

AMA Code of Medical Ethics

2.2.3 Mandatory Parental Consent to Abortion

In many jurisdictions, unemancipated minors are not permitted to request or receive abortion services without their parents' knowledge and consent. Physicians should ascertain the law in their state on parental involvement to ensure that their practices are consistent with their legal obligations. In many places, the issue of confidentiality for minors who seek an abortion implicates competing ethical concerns apart from the abortion issue itself.

When an unemancipated minor requests abortion services, physicians should:

- (a) Strongly encourage the patient to discuss the pregnancy with her parents (or guardian).
- (b) Explore the minor patient's reasons for not involving her parents (or guardian) and try to correct misconceptions that may be motivating the patient's reluctance to involve parents. If the patient is unwilling to involve her parents, encourage her to seek the advice and counsel of adults in whom she has confidence, including professional counselors, relatives, friends, teachers, or the clergy.
- (c) Explain to the minor patient under what circumstances the minor's confidentiality will be abrogated, including:
 - (i) life-threatening emergency;
 - (ii) when parental notification is required by applicable law.
- (d) Try to ensure that the minor patient carefully considers the issues involved and makes an informed decision.
- (e) Not feel or be compelled to require a minor patient to involve her parents before she decides whether to undergo an abortion.

AMA Principles of Medical Ethics: III,IV