

TREATMENT OF MINORS

Minors (below the age of eighteen years) who present with an adult attesting to be the patient's parent or guardian can be registered for evaluation and treatment. If there is any doubt as to the validity of the attestation of guardianship, the matter should be resolved before the patient is presented to a provider for evaluation and treatment. In documenting the care provided to the minor, the progress note should include notation as to the identity of the adult attesting to be the patient's parent or guardian.

Minors (below the age of eighteen years), unaccompanied by a parent or guardian, should not be registered for evaluation and treatment unless one of the following *medical exemptions* exist (with or without verifiable written consent from a parent or guardian):

1. The minor may consent to and be provided contraceptives and testing for pregnancy, unless the person lacks sufficient maturity to understand the results of treatment. The United States Supreme Court has held that the federal constitutional right of privacy in matters relating to the use of contraception protects minors as well as adults.
2. Upon the certificate of one or more reputable practicing physicians, the court may summarily provide for emergency medical and surgical treatment that appears to be immediately necessary to preserve the health and well being of any child. Source: ORC 2151.33
3. A minor may consent to the diagnosis or treatment of any venereal disease. Source: ORC 3709.241
4. A minor may consent to the diagnosis or treatment of any condition that it is reasonable to believe is caused by drug abuse, beer or intoxicating liquor. Source: ORC 3719.012
 - A minor may consent to being given an HIV test for the diagnosis of AIDS or an AIDS-related condition. The consent is not subject to disaffirmance because of minority. Source: ORC 3701.242(B)

Procedure for the provision of health services to the unaccompanied minor:

1. When a minor presents to the health center seeking health care services unaccompanied by a parent or guardian, the Office Manager should refer the minor to the medical staff for medical triage, in the procedural manner dictated by the Center Director.
2. Medical staff (primarily nursing staff), in performing medical triage, should perform the following tasks:
 - Determine whether the minor fulfills any of the *medical exemptions* noted in this policy that allow for rendering health care services in the absence of parent or guardian consent.
 - If the minor fulfills any of the *medical exemptions* noted in this policy, the minor should be registered for medical care restricted to *medical exemptions* that are specific to the minor's circumstances.
 - If the minor fulfills any of the *medical exemptions* noted in this policy, the medical triage person should inquire of the minor whether he/she has any objection to his/her parents or guardians being informed of the medical care that will take place at the health center. If the minor objects, no notification should occur. If the minor does not object, the notification should occur.
 - If the minor does not fulfill any of the *medical exemptions* noted in this policy, the minor should be informed in as dignified and caring a manner as possible that the health center cannot legally render the service. The circumstances of the minor's presentation and the reason for denial of services should be documented in the medical record. Additionally, an attempt should be made to contact the minor's parents or guardians regarding the minor's presentation to the health center.