

## Minors' Access to Confidential Health Services

The Coalition for Responsible Sex Ed advocates for the preservation of the Minors' Consent statute (**Minnesota Statute 144.341-347**) in Minnesota. Access to confidential services helps young people be safe and healthy.

### Health care professionals support minor consent.

- The American Medical Association (AMA), the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association and the Minnesota Public Health Association publicly support a minor's right to consent to their own health care.<sup>1</sup>
- Pediatricians described confidentiality as essential to obtaining necessary and factual information from adolescent patients.<sup>1</sup>

### The role of parental involvement

- 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.<sup>2</sup>
- Current law respects the role of the health care provider as the expert and does not restrict their ability to inform parents or guardians about a minor's health status, especially in situations in which failure to inform them would jeopardize the health of the minor.
- Research shows that mandatory parental consent laws do not convince adolescents to share their health concerns with their parents, but rather increase health risks to adolescents.<sup>3,4</sup>

### Support Minors' Access to Confidential Health Care!

- Contact your legislators today and tell them about the value of confidential access to medical services, such as family planning and STD testing and treatment in Minnesota.
- Join the Coalition for Responsible Sex Ed. Visit [www.coalitionforsexed.org](http://www.coalitionforsexed.org) to find out how to get more involved.

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<sup>1</sup> Adolescent Access to Confidential Health Services, Advocates for Youth [www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/iag/confhlth.htm](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/iag/confhlth.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Ford CA and English A. Limiting confidentiality of adolescent health services, what are the risks? [Editorial] JAMA. 2002; 288:752-753.

<sup>3</sup> Council of Scientific Affairs, American Medical Association. Confidential health services for adolescents. JAMA. 1993;269:1420-1424.

<sup>4</sup> 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.