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Recommendations and Implementation Roadmap for  
Minimum Standards of Specialist Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Cancer Care Units

## DEVELOPING COMPREHENSIVE AYA SERVICES IN CLINICAL SETTINGS

### Part A | A Checklist for Minimum Standards of Care

Developing comprehensive Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) services in clinical settings is essential to meet the unique needs of young cancer patients. This checklist provides a beginner's guide to establishing minimum standards of care, ensuring a supportive and inclusive environment for Adolescents and Young Adults (AYAs).

#### Age-Appropriate Built Environment

- ☐ **Environment:** Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) patients should be treated in departments with other patients of similar age.
- ☐ **Social Spaces:** Provide dedicated social spaces for Adolescents and Young Adults (AYAs) to spend time with peers and friends.
- ☐ **Connectivity:** Ensure access to computers and Wi-Fi.

#### Clinical Care Organization and Patient Pathways

- ☐ **Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Multidisciplinary Team:** Establish a team comprising medical, radiation and surgical oncologists, haematologists, nurses, social workers, psychologists, and other specialists trained in Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) care. This team should include experts in palliative care, reproductive and sexual health, nutrition, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and mental well-being.
- ☐ **Trained Professionals:** Ensure healthcare professionals are specifically trained and have access to ongoing education to address the unique needs of Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) patients.
- ☐ **Control and Comfort:** Allow Adolescents and Young Adults (AYAs) to control and personalise their hospital environment (e.g., bringing their own objects, clothing, and bedding, and controlling the room temperature). Ensure a private closet is available for each patient.
- ☐ **Case Management:** Include a dedicated Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) coordinator to oversee patient care and transitions.
- ☐ **Clinical Trials:** Encourage participation in clinical trials and research. Provide accessible, easily understood information about clinical trials and facilitate Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) participation in clinical and translational research.
- ☐ **Genetic Counselling:** Integrate genetic testing and counselling into patient care.
- ☐ **Digital Records Access:** Provide unrestricted digital access to patient records.
- ☐ **Second Opinions:** Facilitate access to second opinions for treatment options.

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- ☐ **Supportive Care:** Ensure access to palliative care, pain management, and symptom control.
- ☐ **Sexual Health:** Provide access to professionals who offer therapy and support for sexual health concerns, changes in sexual function, and intimacy issues.
- ☐ **Mental Wellbeing:** Include specially trained mental health counsellors, psychologists, psychotherapists, and psychiatrists in the multidisciplinary team to provide mental health assessments, psychological support, therapy for patients and their families, and management of psychiatric symptoms during and after cancer treatment.
- ☐ **Late Effects Surveillance and Long-Term Follow-Up Care:** Provide each patient with a survivorship care plan that addresses long-term follow-up, late effects, and ongoing health needs. Ensure a seamless transition to long-term follow-up care.
- ☐ **Reproductive Health:** Include fertility specialists in the multidisciplinary team to offer counselling and treatment options for fertility preservation and reproductive planning before, during, and after cancer treatment. Utilise decision-aid tools for fertility preservation and family planning.
- ☐ **Nutrition:** Provide access to a certified nutritionist and offer either kitchen facilities or involve patients in hospital menu planning and meal options if a kitchen is unavailable.
- ☐ **Facilitated Care Pathways:** Facilitate smooth transitions from paediatric to adult care services. Use technology to enhance communication and coordination of care.
- ☐ **Exercise Training and Physical Rehabilitation:** Promote access to physical activity and sport-related activities. Include exercise specialists and physiotherapists or physical therapists who specialise in oncology rehabilitation in the multidisciplinary team.

#### Support Services

- ☐ **Education and Career Support:** Provide support for patients to continue or return to education during and after treatment. Offer career counselling and resources to help patients plan and pursue their professional goals.
- ☐ **Family and Social Support:** Offer support services for families, including counselling and support groups.
- ☐ **Housing Support:** Offer free or low-cost housing on-site or near the hospital.
- ☐ **Transportation Support:** Assist patients with getting reimbursed or free transportation to the treatment site.
- ☐ **Children Support:** Provide free childcare for Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) parents attending the clinic for treatment.
- ☐ **Insurance, Finances, and Legal Assistance:** Ensure a dedicated social worker is available to assist with financial and legal issues and provide access to legal assistance.



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The **Checklist and Roadmap** were developed using a mixed-methods approach that integrated inputs from young people with lived experience, healthcare providers, researchers, and other key stakeholders. The recommendations are designed to support healthcare institutions in prioritizing the unique needs of adolescents and young adults (AYAs) and delivering holistic, high-quality care regardless of their location or circumstances.