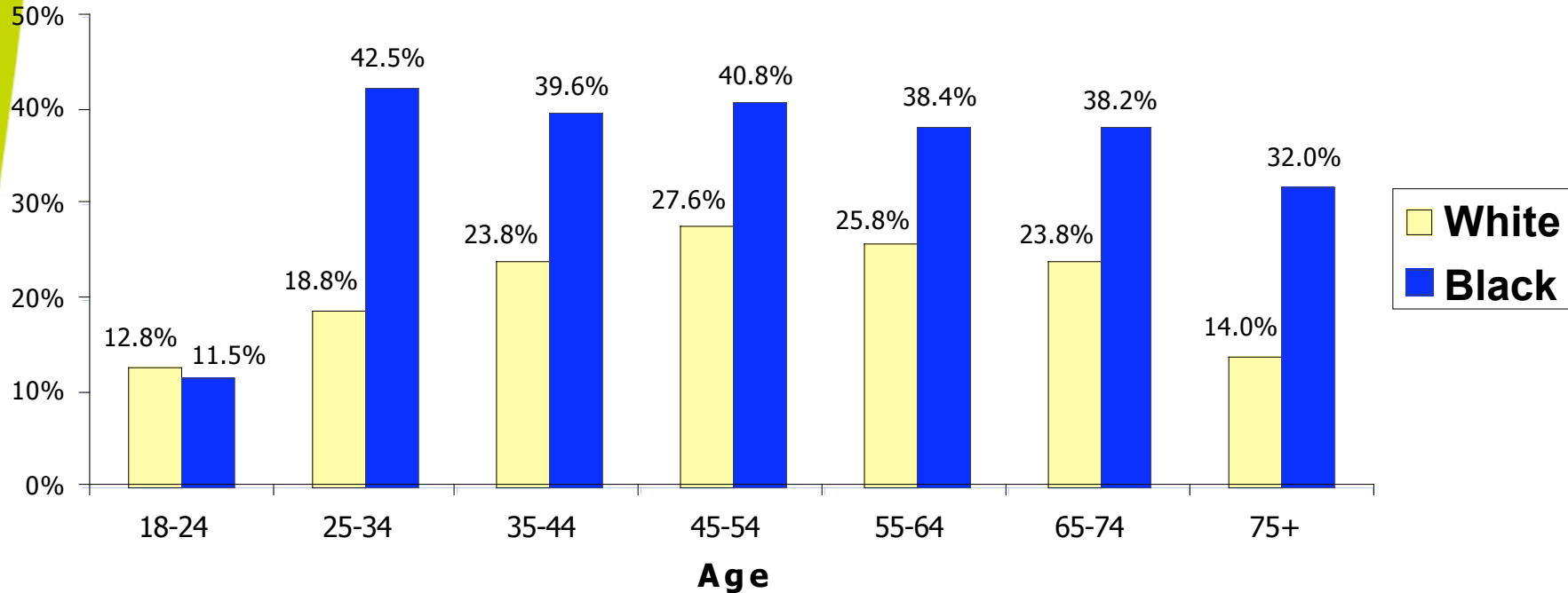
Overweight and Obesity

- A growing concern and a primary underlying cause of morbidity and mortality
- Identifying overweight/obese members is difficult
- Prevention is key and must start early
- Collaborations and partnerships more effective than health plans “going it alone”



Obesity Rates Jump in Early Adulthood

2004 Obesity Rates by Race and Age



Source: BRFSS 2004 (NC)



Approaches

Healthy Lifestyle ChoicesSM Program Weight Control, Nutrition, Physical Activity, Stress Management

Enhanced Benefits

- Physician visits for assessment & treatment of overweight & obesity
- Nutrition counseling – 6 visits
- FDA-approved medications

Adult, Child & Family Programs

Customized program includes:

- Mail-based materials
- Interactive online program
- Health coaching

Provider Toolkits – Adult and Child



Collaborations – Sponsorships & Grants

- **Be Active KidsSM**

- Teaches preschool children about the importance of nutrition and physical activity. Day care providers are given hands-on training, along with a free kit containing teaching materials and curriculum guides. The program is available in all 100 counties in North Carolina.

- **Fit Together Grants**

- Provides funding and technical assistance to rural North Carolina communities that seek to improve community health by implementing innovative and integrated strategies to increase physical activity.



What Can/Are We Doing?

- Extend dependent care coverage beyond age 18
- Continue to develop HSA products and aggressively market to dependents in their 20's
- Offer programs and services that address both tobacco cessation and prevention
- Continue to evolve Healthy Lifestyle Choices and make it a program that is attractive to youth and families
- Seek opportunities to collaborate and partner with other agencies

