

What can YOU do to support lifelong healthy sexuality?



MINNESOTA

SEFL supports young people's right to consent to and access confidential health care services related to:

- emergency medical care
- contraception
- pregnancy related care
- treatment for STIs
- inpatient mental health services
- treatment for drugs and alcohol use

SEFL believes the confidentiality that is assured by a minor's right to consent is a basic principle essential in promoting the health of adolescents.

SEFL believes that health care professionals help adolescents reconnect and communicate better about their health needs with parents and other caring adults.

Support

Minors' Access to Confidential Health Care

In Minnesota, a minor's right to access confidential health care is guaranteed by Minnesota Statute 144.341-347.

Confidential access to information and services can help to reduce risky behaviors; particularly behaviors that can lead to pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (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
- Less than twenty percent of teens would seek care related to birth control, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or drug abuse if parental notice were mandated².
- Eighty percent of unmarried adolescent females would not seek care if their parents had to be told.²
- Related research show 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 have publicly supported minors' right to consent to their own health care.⁴
- Pediatricians described confidentiality as essential to obtaining necessary and factual information from adolescent patients.⁴

The role of parental involvement

- Fifty-five percent 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
- The minors' consent law does not ignore the value of parent-child communication. In fact, health care professionals help adolescents reconnect and communicate better with parents and adults.¹
- Current law allows health care professionals to inform parents or guardians about a minor's health status in situations in which failure to inform them would jeopardize the health of the minor.

What can YOU do to support minors' access to confidential health care?

- Call, write or meet with your MN representative and senator and tell them you support minors' rights to confidential health care.
- Educate adolescents, parents and other adults about minors' rights to confidential health care services and encourage them to contact their legislators.
- Join the SEFL coalition and find out how you can become involved.

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



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Sexuality Education for Life-Minnesota is a coalition of educational, religious, health, social service, and advocacy organizations, as well as concerned individuals that promotes lifelong healthy sexuality by advocating for policies on comprehensive sexuality education and access to confidential health care services.

Sexuality Education for Life-Minnesota is coordinated by the Minnesota AIDS Project (MAP) www.mnaidsproject.org and the Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting (MOAPPP) www.moappp.org
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