

Minors' Access to Reproductive Healthcare in Georgia

Health Services That Can Be Provided to Minors Without Parents' Consent

A minor is a person under the age of 18.

In general, parental consent is needed before a minor receives medical treatment. However, there are some exceptions under Georgia Law. (See Medical Services That Can Be Provided Without Parents' Permission, next)

THE BASICS:

Informed Consent

A minor who understands the risks, benefits and proposed alternatives to certain health services outlined in this information may give informed consent. Informed consent must be voluntary, may be verbal or written, and should be noted in the patient record.

Confidentiality

Fear of disclosure prevents some minors from seeking services. Reports show that when young people are assured that providers will respect their right to confidentiality, they are more likely to seek care, especially reproductive health care.

Communication is Critical

It is usually helpful (and desired) for a young person to talk with a parent or a supportive adult when making healthcare decisions. In fact, most young people do involve at least one parent when making health care decisions. Open communication with parents is not always possible for young people. Some cannot involve their parents because they come from homes where physical violence, sexual abuse, or emotional abuse are prevalent. For these and other reasons, young people may receive a broad range of health services, including confidential reproductive health care as outlined in this card, without telling their parents or needing their permission.

Providers' Facilitating Communication as Related to Minors Receiving Care

Providers are encouraged to:

- Initiate conversations with adolescents about their right to confidential health care.
- Discuss if and how a minor's parents will be involved in her/his care.
- Establish a trusting relationship with both the patient and the parent: Discuss confidentiality with each individually.
- Encourage the adolescent to involve a parent whenever possible.

(For specific health services teens can receive without parents' consent, continue to next page).

