Preventing teen pregnancy and strengthening young families.

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 infections (STI) testing and treatment from a Title X agency without parental permission.

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 Medial 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