

# Adolescent Health Confidentiality Policy (Information for Parents)

**A**dolescence is a time of rapid physical and emotional change, complicated by ever-present peer pressure. Providing excellent healthcare to adolescents requires a sensitive and thoughtful approach. Parents are encouraged to come with their adolescents to healthcare visits and remain active and involved in their healthcare. However, parents must understand that adolescents need to begin to take greater responsibility for their healthcare. Doctors or nurses may request an opportunity to spend some time with your child alone.

**As your child begins to take responsibility for his/her own healthcare, he/she will be accountable for:**

- ◆ Learning and being aware of his or her own health needs.
- ◆ Talking openly with their healthcare provider about issues of concern.
- ◆ Following treatment plans as agreed upon.
- ◆ Keeping appointments.

There are some situations where state law allows adolescents to give consent for their own care. In these cases the records from those services will be kept confidential from parents unless safety issues are involved. For example, teens that have or suspect they have a sexually transmitted disease (STD) may consent to diagnosis and treatment for that STD. In these cases, the medical records documenting these services are confidential. However, there are situations when, in the judgment of professional staff, an adolescent's life or well-being would be jeopardized without family involvement, which would cause confidentiality to be waived.

**Parents with questions or concerns about this policy are encouraged to share their concerns with their adolescent's doctor or healthcare provider.**

Adapted with permission from MassHealth "Prevention and Management of Chlamydial Infections in Adolescents: A Toolkit for Clinicians."



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