Minors’ Rights: Boston

Minors 12+ have the right to the following WITHOUT parent/guardian consent:

- Mental health counseling*
- Screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Substance use treatment (except for methadone maintenance therapy)
- Birth control (including emergency contraception, excluding sterilization)
- Pregnancy testing and prenatal care

* A minor aged 16+ may consent to admission at a mental health treatment facility. In light of Massachusetts’ mature minor rule (a minor who is mature enough to understand the consequences of a given medical procedure), a provider may choose to provide mental health treatment without notifying a minor’s parents.

GENDER-AFFIRMING TREATMENTS & PROCEDURES

- There are also medical treatments to affirm someone’s gender identity, including hormone replacement therapy; however, consent can vary based on type of treatment for someone under 18.
- For more information on where and how to access these services, contact your community clinic.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT REQUIRED

- Abortion (a minor can petition a judge in a process known as judicial bypass)² ³
- Inpatient mental health treatment (if under age 16; after age 16, consent is not needed, but parents may receive notification)

EXCEPTIONS TO PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT

A parent or legal guardian must provide consent on behalf of a minor before healthcare services are provided, with several important exceptions:

- **Sexual assault services**—sexual assault care at any clinic does not require parent/guardian consent, including making a police report and follow-up care

- **Emergency contraception**—no age restriction, prescription, or parent/guardian consent necessary to obtain Plan B One-Step and similar over-the-counter emergency contraception

- **Substance use treatment**—a minor 12+ may consent to treatment for substance use without parent/guardian consent (excluding methadone treatment)

- **HPV vaccine**—mature minors are assessed by providers and can receive the HPV vaccine without parent/guardian consent

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## Minors’ Rights: At a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Minors age 12+ can consent without parent/guardian</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abortion</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>A minor can petition parent/guardian consent in a process known as judicial bypass; to learn more about this process, visit: <a href="https://www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-south-texas/patients/abortion-care-services/minors-and-abortion-care">https://www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-south-texas/patients/abortion-care-services/minors-and-abortion-care</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth Control &amp; Emergency Contraception</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Minors <strong>cannot</strong> consent to sterilization without parent/guardian consent</td>
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<tr>
<td>HPV Vaccine</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Health Counseling</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Under age 16: mature minors are assessed by providers and can access counseling without parent/guardian consent; 16+: parent/guardian consent is not needed, but they <strong>may receive notification</strong>. To access inpatient mental health treatment under the age of 16 parent/guardian consent is <strong>required</strong>; 16+ parent/guardian consent is not needed, but they <strong>may receive notification</strong>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pregnancy Testing &amp; Prenatal Care</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>STI Screening &amp; Treatment</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual Assault Services</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Substance Use Treatment</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Minors <strong>cannot</strong> access replacement narcotic abuse treatment (i.e., methadone treatment) without parent/guardian consent</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Providers MUST override the minor’s confidentiality and report if:**
- There is suspicion of abuse by an adult
- The minor is a risk to themselves or others

*Updated June 2019*