

Health Care Concerns

Providing Health Care to Minors under Washington Law:

A summary of health care services that can be provided to minors without parental consent

Columbia Legal Services

**Washington State's general age of majority for health care is 18 (RCW 26.28.010).
However, a minor can receive services without parental consent in the following areas:**

Service Needed	Minor Consent Sufficient for Confidential Care	Parent/Guardian Consent Required	Parent / Guardian Notification Required	Notes and Source
Emergency medical services:	Yes	No	No	If the parent's consent is not readily available, the consent requirement is satisfied and the minor can receive medical services. RCW 7.70.050(4).
Non-emergency medical services:	No, unless Mature Minor Doctrine applies	Yes, unless minor meets Mature Minor Doctrine standards	No	If it is not a medical emergency or one of the types of services listed below, minors may still give a valid consent under the "Mature Minor Doctrine" if they are capable of understanding or appreciating the consequences of a medical procedure. In determining whether the patient is a mature minor, providers will evaluate the minor's age, intelligence, maturity, training, experience, economic independence or lack thereof, general conduct as an adult and freedom from the control of parents.
Immunizations:	No, unless Mature Minor Doctrine applies	Yes, unless minor meets Mature Minor Doctrine standards	No	Minors may receive immunizations without parental consent under the Mature Minor Doctrine summarized above.
Sexually transmitted disease testing/ treatment (including HIV):	Yes, if ≥ 14	No	No	Minors may obtain tests and/or treatment for sexually transmitted diseases if they are 14 years of age or older without the consent of a parent or guardian. RCW 70.24.110. •Some agencies, such as Public Health – Seattle & King County, will test/treat individuals regardless of age due to mandate to prevent /control the spread of communicable disease.
Birth control services:	Yes	No	No	Minors may obtain or refuse birth control services at any age without the consent of a parent or guardian. RCW 9.02.100(2).
Abortion services:	vYes	No	No	Minors may receive an abortion and abortion-related services at any age without the consent of a parent, guardian or the father of the child. RCW 9.02.100(1); State v. Koome, 84 Wn.2d 901 (1975).
Prenatal care services:	Yes	No	No	Minors may seek prenatal care at any age without the consent of a parent or guardian. State v. Koome, 84 Wn.2d 901 (1975).
Outpatient mental health treatment:	Yes, if ≥ 13	No	No	Minors may receive outpatient mental health treatment if they are 13 years of age or older without the consent of a parent or guardian. The parents will not be notified without minor consent. RCW 71.34.530.
Inpatient mental health treatment:	Yes, if ≥ 13	No	Yes	Minors 13 years of age or older may receive inpatient mental health treatment without parental consent. The parents must be notified, however. RCW 71.34.500.
Outpatient substance abuse treatment:	Yes, if ≥ 13	No	See Source and Notes section.	Minors 13 years of age or older may receive outpatient substance abuse treatment without parental consent. The provider will inform the parents that the minor is receiving outpatient treatment within seven business days if the minor gives written consent or if the provider determines that the minor is not capable of making a rational choice to receive the treatment. RCW 70.96A.096, 230.
Inpatient substance abuse treatment:	No, unless determination of Child In Need of Services (CHINS)	Yes, unless CHINS determination	Yes, unless CHINS	Minors 13 years of age or older may receive inpatient substance abuse treatment without parental consent if DSHS determines he or she is a "child in need of services." RCW 70.96A.235. If school district personnel refer a child to inpatient chemical dependency services, they must notify the parents within 48 hours. RCW 70.96A.096 Parental notification is required if parental consent is required.

- A legally emancipated minor or a minor married to either an adult or an emancipated minor is treated as an adult.
- Information accurate as of November 5, 2007. For most up-to-date version and related document, "A Kinship Caregiver's Guide To Consenting To Health Care," please visit www.washingtonlawhelp.org.
- Unless specified elsewhere in the document, the term "medical services" includes dental, optometry, and naturopathy services.
- RCW – Revised Code of Washington- <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/>

