

Adolescents & the Iowa Law

According to Iowa law, a minor (an individual younger than 18 years) may seek medical care for the following without the permission or knowledge of his/her parents:

- Substance abuse treatment;
- Sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing and treatment;
- HIV testing - if test is positive, Iowa law requires parent notification;
- Contraceptive care and counseling, including emergency contraception; and
- Blood donation if 17 years of age or older.

Even though teenagers and young adults can receive these treatments without their parent's knowledge, it is important to remember parents are a key part of all aspects of a teen's life. Parents and teens are encouraged to be open and honest with each other when it comes to healthcare decisions.

It is important for teens to know that if they are covered by their parents' medical insurance and want it to cover their treatment, they will need to consent to their medical records being shared - possibly even with parents.

A minor may also consent for evaluation and treatment in a medical emergency or following a sexual assault. However, treatment information can not be kept confidential from parents.

Iowa has not adopted the mature minor doctrine.

An emancipated minor is one who is married (or ever married) or is one who:

- Is absent from the parental home with parent consent,
- Is self-supporting, receiving no financial income from parents,
- And, an inconsistent relationship with being a part of the family of the parent exists.

Iowa has a parental notification law with respect to abortion performed on minors. Health care providers must notify a parent, legal guardian, custodian, or grandparent 48 hours prior to performing an abortion on a minor. This applies to teens 17 years old and younger, unless they are married or have ever been married.

If a minor chooses not to notify a parent, legal guardian, custodian, or grandparent, she can seek a judicial waiver.

Exceptions to the parental notification law with respect to providing abortions to minors include:

- Parent provides written authorization for the abortion
- Minor declares she is the victim of child abuse and that abuse has been reported to DHS
- Minor declares she is the victim of sexual abuse and that abuse has been reported to law enforcement officials
- Physician certifies a medical emergency exists, necessitating an abortion to avert minor's death or serious impairment of a major bodily function

The legal age of consent for sexual intercourse in Iowa is 16 years old.
(This excludes persons covered by the Iowa Mandatory reporter laws.)

Person 14 and 15 years of age may consent to sex with a person within 48 months of their age.

Persons less than 13 years of age cannot legally consent to sexual intercourse.

Resources:

Youth Law Center
218 6th Ave.
Des Moines, IA 50309
(515) 244-1172

Center for Adolescent Health & the Law
www.cahl.org

National Center for Youth Law
www.youthlaw.org