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POSTER PRESENTATION

CONSENSUS ON BEST PRACTICES FOR TRANSITION TO ADULT SERVICES FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

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PURPOSE: An international consensus workshop took place on May 11, 2006 to address the issue of preparing youth with disabilities and/or special health care needs for adult life and for transfer to adult services. The challenge of transition to adult health/rehabilitation services is gaining recognition around the world and there is minimal published literature to guide practice and policy. The objectives of the meeting were 1) to share expert practice, research and policy, 2) to generate recommendations for best practices, and 3) to generate strategies for international collaborative research and capacity building. **RELEVANCE:** The workshop results will provide guidelines to service providers in pediatric and adult health/rehabilitation, administrators, researchers and policy makers about preparing youth with disabilities and their families for adult life, as well as recommendations for the actual transfer process to adult health/rehabilitation services. **DESCRIPTION:** Thirty-two international experts were invited to attend the workshop. Principles of transition were grouped into four main themes, which were: 1) the process of transferring youth and families to adult health/rehabilitation services, 2) 'growing up ready', 3) shared management, and 4) professional education. Participants worked in a series of small group sessions to discuss best practices for each theme and ideas for collaborative research and capacity building. **OBSERVATION/DISCUSSION:** The outcome was a series of recommendations for best practices based on the four general themes of transition principles. Participants responded that there is a need to continue to share information and to work collectively on international research and capacity building. **CONCLUSIONS:** The significance of the consensus meeting is that it provides a baseline of information about transition that can be used to plan service delivery, to educate clients, clinicians and organizations, to conduct research and to develop policy. A final report will be submitted to an international journal.