Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
PolicyLab

Research Roundup: Evidence for Better Eating Disorder Care for Teens

Date:

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

Eating disorders are among the most deadly and prevalent psychiatric diagnoses, with anorexia nervosa carrying the second highest mortality rate of all mental health diagnoses, second only to opioid use disorder.

Eating disorders emerge at the intersection of mental and physical health—often beginning in adolescence during a critical window of physical, emotional and social development.

At PolicyLab, our experts have been caring for youth with eating disorders in clinical settings, investigating trends in diagnosis and pursuing opportunities for improved screening and treatment. Our work in this area is increasingly important as we have seen a rise in the rates of youth diagnosed with eating disorders.

Inspired by National Eating Disorder Association's "Every Body Belongs" theme to their Eating Disorder Awareness Week recognition, we're uplifting our extensive body of research that aims to better understand who is affected by eating disorders and their unique needs.

- One Size Doesn't Fit All: The Need to Improve Eating Disorder Assessment Tools
- LGBTQ+ Youth Need Tailored Eating Disorder Treatments
- Eating Disorders Affect Boys and Men Too—Research and Policy Need to Catch Up

Access to treatment is critical. As conversations swirl around upcoming changes to health policy, we know the importance of Medicaid coverage for teens in need of eating disorder treatment.

- The Vital Role of Medicaid in Adolescent Eating Disorder Care

And as we consider ways to prevent eating disorders from developing in youth, we've explored leveraging primary care settings and health education in schools—places youth are already engaged—as potential solutions.

- EvolvED: A New Way to Bring Eating Disorder Treatment to Primary Care

- Addressing Eating Disorders Early is Crucial. Primary Care is a Missing Link.
- Making Nutrition Education for Teens Accurate, Comprehensive and Inclusive
- Closing the Treatment Gap for Teens with Eating Disorders

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