

## **TREATMENT OF MINORS:**

**Confidentiality:** Confidentially in health care means that information about a patient's treatment would not be disclosed without the patient's permission. As it relates to minors, confidential health care means that providers may generally not disclose medical record information to anyone, including a parent or guardian, without the patient's permission.

**Who is considered to be a minor?** A minor is a person who is under the age of 18.

**What is informed consent?** Informed consent could be given by a minor if he/she understands the risks, benefits and alternatives of a recommended treatment or procedure. He/she must also understand that they have the option not to move forward with the recommended treatment. Informed consent can be written or verbal and should be noted by the provider in the patient's medical record.

**Who gives informed consent and/or makes health decisions for minors?** Decisions related to vaccinations, bloodwork, x-rays, referrals to a specialist outside of our practice and any non-emergent medical treatment would be made by the parent or guardian for a minor until the minor reaches 18 years of age.

In New York State, there are a number of exceptions in which a minor may make his/her own health care decisions:

- Minors can get birth control without parental consent or notification.
- Minors can get prescriptions for Emergency Contraception, or the "morning pill" without a parent's consent or notification.
- Minors can obtain both testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections without parental consent. (Some infections must be reported to NY State public health officials; however, medical records may not be shared without the patient's consent).
- Minors have the right to consent on his/her own to having a HIV test.
- Parental consent is not required for a minor to receive drug and alcohol counseling. If medication were to be recommended, the provider would have to first determine whether a parent's knowledge of this recommended treatment would negatively affect the minor patient.
- A minor who is the victim of a sexual assault/rape may choose or decline to have treatment for any injuries sustained during the assault. This would include medical care as well as evidence collection which might be used later on if charges were to be filed.

**A child under the age of 18 MUST be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian AT EACH VISIT.** In the event that a parent or legal guardian cannot attend a follow-up visit, a letter must be sent with the child assigning permission to the accompanying adult who will then represent the parent or legal guardian at this follow-up office visit. Please remember to send along the child's insurance card and co-payment with the accompanying adult.