



Follow-Up Care Tip Sheet

Supporting Follow-up Care

Potential Strategies to Ensure Athletes Receive Care

- Providing a day of care (example: A Day for Special Smiles SOAZ, Mission of Mercy SOWI)
- Bringing organizations/providers on-site at Healthy Athletes screening to provide care
- Working with a provider to attend a Healthy Athletes event and setting up follow up care appointments at the screening
- Working with Clinical Directors to provide follow-up care for the athletes they screened
- Using calls or SMS as a means to remind athletes and caregivers about the need for follow up (this won't ensure they actually get the follow up care)
- Working with a provider to bring community/home-based care to the athlete
- Escorting/transporting athletes to receive care or providing bus passes or vouchers to help cover the cost of public transportation
- Utilizing and training community-based health volunteers by creating a network of community-based volunteers at a local level to track and support athletes in receiving follow-up care who then report back to Programs.

Tracking Follow-up Care

What are we tracking

- **Follow-up care from referrals.** It is possible that an athlete can have multiple referrals in multiple disciplines. We are tracking the follow-up for each referral, not each athlete.
- **If possible, you could also track access to a doctor.** If the athlete has a doctor that they can see if any health issues arise in the future. Did they have one before the screening? Do they have one now, after going through the screening and follow-up process?

Keeping records

- Call, email, SMS to track athletes at each stage of the care process:
 1. Did they schedule an appointment?
 2. Did they attend the appointment?
 3. If possible, find out if they received the required treatment.
- To help with tracking, using a spreadsheet in Excel will be useful. Attached is an example of a spreadsheet that can be used to keep track of who is receiving follow-up care, who has been contacted, and who still needs to be contacted.
- Use a sample of athletes. (i.e. You do not need to track every athlete that is screened if you think the sample you track represents all athletes.)

Additional Tips for Tracking Follow-up Care

- If you are going to make follow-up phone calls, be sure to inform caregivers and athletes that you will be conducting these phone calls. Giving them warning will prepare them for the calls, and, in some cases, knowing you are going to call will make them more proactive in seeking care.
 - Give a follow-up card to the athlete telling them the date they (or their parent/guardian) will be contacted by Special Olympics.
- If the athlete does not know their contact information, get the name of their coach and reach out to that coach to obtain this information.
- Use volunteers/interns from Universities or other partner organizations to make follow-up phone calls.
 - These volunteers also can be used to help create a list of doctors and other care providers that treat people with intellectual disabilities and those who take government health plans/provide affordable treatment.
- Contact athlete/caregiver one or two weeks after making the screening to see if they have made an appointment. If you do not receive a response, attempt to contact up to three times before removing them from the sample.
- When making phone calls, it is useful to have the following information on hand to be able to answer questions:
 - Name of the doctor who screened the athlete
 - A list of doctors who treat people with intellectual disabilities and doctors who take Medicaid/provide affordable treatment
- If an athlete misses an appointment, have a protocol in place to assist in getting the appointment rescheduled.
- If SMS is unavailable, automated email can reduce the amount of volunteers needed to track care. Particularly during the “appointment reminder” stage, setting up a system that automatically sends an email can be very helpful to remind athletes of their appointments while reducing staff time.
 - Use MailChimp, Survey Monkey, and/or Google Forms to create a free survey. Ask if athlete/parent has set up an appointment, needs help finding a doctor, made it to the appointment, etc.
 - Similar to SMS, automated email can be challenging to implement due to varying levels of literacy and Internet access. This method will not get 100% response rate but may reduce the number of calls that need to be made
 - If no response, begin telephone protocol.
- Think about if other people or organizations can provide this information to you. For example, the staff at a special school that an athlete attends, your Clinical Directors, or a partner organization may already have the answers.