



Minor's Access to Contraceptive Services in Iowa

In Iowa, a minor (someone under age 18) may seek confidential family planning services (birth control) and sexually transmitted disease (STD) testing and treatment from a Title X agency without parental permission.

Allen Women's Health is the Waterloo (local) Title X agency. 319-235-5090

Confidential access to information and services can help to reduce risk, particularly risk behaviors that can lead to pregnancy and STIs.

Confidentiality is a basic principle essential in promoting the health of adolescents

- ❖ Research shows that adolescents may not access health services without the guarantee of confidentiality. ¹
- ❖ 80% of unmarried adolescent females would not seek care if their parents had to be told. ²
- ❖ Related research shows that mandatory parental consent laws do not convince adolescents to share their health concerns with their parents, but rather increases health risks to adolescents. ^{2, 3}

Health care professionals support minor consent

- ❖ The American Medical Association (AMA), the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Public Health Association, support a minor's right to consent to their own health care. ⁴
- ❖ Pediatricians described confidentiality as essential to obtaining necessary and factual information from adolescent patients. ⁴

Parent involvement is important

- ❖ 55% of adolescents discuss their use of reproductive health services with their parents and an even greater number involve their parents in the event of an unplanned pregnancy. ⁴
- ❖ Health care professionals help adolescents reconnect and communicate better with parents and adults by encouraging parental involvement. ¹
- ❖ Current law allows healthcare professionals to inform parents or guardians about a minor's health status in situations in which failure to inform would jeopardize the health of the minor.

¹ Ford CA and English A. Limiting Confidentiality of Adolescent Health Services, What Are the Risks? (Editorial) JAMA. 2002; 288:752-753

² Council of Scientific Affairs, American Medical Association. Confidential Health Services for Adolescents. JAMA. 1993; 269: 1420-1424

³ Reddy DM, Fleming R, Swain C. Effect of Mandatory Parental Notification on Adolescent Girls Use of Sexual Health Care Services. JAMA. 2002; 288-710-714

⁴ Adolescent Access to Confidential Health Services, Advocates for Youth, www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/iag/confhlth.htm