August 2021

To Interested New Members of the Youth Health Advisor Team,

Our advisory council, the NC Division of Public Health Youth Health Advisor (YHA) Team is currently accepting applications for new members for our 2021-2022 year. Our team is a group of young people ages 14 to 18 who partner with the Division of Public Health’s Children and Youth Branch. We meet virtually twice a month to discuss adolescent health issues and promote health education to youth in our state. Our goal is to help to make communities and the state a healthier place for adolescents.

During our meetings, we have productive discussions, create group projects, and help other health programs in their work to keep our state’s young people healthy. Team members live all over NC which is great because we are exposed many differing experiences and opinions on youth health.

There is a lot you can get out of this experience of becoming a YHA member. For example, you can participate in leadership opportunities, provide feedback and guidance for youth health programs, create social media posts and videos, and more. There is also a lot of collaboration with other youth on the YHA team, public speaking opportunities, guest speakers, and the opportunity to discuss and problem solve important health issues. This is a safe place where your voice is heard and your ideas matter.

During our 2020-2021 year, our team decided on our top five most pressing teen health issues. Our team worked in small groups to address the areas of physical health, impact of social media/technology, mental health and wellbeing, healthy relationships, and substance use and other addictions. Each small group provided leadership in a discussion related to these health areas. Additionally, our team created a COVID-19 Survey completed by middle and high school youth on health and lifestyle changes that occurred because of the pandemic. This survey helped us and other health programs to see how NC youth are struggling and how we can help them through this difficult time. During our upcoming year, we plan to continue peer-led health discussions as well as use our COVID-19 survey findings to create team and individual community service projects to support youth health.

YHA members are expected to commit one year to the team. We meet the first and third Tuesdays of each month from 4-5 PM. Our attendance policy allows for two missed meetings.

Our team meets virtually which means a reliable internet connection and web camera are helpful, but we always try to work with those who do not have dependable access to internet and technology. Group projects may require time out of our meetings to get together with your group members (virtually). Remember, anyone ages 14-18 living in NC can join!

Applications will be accepted until 08/27/21 and our first meeting will be 09/07/21. You can apply online using this link. All additional questions can be directed to Rachel Zarcone at Rachel.Zarcone@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,
The 2020-2021 YHA Team